

ST. JACOB OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

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February 17, 2008

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Fr. Caleb Abetti, Priest (603.219.1711)

Susanna Toolan, President

Fr. Dn. John Konkle, Deacon (603.738.4635)

Rebecca Kotula, Choir Director

Sunday, February 24. **SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON — Tone 6. First (4th c.) and Second (452) Finding of the Honorable Head of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John.** Ven. Erasmus of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.).

3rd and 6th Hours, 9:10am.

Divine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, 9:30am.

*Epistle: I Cor 6:12-20; II Cor 4:6-15 Gospel: Lk 15:11-32; Mt 11:2-15*

Parish Council Meeting following coffee hour (~ noon)

Wednesday, February 27. **Rest of St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn (1915).**

Daily Vespers, 5:30pm, with light meal and Lenten Study.

Readings for Study: *Great Lent* chh 1-2; *The Ladder*, Step 2.

Saturday, March 1.

Great Vespers of the Resurrection, 5pm.

Sunday, March 2. **SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE) — Tone 7.** Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia (ca. 320). St. Arseny (Arsenius), Bishop of Tver' (1409). Virgin Martyr Euthalia of Sicily (257).

3rd and 6th Hours, 9:10am.

Divine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, 9:30am.

*Epistle: I Cor 6:12-20; II Cor 4:6-15 Gospel: Lk 15:11-32; Mt 11:2-15*

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**Liturgical Reflections**

St. Athanasius on the meaning of Great Lent: It is well, my beloved, to proceed from feast to feast; again festal meetings, again holy vigils arouse our minds, and compel our intellect to keep vigil unto contemplation of good things. Let us not fulfill these days like those that mourn, but, by enjoying spiritual food, let us seek to silence our fleshly lusts. For by these means we shall have strength to overcome our adversaries, like blessed Judith, when having first exercised herself in fastings and prayers, she overcame the enemies, and killed Olophernes. And blessed Esther, when destruction was about to come on all her race, and the nation of Israel was ready to perish, defeated the fury of the tyrant by no other means than by fasting and prayer to God, and changed the ruin of her people into safety (St Athanasius, Festal Letter IV.2)

PreLenten Fasting: This is meatfare week, the time when we eat up the meat in our homes, preparing ourselves to say 'good bye until Pascha' next Sunday. Fasting on Wednesday and Friday is normal. Next week is cheesefare week, when we are permitted dairy and fish everyday of the week, including Wednesday and Friday, preparing ourselves to say 'good bye until Pascha' on Forgiveness Sunday.

Forgiveness Sunday: Sunday, March 9, is Forgiveness Sunday. After having our traditional cheesefare coffee hour after Liturgy, we will return to church for Forgiveness Vespers. Our Lenten effort is a communal effort, not something we do on our own, and thus let us make every effort to begin Great Lent together with this beautiful service and the Rite of Forgiveness.

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**This Week's Saints**

(adapted from www.oca.org)

Wednesday, February 27. *St Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn (+ 1915).* Born in Syria in 1860 to pious parents, he served the Antiochian church first in Antioch and then for many years in Moscow. In 1895, being invited to serve as pastor of the Arab Orthodox community in New York, he came to the United States. After a time in NY, St. Raphael began to travel around the country—seven trips in all—to care for the Arab Orthodox who were without a pastor. On December 15, 1898, the newly appointed ruling bishop in America, (Saint) Tikhon, came to serve the Liturgy at the Syrian church of St Nicholas. Raphael told his people that their new Archpastor was one who "has been sent here to tend the flock of Christ -- Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs, and Greeks -- which is scattered across the entire North American continent." At that time, of course, there were no parallel jurisdictions based on nationality. On the third Sunday of Lent in 1904, Saint Raphael became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated on American soil. In July of 1905 Bishop Raphael consecrated the grounds for St Tikhon's Monastery and blessed the orphanage at South Canaan, PA. Three days later, he presided at a conference of diocesan clergy at Old Forge, PA. Among the clergy in attendance were three who would also be numbered among the saints: Fr. Alexis Toth, Fr Alexander Hotovitzky, and Fr John Kochurov (the last two would die as martyrs in Russia). St. Raphael fell asleep in the Lord on February 29, 1915. He was glorified on May 29, 2000 at St. Tikhon's Monastery by the OCA. His sacred relics remain at the Holy Resurrection Cemetery at The Antiochian Village near Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Friday, February 29. *St. John Cassian (+435).* Born around 360, St. John entered a monastery in his late teens, and shortly thereafter, he—along with his relative St. Germanus—departed for the holy land and Egypt to draw upon the spiritual experience of the ascetics. Like honeybees they journeyed from place to place, gathering the sweet nectar of spiritual wisdom. Twenty years later, in 399, he traveled to Constantinople to learn of the virtue and holiness of St. John Chrysostom. In 404 he returned to the West, was ordained a priest, and sent to Massilia Gaul (France) where he started both a men's and a woman's monastery. St John is noted for three important writings, all written during his years in Gaul. *The Institutes of the Cenobitic (communal) Life* describes the life the Palestinian and Egyptian monks, with whom he spent so much time, as well as how to combat the eight deadly sins. *Conferences with the Fathers* is written as a series of conversations with monastic elders on the topics of love, purity, friendship, God's help and His gifts to us, the solitary and cenobitic (communal) monastic life, repentance, fasting and vigils. The 12<sup>th</sup> Conference has been particularly important in providing an Orthodox understanding of free will in response to the later Augustinian writings on predestination. *On the Incarnation of the Lord, Against Nestorius* defends Orthodox understanding of the two natures of Christ affirmed at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. In his works, St John Cassian was grounded in the spiritual experience of the ascetics. In the words of St John of the Ladder (March 30), "great Cassian reasons loftily and excellently." His writings are also praised in the Rule of St Benedict. While St John Cassian lived in the West for many years, his spiritual homeland was the Orthodox East. He fell asleep in the Lord in the year 435. His holy relics rest in an underground chapel in the Monastery of St Victor in Marseilles. His head and right hand are in the main church.