

**ST. JACOB OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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November 30, 2008

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Priest (603.219.1711)

Susanna Toolan  
President

+ + + **Service Schedule** + + +

Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

*24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (10th of Luke)—Tone 7. Holy and All-praised Apostle Andrew the First-called (62 A.D.) St. Frumentius, Archbishop of Abyssinia (Ethiopia – ca. 380). 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours, 9:10am  
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, 9:30am.  
Epistle: Eph. 2:14-22; Gospel: Luke 13:10-17.*

Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>

Daily Vespers, 5:30pm. Meal and Study Group @ 6:15 pm: “Finding Christ According to the Scriptures”.  
Food sign up: see David (soup, bread, or drink).

Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

Great Vespers of the Resurrection, 5:00pm.

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

*25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (11th of Luke) — Tone 8. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (397). Ven. Anthony, Abbot of Siya (Novgorod – 1558). Ven. Nilus of Stolobensk (1554). Ven. John the Faster, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves – 12<sup>th</sup> c.). Martyr Athenodorus of Mesopotamia (ca. 304). Ven. Paul the Obedient. St. Philotheia of Thrace, Protectress of Romania (12<sup>th</sup> c.). Ven. Gregory, Founder of Grigoriou Monastery (Mt. Athos – 14<sup>th</sup> c.)  
3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours, 9:10am  
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, 9:30am.  
Epistle: Eph. 4:1-6; Gospel: Luke 17:12-19.*

+ + + **Upcoming Events** + + +

11/15 – 12/24		Nativity Fast
12/6	Saturday	Feast of St. Nicholas
12/7	Sunday	<b>Special Parish Meeting to elect additional Parish Council members.</b>
12/10	Wednesday	Daily Vespers, 2 p.m. at <b>Berlin Health and Rehabilitation Center</b>
12/25	Thurs	<b>Christmas! The Nativity of Our Lord.</b>

Peculiar to a star is the light that surrounds it.  
And peculiar to those who worship and fear God  
are poverty and humility. For there is nothing so distinctive,  
nor is there so plain a sign, of the disciples of Christ,  
as a humble spirit and an unpretentious appearance.

All four Gospels speak of this.

-Hesychius of Jerusalem

**SERMON, given by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom  
25<sup>th</sup> December 1967**

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Helpless love is both salvation and judgement, helplessness and love that abandons itself into the hands of men is the only thing that finally can call out of hardened hearts, of rough souls of sinful personalities the last possible spark of response. If we are incapable of responding to love that makes itself helpless, that accepts to be vulnerable, that abandons itself into our hands, then we are not capable of responding to anything, then something tragic must happen to us, to our life in order to make us capable of answering the call of love. And in that respect helpless love which is salvation is also a test, a critical moment in our life – and the Greek word “crisis” means judgement.

The coming of Christ into the world is our salvation, the coming of Christ into the world is the Last Judgement already begun; it is our salvation because Divine Love makes itself present, tangible, visible in the world, because it makes itself defenceless and vulnerable, because it calls to us for mercy, because Divine Love made flesh is either received or rejected. But it is also our judgement because if we are incapable of answering to defencelessness with mercy, if we are incapable of taking the One who refuses power which is His, to defend Himself against us, then we are judged and we stand condemned.

This is the way in which the message of the Incarnation comes to us; it is stern and at the same time it is so infinitely tender, and warm, and loving. Let us discard the severity of the message not by overlooking it, but by realizing how tragic and critical it sounds and by responding with all the sensitivity, all the perceptiveness there is in our heart, and then salvation will be ours.

But the salvation which Christ offers us in that way is not simply the acceptance of the new-born child, of His defencelessness, with charity and love and tenderness, it is also something that involves us more profoundly and perhaps more sternly because He says, “I have set you an example that you should follow it”. If we are Christ’s, we must learn to become bearers of defenceless love that disarms, of defenceless love that is prepared to make itself wounded, of the defenceless love which brings itself a living sacrifice for the salvation of those who can receive it and unto the propitiation of the sins of those who reject it because they do not know what they are doing.

These are the thoughts which I wish to leave with you on this Christmas day and in this time of preparation, because all our life and all the history of the world is a time of preparation, it is Advent, because Christ who came into the world is coming into the world. The first Advent was in humility, defencelessness, unto salvation, the other one will be in glory and in power, but also unto salvation, if we only can see the whole of our life and the whole of history as Advent, the time of the coming of Christ, and if sincerely one day we can long for this day of the Lord, and say together