

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson

Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Trudy Ellmore

Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



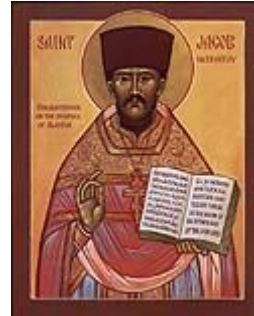
Sunday, July 26, 2015

Tone 7

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

Epistle: I Corinthians 1:10-17

*8th Sunday after Pentecost; Repose of St Jacob Netsvetov the
Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska.*



*Glory to
Jesus Christ!*

*Glory
Forever!*

*Repose of St Jacob
Netsvetov the
Enlightener of the
Peoples of Alaska*

*Righteous Father Jacob, adornment of Atka and the Yukon delta,
offspring of Russian America, flower of brotherly unity, healer of sickness,
and terror of demons, you offered yourself as a living sacrifice
to bring light to a searching people.*

Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved!

Today the Church Remembers

**8th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 7. The Repose of St. Jacob (Netsvetov),
Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska (1864).** Hieromartyr Hermolaus and Martyrs
Hermippus and Hermocrates at Nicomedia (ca. 305). Ven. Moses the Hungarian, of
the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—ca. 1043). Martyr Parasceva of Rome (2nd c.). Ven.
Gerontius of St. Anne Skete (Mt. Athos). The “EMVOLON” Icon of the Most-holy
Theotokos in Constantinople.

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

Elizabeth Zimmerman, on her birthday, offered with love by her family.

Andrew & Maribeth, on their anniversary, offered by their family.

In Eternal Memory of:

Our mother Ann, offered by Linda and Richard Dantine.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, July 26th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 1st

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 2nd

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 8th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 9th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Readings:

Epistle: I Corinthians 1:10-17

Brethren, I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispos and Gaius; lest anyone should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

At that time, Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

**Thoughts for Each Day of the Year
According to the Daily Church
Readings from the Word of God
By St. Theophan the Recluse**

Before the miraculous filling of the five thousand people, the disciples of the Lord wanted the people to be sent away; but the Lord said to them: *They need not depart; give ye them to eat.* Let us learn this word, and each time the enemy suggests to us to refuse someone who asks for something, let us say from the face of the Lord: "They need not depart, give ye them to eat"—and let us give whatever we find at hand. The enemy destroys the desire to offer charity, and suggests that maybe the asker is not worthy of being given to; but the Lord did not investigate the worthiness of those sitting there: he served everyone equally, while of course, not everyone was equally devoted to Him; perhaps there were even those who later cried: "crucify him." Such is God's overall providence toward us: *He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust* (Matt. 5:45). If only the Lord would help us even a tiny bit to be merciful, *as our heavenly Father is merciful* (Luke 6:36).



Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:

Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News **Coming Events for Your Calendar**

Next Council meeting will be August 30, 2015 at 12:15 p.m.

The Dormition Fast begins Saturday, August 1 and goes to August 14.

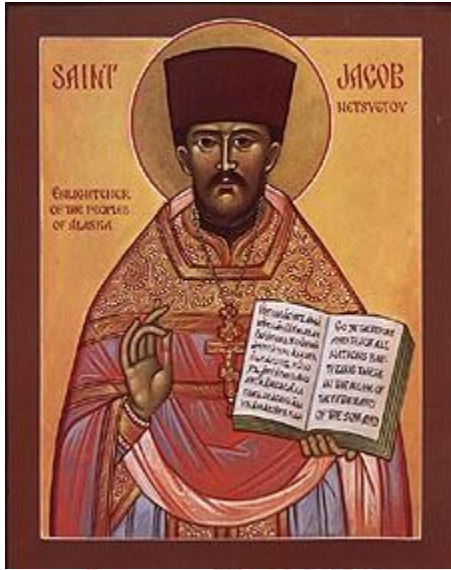
Please be sure that all Social Hour foods (especially desserts) are according to the fasting requirements of the Orthodox Church during this period of time.

August 20, 2015
Orthodox Youth Day
Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Jackson, NJ
Six Flags Great Adventure

August 23, 2015
NJ Deanery Clergy Family Picnic

September 2-3, 2015
Clergy Conference
Assumption of the Virgin Church, Clifton, NJ

***Rest of St Jacob Netsvetov the
Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska***



Father Jacob (Netsvetov) of Alaska was born of pious parents in 1802 on Atka Island, Alaska. His father, Yegor Vasil'evich Netsvetov was a Russian from Tobolsk. His mother, Maria Alekseevna, was an Aleut from Atka Island. Yegor and Maria had four children who survived infancy; Jacob was the first born, followed by Osip (Joseph), Elena, and Antony. Yegor and Maria were devoted to their children and, though of meager means, did all they could to provide them with the education which would help them in this life as well as in the life to come. Osip and Antony were eventually able to study at the St Petersburg Naval Academy in Russia, becoming a naval officer and a shipbuilder, respectively. Their sister, Elena, married a successful and respected clerk for the Russian-American Company. But Jacob yearned for a different kind of success, a success that the world might consider failure for “the righteous live forever, their reward is with the Lord” (Wis. Sol. 5:15). And so, when the family moved to Irkutsk in 1823, Jacob enrolled in the Irkutsk Theological Seminary and placed all his hope in Christ by seeking first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).

Jacob was tonsured as a Sub deacon on October 1, 1825. He married a Russian woman

(perhaps also a Creole) named Anna Simeonovna, and in 1826 graduated from the Seminary with certificates in history and theology. On October 31, 1826, he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate and assigned to serve the altar of the Holy Trinity-St Peter Church in Irkutsk. Two years later, on March 4, 1828, Archbishop Michael, who had earlier ordained Father John Veniaminov (St Innocent), elevated the godly deacon Jacob to the Holy Priesthood. This, however, was no ordinary ordination. As if he were a new Patrick, hearing the mystical call of his distant flock, Father Jacob yearned to return to his native Alaska. And the all-good God, who “satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness” (Ps.107:9) heard the prayer of his servant.

Archbishop Michael provided Father Jacob with two antimensia: one for the new Church which would be dedicated to the glory of God in honor of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Atka, and one to be used for missionary activity. On May 1, 1828 a Molieben for travelers was served, and Father Jacob, his father, Yegor, (now tonsured as reader for the Atka Church), and his matushka, Anna, set out for Alaska.

Who can tell of the perils and trials associated with such a journey? Travel in those days was never easy, either overland or over the waves of the sea. Nevertheless, aided by prayer and confidence in God’s providence, the Netsvetov family arrived safely in Atka over a year later, on June 15, 1829. The new assignment for the newly-ordained Father Jacob would also prove to be quite a challenge. The Atka “parish” comprised a territory stretching for nearly 2,000 miles and included Amchitka, Attu, Copper, Bering and Kurile Islands. But this did not deter the godly young priest, for when he was clothed in the garments of the Priesthood, he was found to be “clad with zeal as a cloak” (Is. 59:17), and so he threw himself wholly into his sacred ministry. His deep love for God and for his flock was evident in everything that he did. Both in Atka and in the distant villages and settlements which he visited, Father Jacob offered himself as a “living sacrifice” (Rom 12:1). Having “no worry about his life” (Mt. 6:25 ff), the holy one endured

manifold tortures of cold, wet, wind, illness, hunger and exhaustion, for to him life was Christ (Phil 1:21). Showing himself as a “rule of faith,” his example brought his people to a deep commitment to their own salvation. Being fully bilingual and bicultural, Father Jacob was uniquely blessed by God to care for the souls of his fellow Alaskans.

When he arrived in Atka, the Church of St Nicholas had not yet been built. So, with his own hands Father Jacob constructed a large tent (Acts 18:3) in which he conducted the services. For Father Jacob the services of the Church were life: life for his people and life for himself. It was in the worship of God that he found both strength and joy. Later he would transport this tent with him on his missionary journeys, and like Moses in the wilderness, the grace of God was found wherever this tent was taken (Num 4:1 ff; 10:17 ff).

When his first six months had ended (end of 1829), Father Jacob recorded that he had baptized 16, chrismated 442, married 53 couples, and buried 8.

Once the church was constructed, Father Jacob turned his attention to the building of a school in which the children would learn to read and write both Russian and Unangan Aleut. The Russian American Company provided some of the support initially, with the students providing the remainder. This continued until 1841, when it was reorganized as a parish school and ties with the company ceased. Father Jacob proved to be a talented educator and translator whose students became distinguished Aleut leaders in the next generation.

Father Netsvetov led an active physical and intellectual life, hunting and gathering for his own subsistence needs, preparing specimens of fish and marine animals for the natural history museums of Moscow and St Petersburg, corresponding with St Innocent (Veniaminov) on matters of linguistics and translations. He labored over the creation of an adequate alphabet for the Unangan-Aleut language, and the translation of the Holy Scriptures and other appropriate literature into that language. St Innocent praised the young pastor for his holiness of life, his teaching, and for continuing this work of translating which he, himself, had begun earlier among the native peoples. After

fifteen years of service, Father Jacob was awarded the Nabedrennik, Kamilavka, and Gold Cross. Later, he would be made Archpriest and receive the Order of St Anna.

These ecclesiastical awards do not tell of the personal sufferings of this warrior for Christ. In March of 1836, his precious wife, Anna, died of cancer; his home burned to the ground in July of 1836; and his dear father, Yegor, died of an undetermined illness in 1837. Who can utter the depth of sorrow felt by this God-pleaser? Yet he lifted up his voice with that ancient sufferer and cried, “Shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity? In all this he did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10). In his journal Father Jacob attributed all to “the Will of Him whose Providence and Will are inscrutable and whose actions toward men are incomprehensible.” He patiently endured hardships and sufferings like the Holy Apostle Paul. He saw in these misfortunes not a Victory by the hater of men’s souls (i.e. the devil) but a call from God to even greater spiritual struggles. With this in mind, Father Jacob petitioned his ruling bishop to return to Irkutsk in order to enter the monastic life. A year later, word reached him that permission was granted contingent upon the arrival of a replacement. None ever came.

Instead, Bishop Innocent soon came to Atka and asked Father Jacob to accompany him on a voyage by ship to Kamchatka. Who can know the heavenly discourse enjoyed by these two lovers of Christ as they traveled over the waves? This, however, is clear, the holy archpastor was able to accomplish three things in Father Netsvetov. Firstly, he applied the healing salve of the Spirit with words of comfort; secondly, he dissuaded Father Jacob from entering the monastery; and thirdly, he revealed to the godly priest the true plan of the Savior for his life, that he ‘might preach (Christ) among the Gentiles’ (Gal. 1: 16) deep in the Alaskan interior. Father Jacob continued to serve his far-flung flock of the Atka parish until December 30, 1844. A new zeal had taken hold of him, and it was then that St Innocent appointed him to head the new Kvikhpak Mission in order to bring the light of Christ to the people of the Yukon. Here, aided by two young Creole assistants, Innokentii

Shayashnikov and Konstantin Lukin, together with his young nephew, Vasilii Netsvetov, Father Jacob “settled” in the wilderness of Alaska.

He learned new languages, embraced new peoples and cultures, devised another alphabet, built another church and Orthodox community, and for the next twenty years, until his health and eyesight failed, continued to be an evangelical beacon of the grace of God in southwestern Alaska.

Establishing his headquarters in the Yup’ik Eskimo village of Ikogmiute (today’s ‘Russian Mission’) he traveled to native settlements hundreds of miles up and down Alaska’s longest river (the Yukon) as well as the Kuskokwim River region. At the insistence of Indian leaders, he traveled as far as the middle of the Innoko River baptizing hundreds of Indians from various, and often formerly hostile, tribes. “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps 133:1). He built the first Christian temple in this region, and dedicated it to the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross. Here Father Jacob, in spite of failing health, joyfully celebrated the Church’s cycle of services, including all of the services prescribed for Holy Week and Pascha.

Finally, in 1863, the evil One, who “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet 5:8), sought one last time to get the better of the righteous one. So the devil, the father of lies, (John 8:44), inspired an assistant of Father Jacob to level spurious and slanderous charges against his master. This resulted in a summons to Sitka, issued by Bishop Peter. The godly pastor was quickly cleared of all charges, but due to his ever-worsening health, he remained in Sitka for his final year serving a Tlingit chapel. He died on July 26, 1864 at the age of 60 and was buried on the third day at the entry of the chapel. During his final missionary travels in the Kuskokwim/Yukon delta region, he had baptized 1,320 people—distinguishing himself as the evangelizer of the Yup’ik Eskimo and Athabascan Indian peoples.

This brief history has recounted the basic chronology of the saint’s life and labors, but we must not neglect to relate his other deeds, that the light be not “hidden under a bushel”

(Mt.5:15). In 1841, Father Jacob encountered a group of women from his flock in Amlia who had fallen victim to certain demonic influences and teachings. Blaming himself for the seduction and fall of his spiritual children by the evil one, he informed the leader among them that he was going to pay them a visit.

Upon arriving, he found one of the women paralyzed, semi-conscious and unable to speak. He ordered that she be removed to another house apart, and on the next day when this was accomplished, he lit the lampada before the icons of the beautiful corner, vested himself in his priestly epitrachilion (stole), sprinkled holy water throughout the room, and began the first prayers of exorcism. He then left.

During the night he was notified that the woman had begun to speak but incoherently. He came immediately to her and performed a second exorcism. This time, she sprang out of her bed and stood next to the saint, joined her prayer to his, and accompanied them with prostrations. When the prayers were finished, Father Jacob again sprinkled her with holy water and gave her the precious cross to kiss. She regained full consciousness, a state of health and true reason—that is, even the false teachings of the evil spirits had no more part in her.

Once in November of 1845, Father Jacob was preaching in the village of Kalskag, where the local chief was also the head shaman. He spoke for all of the villagers and resisted the Word of God forcefully. But the saint, calm and full of the Holy Spirit, continued to sow the seeds of right belief and piety. After many hours, the chief fell silent and finally came to believe. The villagers, in solidarity with their leader, also joyously expressed their belief in the Triune God and sought Holy Baptism.

Father Jacob was a physician of bodies as well as souls. He often cared for the sick among his flock even to his own detriment. During the winter of 1850-1851 the saint was himself ravaged with illness. Yet he cared for the sick and dispensed medicine to them every day. Father Jacob’s preaching often brought together in the Holy Faith tribes who were traditional enemies. One example from his journal reads:

“Beginning in the morning, upon my invitation, all the Kol’chane and Ingalit from the

Yukon and the local ones gathered at my place and I preached the word of God, concluding at noon. Everyone listened to the preaching with attention and without discussion or dissent, and in the end they all expressed faith and their wish to accept Holy Baptism, both the Kol’chane and the Ingatit (formerly traditional enemies). I made a count by families and in groups, and then in the afternoon began the baptismal service. First I baptized 50 Kol’chane and Ingalit men, the latter from the Yukon and Innoko. It was already evening when I completed the service. March 21, 1853.”

So it was that this apostolic man, this new Job, conducted himself during his earthly course. There are many other deeds and wonders which he performed, many known and many more known only to God. Few missionaries in history have had to endure the hardships which Father Jacob faced, yet he did so with patience and humility. His life of faith and piety are the legacy which he leaves to us, his spiritual children in America, and indeed to all Christians throughout the world.

*Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai
Velimirovich, XV:*

White doves fly over my blue lake, like white angels over the blue heaven. The doves would not be white nor would the lake be blue, if the great sun did not open its eye above them.

O my heavenly Mother, open Your eye in my soul, so that I may see what is what--so that I may see who is dwelling in my soul and what sort of fruits are growing in her.

Without Your eye I wander hopelessly through my soul like a wayfarer in the night, in the night's indistinguishable gloom. And the wayfarer in the night falls and picks himself up, and what he encounters along the way he calls "events."

You are the only event of my life, O lamp of my soul. When a child scurries to the arms of his mother, events do not exist for him. When a bride races to meet her bridegroom, she does not

see the flowers in the meadow, nor does she hear the rumbling of the storm, nor does she smell the fragrance of the cypresses or sense the mood of the wild animals--she sees only the face of her bridegroom; she hears only the music from his lips; she smells only his soul. When love goes to meet love, no events befall it. Time and space make way for love.

Aimless wanderers and loveless people have events and have history. Love has no history, and history has no love.

When someone makes their way down a mountain or climbs up a mountain without knowing where he is going, events are imposed upon him as though they were the aim of his journey. Truly, events are the aim of the aimless and the history of the pathless.

Therefore the aimless and the pathless are blocked by events and squabble with events. But I tranquilly hasten to You, both up the mountain and down the mountain, and despicable events angrily move out of the way of my footsteps.

If I were a stone and were rolling down a mountain, I would not think about the stones against which I was banging, but about the abyss at the bottom of the steep slope.

If I were a mountain stream, I would not be thinking about my uneven course, but about the lake that awaited me.

Truly terrifying is the abyss of those who are in love with the events that are dragging them downward.

O heavenly Mother, my only love, set me free from the slavery of events and make me Your slave.

O most radiant Day, dawn in my soul, so that I may see the aim of my tangled path.

O Sun of suns, the only event in the universe that attracts my heart, illuminate my inner self, so that I may see who has dared to dwell there besides You--so that I may eradicate from it all

the fruits that seem sweet from the outside, but smell rotten in their core.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XIV

God and Us – How do we relate God?

You must love every man with your whole soul, but put your hope in the one God, and serve Him alone. For as long as He is protecting us and our friends (the angels) are helping us, our enemies (the demons) cannot inflict evil upon us. But when He forsakes us, the also our friends turn away from us, and our enemies receive power over us.

St. Maximus Confessor, Chapters on Love, 4.95.

The Prologue of Ohrid
St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Reflection

Not one passion is conquered without a great struggle. The Holy Fathers have referred to the passion of fornication as death. When a fornicator is saved from the passion of fornication, it is as though he has risen from the dead. For those who live in the world, the passion of fornication is chiefly inflamed through sight, while for those who live a life of asceticism in the wilderness the passion is inflamed through thoughts and imagination. Saint Sarah, a great female ascetic, was tortured by the demon of fornication for thirty years. She always defeated it by prayer and drove it away from her. Once the demon of fornication came to her in bodily form, and said: "Sarah, you have defeated me!" Sarah humbly answered: "I have not defeated you, but the Lord Christ has defeated you." From that time on, the thought of fornication left her forever. When Saint Poemen was asked how a man can struggle against the demon of fornication, he replied: "If man surpresses his stomach and his tongue, then he will be able to rule over himself." St. Anthony said that three kinds of impulse exist in the body: "The first is from nature, the second is

from lack of restraint in food and the third is from the demons." Others have said that the vice of fornication is strengthened by anger and pride. But all agree that, in addition to man's sobriety and spiritual effort, God's help is necessary to uproot this repulsive passion completely. The life of St. Moses the Ugrian, among many others, is a witness that it is possible for man to preserve himself in purity. St. Moses lived fifty years in the world and ten years in the monastery; altogether, a total of sixty years lived in complete virginal purity.

Contemplation

To contemplate the miraculous victory over the Amorites (Joshua 24):

1. How God sent hornets against the Amorites, and they all fell into confusion and were defeated by the Israelites;
2. How the Lord God is mighty; and how He destroys the proud and unjust, with the aid of small things.

Homily:

About the misfortune of those who come to Christ and then apostatize from Him (fall away)

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20).

Brethren, bright is the sun, but brighter still are the words of the apostle. The sun illumines bodies, brethren, but it cannot illumine souls-- while the apostolic words illumine the souls. The apostle clearly sees the heights and depths of a soul, and he illumines it for us out of fervent love, in order to lead us on the pure path of salvation. He gives us two great instructions in a few words. The first is that one cannot flee from the impurity of this world except through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Without knowledge of the Lord Jesus, one is unable to see or to know the impurity of this world, and without the knowledge of the Lord Jesus man is unable to be cleansed from this impurity. The second instruction is that when a

man flees from the impurity of this world through knowledge of the Lord Jesus but turns back to be entangled in it again, then for him *the latter end is worse than the beginning*. For having known the light, he returns again to the darkness, and the darkness becomes even darker. Having known righteousness, he again sinks into unrighteousness, and his punishment is more severe. Having known holiness, he falls back into brutishness--and his bestial nature becomes more fierce than ever. The holy apostle does not hesitate to equate this turning back with a dog who returns to his own vomit, and with a sow which, having been washed, returns to wallow in the mire.

Whoever knows the Lord Jesus Christ also knows all that is needed for his salvation: he receives sight so as to see impurities, lies and injustice, and he receives the power to flee all of that. Therefore let him not turn back, lest eternal death swallow him up. Let him not tempt God countless times: for, if God was quick to save him the first time, He will be slower the second time; and even slower the third time. Oh, how illuminating the apostle's words are, my brethren! O Lord Jesus, Saviour, Almighty and All-Good, do not depart from us in the hour of our weakness; deliver us when the impurities of this world attempt to draw us back to them.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Patristic Wisdom for Daily Living with the Church Fathers:

Remember that everything is made for a reason

If creation is good, why are there poisonous plants? St. Basil reminds us not to suppose that our stomachs are the measure of everything. What is poisonous to eat may also be vital medicine—which is as true now as it was then.

In the rich treasures of creation, it is hard to select what is most precious; the loss of what is omitted is too severe. “Let the earth bring forth grass;” and instantly, with useful plants,

appear noxious plants; with corn, hemlock; with the other nutritious plants, hellebore, mandrake and the juice of the poppy.

Well, then, shall we show no gratitude for so many beneficial gifts, and reproach the Creator for those that may be harmful to our life? And shall we not reflect that not everything has been created in view of the wants of our bellies? The nourishing plants, which are destined for our use, are close at hand, and known by all the world.

But in creation nothing exists without reason. One serves as food to some animal; medicine has found in another a relief for one of our maladies. There are even circumstances where poisons are useful to us; with mandrake doctors give us sleep; with opium they lull violent pain. Hemlock has often been used to appease the rage of unruly diseases; and many times hellebore has taken away longstanding disease. These plants, then, instead of making you accuse the Creator, give you a new subject for gratitude.

—St. Basil, *Hexameron*, 5.4

In God’s Presence, consider....

When bad things happen, am I tempted to blame the Creator?

How can I grow in the belief that everything is made for a reason?

Closing Prayer:

Father, you have created every blade of grass. Watch over all your creation with your unconquerable providence.

