SYNAXARION: The Holy Hieromartyrs Hermolaus, Hermippus, and Hermocrates; Paraskeve the Righteous Martyr of Rome; Prisca the Righteous Martyr; Moses the Hungarian; Jacob Netsvetov the Enlightener of Alaska

Resurrectional Apolytikon (Plagal 2nd Tone): When the angelic powers appeared at the tomb and soldiers guarding You became as though dead and standing by Your sepulchre was Mary seeking Your pure and sacred Body. For You did vanquish Hades and uncorrupted by its touch, You came unto the virgin woman bestowing the gift of Life. O You who rose from the dead, Lord, we give glory to You.

Apolytikon of St. Paraskevi: Having worked with readiness befitting the call, O one named after readiness, you inherited as dwelling, the faith which is your namesake, Paraskevi the Great Victor; wherefore you flow forth healings, and intercede for the souls of all of us.

Apolytikon of St. John the Baptist: The memory of the just is observed with hymns of praise; for you O Forerunner the witness of the Lord is sufficient. You have proved to be truly more venerable than the prophets. Since you were granted to baptize in the river, the One Whom they proclaimed. Therefore, you strove for truth, proclaiming with joy the Good News, even to those in Hades: that God was manifested in the flesh, and takes away the sins of the world, and grants to us His great mercy.

Kontakion: A protection of Christians unshameable, intercessor to our Holy Maker unwavering, reject not, the prayerful cries of those who are in sin. Instead, come to us for you are good, your loving help bring unto us, who are crying in faith to you. Hasten to intercede and speed now to supplicate, as a protection for all time, Theotokos for those who honor you.
Readings for the 7th Sunday of Matthew

Epistle Reading is from Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Gospel Reading is from Matthew 9:27-35

The At that time, as Jesus passed by, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

Trisagion: Aliki (15 years)

Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks: The Bible Project
July 26 - August 1

*Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Psalm 34:15*

We fill our lives with complex plans and goals. We even make Christianity into more science than practice. This week’s verse is an example of how one simple verse of Scripture can be the motto for an entire day, even an entire life. Our life’s work is to depart from evil and do good, to repent and to find God, to grow towards Him every day. We do this by seeking peace and pursuing it, by being people who promote peace, by being people who calm conflict rather than create it. This is another example of a verse to put on your nightstand or front door or desk at work to refer to often, especially before conversations that involve confrontation. There is a way even in confrontation to do it peacefully and in a way that glorifies God.
Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday, July 26  
7th Sunday of Matthew & St. Paraskevi  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Young Adult Discussion via Zoom 6:30 p.m.

Monday, July 27  
Bible Study with Charlie 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, August 2  
8th Sunday of Matthew  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Fr. Stavros will be out of town this week. For all pastoral emergencies, please contact Charlie Hambos. There will be no Paraklesis on Wednesday or Divine Liturgy on Saturday, August 1. The weekly Paraklesis service and Saturday Divine Liturgy will resume next week.

The 12 Disciples Project

During this period of the covid-19 pandemic, I have committed once a week to offer a Paraklesis service of supplication to the Virgin Mary. During this service, we pray for all the stewards of our church by name. So that, whether you attend church in a given week or not, your name is heard within its four walls. The purpose of Paraklesis is to ask the Virgin Mary, together with the saints, to intercede before Christ for the people being prayed for at the Paraklesis. Intercessory prayer has a great value, in that among other things, it lets us know that we are not alone, that others are caring about our well-being. We know that Christ cares for us. We know that the saints care for us. And we are supposed to care for one another.

For the month of August, we are introducing the Twelve Disciples Project. We know that Jesus had twelve disciples. We know that these disciples helped establish the Christian church. Coincidentally, the list of our stewards that we pray for at the weekly Paraklesis is twelve pages long.

What we are looking for are twelve people who will volunteer, for the month of August, to pray for the names on one page of these twelve pages. The goal is for the name of every parishioner—those who we see often and those who we don’t; those who are attending services in person and those who are attending virtually; that every parishioner will be remembered in prayer on a daily basis throughout the month of August. If more than 12 parishioners are interested, then we will send each page of stewards to more than one person. If 24 parishioners are interested, everyone will be prayed for by two people each day. If 36 parishioners are interested, everyone will be prayed for by three people a day, and so on. If you are interested in being part of the Twelve Disciples Project, please email the office at office@stjohntpa.org by August 1, and we will email you your one page of parishioners to pray for, as well as a prayer to offer for them.

Additionally, during the month of August, Father Stavros will send an email of encouragement to all the “Disciples,” as well as offer their names in prayer each day of August.

What: The Twelve Disciples Project  
When: August 1-31

Why: To make sure every parishioner is remembered in prayer during the month of August

How: Send an email to the church office, receive a one-page list of our parishioners (1/12 of our parish population) and commit to pray for them every day from August 1-31

Who: Everyone is welcome to participate!

Answer these thought provoking questions about today’s Gospel Reading in the adult and teen Sunday school lesson. Click HERE.
Liturgical Notes for today

July 26 - St. Paraskevi - St. Paraskevi lived in the second century. She was orphaned at the age of 20 and was left a large fortune by her parents. She sold all of her possessions to help heal human suffering and remained a version her entire life, leading a monastic life. She was strong in eloquence and spoke persuasively to Romans, converting many to Christianity. She was sentence to be martyred by the emperor Antoninus, by being thrown into a cauldron of oil and tar. When she was put in the cauldron, the material cooled instead of burning her. The emperor approached to see what was going on and the steam from the cauldron blinded him. St. Paraskevi then healed the emperor, who set her free. She was martyred by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus’ successor. St. Paraskevi is the patron saint of our eyes, and optometrists.

July 26 - Jacob Netsvetov the Enlightener of Alaska - St. Jacob (Netsvetov) was born in Alaska in the beginning of the 19th Century but he had Russian roots. He was an Alaskan Creole which means that his father was one of Russian colo-nists from Irkutsk, but mother was Aleutian. Jacob was educated in Irkutsk and married on 1927. Soon he become ordained priest – first among other native Alaskans. It should be noted, that righteous Jacob was a pupil of Metropolitan Innocent (Veniaminov), also known as “The Apostle of Siberia and Alaska”. Since 1828 young priest started his missionary ministry of Alaska, and he had been doing it for twenty years. He built the church devoted to the honor of St. Nikolaos the Wonderworker in Kwethluk and that parish keeps its activity until today. For residential population St. Jacob translated the text of the Holy Gospel to Unangan. When St. Jacob’s wife passed away it become very ordeal for him and after that father Jacob decided to become a monk in Irkutsk. But it’s never happened, because it was impossible to find a substitute person for such difficult walk of life, and this holy man proceeded to carry his diligent obedience until his dying day, living as a monk. In 1844 St. Jacob was sent to a more severe place of pastoral ministry – continental part of North-West Alaska, where he enlightened residential Eskimos. The preaching of Evangelical Truth among the hard-to-reach people of Alaska is the most great affair of St. Jacob (Netsvetov). Canonization and glorification of this righteous man was committed by Orthodox Church in America in 1994. At the same time St. Jacob has been called “The Enlightener of the peoples of Alaska”. (nyblago.com)

Take Advantage of the Parish Assistance Program (PAP)

Since May 1, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church has partnered with BayCare Behavioral Health to offer a Parish Assistance Program. The PAP program will provide our parishioners access to free and confidential counseling services - offering additional support when life’s challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can contact BayCare to request up to three free and confidential counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional. The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times.

Up to three free and confidential counseling sessions.

Call 1-800-878-5470

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Ron Myer, George and Toula Tsaros, Fr. Pat Legato, Nellie Pringle, Robert Calbi, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Tony Ekonomou, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Tina Chakonas, Ann Demas, Alex Martinez, Aaron Martinez, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, Evangeline Xeroteres, Nichole Ross, Daniel Ross, Daniella Ross, Ashley Henderson, Natalie Henderson, Chris, Debbie, James, Avery, Lily, Jacob, Jesse, Ann, Rosario, Antonia Caffentzis, Alissa, John, Angela, Joey, Christine Scourtes, Steven, Matthew & Family, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xenick, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Vamvakias, John Myer, Mike Trimis, Robert and Alice Stoccardo, John Alexander, Michael Romero, George Hambos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Anastasia Smyrnakis, Ekaterina & Anna Shushaalykova, Dora Koudouna, Ana Mouroer, Debbie Phelps, Mary Voykin, David Voykin, Anne Sakellaris, Denise Bdrane, Sia Blankenship, Don Payne, Zhana Temelkova, Stanislava Terzieva, James, Jude and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.