



# The Eagle

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№ II

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FRIENDS OF ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY

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## A Word from the Dean

WE GREET you with the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul! Our second academic year is just around the corner and we are thankful to God Who has brought us thus far. Interested parents and students are calling about enrolling in the fall. I talked with one prospective student just the other day. He asked me to explain what the school was like, thereby trying to see if it was what he was looking for. I began to tell him of the beauty and captivating wildness of the Alaskan frontier, of our life of prayer, theological studies, work—both skilled and good hard labor, outdoor adventures, sports, etc. This was interesting to him but he seemed to be looking for something more than what my description had touched upon. Finally, he said plainly: "I'm looking to change my life, can you help me? I want to do what is right and leave my old ways behind me from now on."

In that moment I felt like a salesman who had missed the most important point. He was wanting the *one thing needful*. Now, it was easy to convey the richness of our life and character training that is at the base of all our endeavors with the young men. Underlying all our work here at the Academy is the work of *brotherhood*. This young man, like many others, is seeking something solid to base his life on. The Academy offers this above all: life in Christ and the training







One of the students working out on one of the outlying islands.

necessary to become a man and, more importantly, a father. This is the very heart of the curriculum and, I could tell, was what my young friend was hoping to hear from his now eager response. The Academy continues to flourish and by the Grace of God is being established as a place of hope for young men to find themselves, discover the Orthodox way of life (that “*elemental reality* which transforms a man” as Fr. Adrian would say), find new and inspiring horizons and come to know that blessed assurance that they belong to Christ and are His sons...

### *High Seas to Peaceful Lagoons*

Over the last month we have been out on the high seas. Our men have traveled across the Shelikof Strait to the Katmai peninsula to help with the resort lodge there.

One of the students’ great consolations and joys is to go “subsistence” fishing with the monks on their skiff, named appropriately “The Archangel.” This is not just for sport. In Alaska most fishing is done for what is called “subsistence” or, more understandably, survival. “Gill nets” are put out into these beautiful Alaskan coves and



lagoons. Red salmon will swim into the nets and get caught in its webbing, thereby providing us too, just as for the local natives, this source of food which is a much-needed element in our Academy diet.

We have also assisted some captains of charter vessels on their voyages to the northern and southern ends of Kodiak Island and have seen quite a bit of new terrain that can only be reached by sea or by air, including some of the oldest historical Orthodox churches. The waves have been high at times and we are beginning to learn a lot about navigation, common sea sense and getting our sea legs.

### *An Alaskan Tribute*

Many of you may remember the story about the man who died in the car accident, Lynne Saupe, recounted in issue № 7 of *The Eagle*. One of our young men by God's Providence was with him, holding his head at the moment of his passing into eternity. I would like to tell you about what followed. It turned out that this elderly man was a very famous artist in Alaska and especially in Kodiak. As a memorial to him, they asked anyone who might have a picture painted by him to bring it forth so that all these paintings could be exhibited together in the local art studio. The studio turned out to be quite full, and before our eyes was a prolific and varied collection of the most beautiful portraits of Alaskan landscapes and other subjects that I have ever seen. Then they called all of his friends and family together. Our men were also invited and we sang some of the troparia and funeral songs that the men had sung on the sidewalk at the site of his car accident and repose. It was deeply moving to the family and quite a sight to all those present—this group of our young men in uniform paying tribute to one of Kodiak's beloved citizens.

### *The Russian Night*

Back on land, after having accomplished successful Italian- and Greek-Night fundraising festivals we just completed what turned out to be the best one of all: the Russian Festival. We acquired the use of a large hall and practiced, nearly every evening, men's Russian dancing and singing with a full 18-member balalaika orchestra. The food prepared was exquisite and the evening was deeply touching in many ways. There was an overall sense of community and family.



Townspeople who were new acquaintances said they felt an uncommon warmth, witnessing the crew and the young men hosting the event working together with joy. Several people who attended noted that our men sang with sincerity and enthusiasm, something which they feel is so lacking in today's music and, generally speaking, in all of society where so much is artificial or egotistically based.

As their encore, the men sang one final song, "Farewell Beloved City." Since our Russian "five" are leaving very soon for Moscow on their missionary journey, this was their heartfelt *arrivederci* for now, to this beloved town of Kodiak where they have made many friendships. The beautiful harmonies of this "farewell song" pulled more than one heartstring and furtive tear. The townspeople have let us know that they expect a full report with a slide show from our men upon their return. Many people promised to wave the men farewell from the dock as they sail off on the "Tustemeena" (the ferryboat which travels to the mainland).

We might add that the food for the Russian Night was cooked upon our brand new "Wolf-type" commercial stove, donated to the Academy by the generosity of many supporters. It is a six-burner stainless stove of great weight. After the purchase of this stove, the problem presented itself of how to get it shipped to Alaska. The answer to our prayers came in the form of caring, anonymous Alaskan individuals. They had heard about the efforts of the school in its work with young men and decided to donate space on three different transports, and it arrived at our front door shipped free of charge!

### *A Note of Thanks*

We will conclude by, once again and not for the last time, thanking all of you. You have shipped us packages of food, books, clothing and many surprises through all these months. Each one is treasured. The support you have given has all gone directly into building this Academy. We hope to convey to you that which is being built into the men, touching not only the Kodiak community but also each community that these men will return to after their stay with us. Our faith and the Orthodox worldview is being shared through each man as a light in the midst of this world of darkness.

—Fr. Deacon Paisius