



The Eagle

JAN., 2000

№ 17

FRIENDS OF ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY

c/o ST. PAISIUS ABBEY, P.O. BOX 130
FORESTVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95436

A Wonderful Evening

Dear Friends of St. Innocent's Academy,

Most people get wonderful presents for Christmas. We got our most wonderful present for New Year's - Fr. Herman! He arrived at the Kodiak airport late in the afternoon on New Years Day, where he was greeted by monastics from the St. Herman Brotherhood, Academy Community adults and children, and the St. Innocent's Academy choir in full voice singing songs in Georgian. Many heads turned in the small airport at this unusual and extremely enthusiastic greeting.

After we processed out of the airport with Fr. Herman's luggage, we drove in a caravan of cars plus the Academy yellow school bus to Monk's Rock.

Monk Andrew and the Academy young men have been in the process of renovating the coffeehouse - opening up the dividing wall between the two rooms by adding two beautiful arches, and restoring the chapel in the back room. Fr. Herman wanted to see the progress being made, so while he looked intently at every-

thing, we sang for him his favorite Christmas Carol, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear". Then we made a brief stop at Fr. Jonas and Joan-Marie Worsham's house before proceeding to the Upper Academy at the Baptist Mission for dinner, where Fr. Herman gave a brief talk on the principles of discipleship.



Safe arrival in Kodiak

After dinner, Donna and I drove Mother Innokentia, who arrived with Fr. Herman to the Russian Holy Resurrection Church downtown, where the relics of St. Herman are preserved, so she could pay her respects. We were blessed that we arrived just after Saturday vespers, so the church was still open. It is only open for Saturday vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy, so we don't get to go see St. Herman as nearly as we would like. His presence is so strong there, and we all feel guided by him in all we do on this island where he still governs benevolently. Painted on top of his coffin is a beautiful large icon, measuring about one foot high by two and one-half feet across. It depicts in bright, vivid colors St.

Herman over the ocean, blessing all. On the right side of the coffin in a glass case is his very worn hat. On the left are the heavy iron cross and chains which he wore under his clothing. They lie on the coffin for all to touch. We thanked him with all our hearts for his love and attention towards us, then went out again into the cold winter night.

The next stop was, of all places, the local TV station. The Academy choir was doing a live TV show on the local cable channel, sandwiched between dinner and vespers. When we arrived they were just finishing rehearsing and were about to go on the air. Fr. Paisius began the program with some comments about the Academy. He said the Academy was for troubled and non-troubled youth from all types of backgrounds. He told how the Academy strives to bring young men to the fullness of manhood by not just giving them a religious education, but by showing them how to lead a religious life. He said that no matter what else they did at the Academy, they tried to do things lively, as in "having a lot of life". That they succeeded was attested to by their life and vitality as they began to sing. During the program, Sam Dank and Christopher Jones did an old carol, "The Seven Joys of Mary". The addition of Joshua Mead and Anthony May made a quartet, and the further addition of Caleb Wood Gabriel Woldegiorgis, and seven year old Josiah Wood made up the full choir.

Fr. Paisius sang and accompanied the young men on guitar, played the tambourine, or just stood to the side leaving the boys to sing with just one another, depending on the song. The quartet and choir sang a varied repertoire ranging from Georgian chants to Irish folk songs, the Appalachian Shape Note song "What Wondrous Love is This", some very authentic sounding renditions of old Black spirituals, and ended with a rousing version of Funiculi, Funicula in Italian. The whole program was done with great enthusiasm and was extremely professional, reflecting both the hard work done by the men and the inspiration and direction of Fr. Paisius.

The staff at the station was quite impressed, saying they planned to repeat the program at a future date because they liked it so much, and wondering when the boys were going to put out

their first CD! Now we all piled into the car caravan once again, and we headed down to the Lower (old) Academy building, (which is in the process of being purchased) for vespers, with matins to follow in the morning.

With the finishing of vespers, the whirlwind was over. Someone commented that we had done an incredible amount in just six hours! Looking back on it I spent a great deal of those six hours with tears in my eyes. Watching the small army of people who showed up to greet Fr. Herman at the airport, and who with such love sang for him. I was reminded of the time not much more than twelve years ago when he had few people working actively with him who saw the value of what he was trying to transmit. Now in Kodiak alone there is a young men's Academy, Monk's Rock Coffeehouse, the Captain's Restaurant, and a growing community, in addition to the monastic presence on Spruce Island and St. Nilus Island, all made up of people who are trying their best to put into effect the teachings he has given us.

In his talk at dinner, Fr. Herman began by saying that few Orthodox Christians actively witness to their faith as Jesus commanded us to do. He told us of his first conversations with Fr. Gerasim on Spruce Island almost forty years ago, when Fr. Gerasim lamented the decline of any strong Orthodox presence in Kodiak. Now, with the resurgence of our small but energetic community, that is beginning to change. Please support us with your prayers that this may continue.

Alan Jones

Receiving the Academy Shirt

Young men arrive at the Academy and for the first several weeks wear clothes reflecting their "novice" status. When they are ready to take on the responsibility and privilege of representing St. Innocent's Academy, they are invested with an official Academy shirt. As they grow in their level of responsibility and brotherly authority, colorful ship patches are sewn onto this shirt.

Dear Mothers

Please help us with uniform shirts! The Academy needs help in finding a good quality source of tan long-sleeved workshirts, such as those made by Carhart. We need a variety of men's sizes,



The uniforms of the "Russian 5" before their journey

and factory seconds would be fine. Can you help us find a supplier who can sell them at a good price, or, even better, a donor for this important symbol?

Christmas Festivities: Christian Witness

Last Sunday night, December 19, the fishing boats paraded down the channel decked out in bright Christmas lights, right outside the window of the original Academy building. Immediately afterwards, we attended the festivities over at the Baptist Mission's 'Currier & Ives Christmas'.

Many, many Kodiak folk gathered around the bonfire after the boat parade, until two authentically dressed shepherds brought us news of great good tidings and invited us to follow them to Bethlehem. The booming voices of Joshua Mead and Michael

Jones as the shepherds were very effective in cutting through the crowd noises and leading us all over to the stable. The upper loft doors were open and lighting revealed a choir of heavenly angels, led by many Academy members, praising God and singing. Then the barn doors were opened to reveal a nativity scene with a real family and real baby, and many real animals. Three fine kings in full regalia (Mary De Lucia, Justin Wood and Gabriel Woldegiorgis) processed in. The children were invited in and admired the baby and petted the horses, sheep, and goats. The Mission's beagle dog was a bit confused, but very happy to be included in the petting! The whole scene was beautiful, and a lovely example of Christian witness.

A stirring rendition of "The Seven Joys of Mary" by basso profundo Christopher Jones and exuberant tenor Sam Dank, accompanied by the spirited tambourine playing of Fr. Paisius, closed the performance. At that point the most amazing hayride contraption consisting of a tractor with snow chains and a trailer, the whole thing decked out in Christmas trees, lights, flashing wreaths, candy cane stripes on the exhaust pipe, etc. was started up by Justin Wood, to the immense delight of all sorts of people who piled in for caroling rides along the ocean front, under the almost full moon. Fr. Paisii's trumpet and tambourine accompanied the carolers and much merriment was spread to the town of Kodiak.



The following poem was found anonymously left next to Fr. Paisius's plate on St. Herman's Day

Under the Hem of His Robe

I moved to Kodiak
To be near St. Herman
Who lives nearby
On lovely Spruce Island
To do his work
And live my life
Under the hem of his robe

The islands here
Are governed by him
People are called
By him to come up here
We get to Spruce Island
At his discretion
We go through our days
With his presence to guide us
Under the hem of his robe.

His orphans have found
Another protector
St. Innocent's Academy
Now sits on the shore
Nurturing legions
Of modern day wounded
Whose hearts now need healing
Like his children of old
They live their lives
In his tender compassion
Under the hem of his robe

We had vigil last night
For the feast of St. Herman
Snow storming outside
Drafts blowing through cracks,
The lights going off
Huddled 'round heaters

At the back of the chapel
Wrapped up in layers
Our small community
United in love
Under the hem of his robe

Monks have returned
To Herman's Spruce Island
Living the life
That first drew him here
Nuns too, on near Nilus Island
Protecting the whole world
With toil in prayer
They live a hard life
The same way that he did
Depending on God
To fill all their needs
The storms of their struggles
Drive them to protection
Under the hem of his robe

— December 12/25 St. Herman's Day

Wish List

Roladex
Typewriter
Multicolored file folders for office
Post-it notes

On another note, we are beginning a project to make vestments, acolyte robes, analogion covers and everything that is needed for a church, both for St. Innocent's Chapel and for the new chapel being built at Monk's Rock. If you would like to make anything in the line of vestments, aers, decorative icon scarves, altar clothes, etc. we would be so grateful. We are looking for nice gold curtains for material, and could use any ecclesiastical trims, ribbon, fabric, fringe, buttons, embroidered crosses, interfacing, etc. We would also be glad of candlestands, candles, crosses and ecclesiastical implements and supplies of any type. Thank you for remembering us!