



The Eagle

JANUARY, 2001

№ 29

FRIENDS OF ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY

P.O. BOX 1928, KODIAK, AK 99615

ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY, P.O. Box 1517, Kodiak, AK 99615

The Word Made Flesh

Throughout the Nativity Fast, the Academy has been pondering the mystery of Christ born in a cave. We have been reading from *On the Incarnation of the Word of God* by St. Athanasius the Great, and G. K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*.

Chesterton points out how remarkable is the contradiction of the King of Glory being born tiny and helpless in a cave, not even at the level of the earth, but below it. It seems upside down to us worldly men, yet the very purpose of this Fast is to bring Christ into the subterranean recesses of our hearts, minds, and souls.

We recapitulate in ourselves the whole nativity story: we have a part of ourselves that is Herod, seeking to slay the newborn Christ, and a part that adores as the Shepherds and brings gifts as the Wise Men. Sometimes we have to quarry out the space for the cave itself out of solid rock!

In a recent address to the Academy, Abbot Gerasim stressed that we gain the spiritual life through difficulties. This is the way of the Cross. At the Academy, we are striving to live in a way that

is not calculated according to worldly ways, but rather is open to the Inspiration of God's ways.

May God grant that we nourish the small and tender presence and life of Christ born into us anew this Nativity.

Fr. Paisius De Lucia,
Dean



The Academy men sing for guests at Thanksgiving.

Thanks

St. Innocent's Academy would like to give special thanks to Abbess Michaila, the nuns of St. Paisius Abbey, Matushka Margaret Hoffman, and Sr. Kate McCaffrey for their labors in starting *The Eagle* and Friends of St. Innocent's Academy more than two years ago. Your help and your prayers have been invaluable! *Sprazdnikom!*

A Courier and Ives Christmas

by Donna Jones

Sunday night, December 17, was the annual "Courier and Ives Christmas" at the Baptist Mission, in which the Academy always takes part. We help supply shepherds in the fields, a choir of angels, and kings. We decorate the tractor and hay wagon extravagantly, and light the whole contraption with an onboard generator, providing an unusual sight as Mr. Wood drives carolers around the neighborhood. At the same time, the Kodiak Christmas boat parade goes through the channel right outside the Mission and the Academy, all decorated with Christmas lights.

After the boat parade, the crowds gathered to sing Christmas carols and then the main event began. First, Joseph and Mary came through the assembled people, with a gray pony. Then shepherds appeared, enthusiastically proclaiming the good news, and led everyone to the stable. As they approached the small barn, the lights came on in the loft revealing a choir of angels which began singing. Then the lights came on in the stable itself, and we could see Joseph and Mary standing in front of the cradle, with various animals gathered around. Soon the Three Kings arrived, bearing gifts. We all held our breath as the pony kept eating the hay in the manger, because we suspected that there was a real baby in there—and there was! A look of wonder came over each face as the baby cried out a bit later, safe in his mother's arms. (The pony had been moved so he couldn't eat the hay, but he proceeded to nibble on one of the kneeling King's crowns, causing much subdued merriment to the three Academy students playing the Kings).

Fr. Paisius was asked to read sections of the Christmas Gospel to the crowd, and he gave a stirring address on the reality and yearly wonder of this holy birth. There is always a spirit of holiness that descends on this occasion, and peoples' hearts were truly moved.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

The Socratic Circle

by Mamas Monroe Pousson

ONE DAY WHEN I was talking with a friend about Plato, Fr. Paisius sprung up with the idea of a philosophy meeting at Monk's Rock bookstore. I immediately shied away from the idea, fearing the arguments that were sure to be birthed by such a wide-open invitation. However, Fr. Paisius insisted, and I started to grow on the idea.

I originally was going to call it Plato's Place; I had the idea of having games (chess and such), readings from the Greek philosophers and a lot of Play-doh (the gooey stuff not the philosopher). Sr. Mary, who runs the bookstore, objected towards the name (being herself of a fairly serious disposition), so I changed it to the Socratic Circle.

My friend whose conversation with me about Plato spawned the initial idea became my partner in this enterprise. He made fliers which he passed out at the high school which he attended, and spread the word around to his friends about the Circle. We scheduled the first meeting for the following Friday and nobody showed up, not even my partner.

Starting with the next Friday, kids started to trickle in, peaking a few weeks later at around eleven or twelve people. We proceeded to read from various philosophers from Socrates and Plato to Lao Tzu and Chang Tse. We attempted to tackle such topics as Time (reading from Augustine), Honesty (reading from Chesterton) and Virtue (reading from Aesop). Sure enough, arguments and disagreements abounded like prairie dogs in the West Texas plains, jumping out of their holes and barking at each other. The most amazing thing is that a) they liked it and b) every night a semi-concrete conclusion of some sort was achieved.

The Socratic Circle now has a regular following of young men (and occasional young women) who are eager to express and formulate their ideas about the nature of life, God, time, space and other intriguing and supposedly subjective concepts. This,

with God's blessing, will continue to enrich the lives of the young people here who are searching for truth, drowned within the whirlpool of modern philosophies. We also recommend starting such "Circles" at your own bookstores and churches as a missionary tool for engaging the minds and souls of our youth.

Wish List

Mary DeLucia: A 20 qt. commercial bread mixer and bowl, so we can make our own bread; and warm gloves and winter clothing for the boys.

Fr. Paisius: Beeswax candles for the chapel.

Mr. Wood: Socket set, wrenches, mechanic's tools. Much needed!

Mr. Jones: Digital camera and videocamera.

Sr. Mary Butler (for Monk's Rock Bookstore): 12-foot ladder, large clear storage boxes, decorative seasonal cloths and fabrics, a complete first aid kit, extension cords (either indoor or outdoor), colored 8 1/2 x 11 paper.

Mamas Pousson (also for Monk's Rock): Stamps for mailings, a wooden chess set (especially large size).

Michael Jones: Backpacking snow shovels, and snow shoes (aluminum or wood), for the Wilderness Education Program.



***"The prayers of one's father are a shelter
over our heads which protect us."***

— St. Theodore of Sanaxar

A Wilderness Adventure

by Innocent Damiano and Anthony May

NOT LONG AGO a few of us at St. Innocent's Academy had an opportunity to go to a small island off of Kodiak for a weeklong hunting trip. It was approaching winter and we needed food to last us through the season. As we were coming close to Raspberry Island we were welcomed by several whales dancing in the water as if to greet us and wish us safe hunting. Porpoises were swimming alongside the boat to keep us company. It was one of the most beautiful sights we have ever seen in Kodiak. When we made it to the cabin we found that it hadn't been used in years, and had been overtaken by squirrels who had made it their nest. After hours of cleaning it began to look like a cabin. The first thing we did after cleaning was to set up our icons, and we said that before we do anything we will pray, partly because of the fear of bears, but mostly because we simply wanted God's grace to be with us.

One of the many ways we eat in the academy is by hunting for our own food. Rather than hunting for a sport, we hunt out of necessity. If we don't hunt, we don't have meat. We feel it's proper to have respect for the animal, and to give thanks to God who sustains us in all things.

There were five of us hunting: Mr. Wood, the Assistant Dean, his son Josiah (age eight), Anthony, Andrew, and Innocent. Mr. Wood, Anthony and Josiah went out first, going back and forth in the skiff on the shores of Raspberry Island searching for deer. For hours they saw nothing. Frustrated and tired and about to give up, Josiah said to his dad, "We forgot to pray." They immediately stopped everything and prayed. As soon as they stopped praying, God gave them a deer. Anthony spotted it high in the mountains and they began to climb. A good mile along they spotted it again, and God blessed us with the first deer. It's times like these that God shows us the effectiveness of prayer.

Later that evening, we were all feeling a little tense after seeing bear claw marks on a tree next to our cabin. Having previously heard stories about recent bear encounters in the same area, we began to seriously discuss the safety and danger of having an

ice chest full of eggs, syrup and bacon inside our cabin, plus a nice fresh deer hanging out back in a tree. We shared ideas on the matter, and decided that we should take every good precaution but needed to rely on God.

Outside in the dark and endless night lay the faint glimmer of stars up in the sky. The wind began to whistle and howl against the cabin's walls when suddenly we heard a movement on the deck. Anthony and Innocent froze stone cold and told the others to be quiet. We heard a loud thump, and the cabin shook, followed by an eerie scratching sound. "It's a bear!" someone whispered.

Mr. Wood began to look very serious. He loaded the shotgun he had been cleaning while Anthony, the other staff member, readied a revolver. The four of us approached the door, listening intently. The noise stopped. Mr. Wood pushed the door open.

To our relief, we had been fooled by the wiles of nature. The strong forces of the Kodiak winds were rattling a torn piece of tarp, and an fishing rod had gotten entangled in it. The old rod was whipping around, banging on the deck and scratching on the door! Feeling quite foolish we chuckled a little, and silently re-entered the cabin. Although we had a scare that night, we never once during our week long stay had trouble with a bear.

We hunted four days more, morning to night, in rain, sleet, and windstorms, and were blessed with two more deer, filling the freezers at the Academy. Glory be to God!

* * *

The following recipe from Staff Member Anthony May is a truly exceptional marinade that we use for venison and other foods — for barbecue, pan fry, broil or bake.

May's Mountain Marinade

3 minced Mandarin oranges	2 cups olive oil
3 tsp. brown sugar	½ cup red wine vinegar
¼ cup cracked pepper	¼ cup rosemary
2 cloves garlic, minced or chopped	1 qt. soy sauce
1 small onion, minced or chopped	

Announcement!

Essay Contest on the Academy

MANY PEOPLE tell us that they enjoy reading *The Eagle* and hearing about the Academy. So, we decided to have an essay contest. How has the Academy and/or the articles written in *The Eagle* affected or influenced you? Have you been inspired to do something you would not ordinarily have done? What types of articles would you like to see in future editions of *The Eagle*?

The contest will have both an adult division and a youth division, so please indicate whether you are 18 years old or older, or under 18. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. Please send entries to: Essay Contest, St. Innocent's Academy, PO Box 1517, Kodiak (our fair city) AK, 99615, or submit e-mail entries to alandonnaj@ak.net.

Deadline will be when we stop getting entries. Entries submitted by carrier pigeon cannot not be accepted because of the distances involved, and because we have too many hungry eagles up here.



The new Academy Irish String Band! Left to right: Father Paisius, Michael Jones, Andrew Figges, Innocent Damiano, Anthony May. Not pictured: Lucia Newton, Mr. Wood, Theophil McCann.