

# The Eagle

JUNE, 2001

No 34

FRIENDS OF ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY  
P.O. BOX 1928, KODIAK, AK 99615

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

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## The Holy Spirit Has Descended!

As you receive this Eagle we will be touring the Eastern United States. Perhaps we're in your town today? I will be traveling with eight students and staff members to Chicago, Madison, Boston, Syracuse, Indianapolis, Akron, Nashville, and many as yet to be named points in between. We will possibly be getting from place to place by means of some used autos we hope to acquire at the beginning of our trip.

In Boston we will be attending our first annual diocesan youth conference presided over by our bishop, Metropolitan Joseph. In Syracuse we are hoping to gather with many in that community for inspirational talks and to plan a possible youth discipleship house there, then have a barn dance and barbeque. We are also looking forward to our time with the large community in Indianapolis. The high point, towards the end of our voyage, will be the diocesan meeting in Akron with our Metropolitan and the priests and delegates of all our Bulgarian parishes across the nation.

All along the way we will be ready to serve the Lord and His people in any way He asks of us. We are prepared to sing, play music, dance, and give lectures and other inspirational talks. Most of all we are prepared to work and serve however we can. In towns small and large across these states we will appear, perform

and then lend a hand in some service work. God will help us to find creative ways to knock on many doors that are now unknown to us and hopefully surprise with joy those new friends we will make as we travel.

Accordingly there is no set schedule between our major meetings. We are asking the Lord to lead us as we travel and have Him guide our steps. This is in accord with the motto of Saint Innocent "By the Lord are a man's steps rightly directed" (Psalm 37:23). Last year we sent out five of the older students with no real provision, just the prayer that Our Lord would help them. They came back rejoicing having been helped in many ways by so many generous souls who were grateful for what the men were able to share in their communities and their lives. We are placing ourselves on that same walk this year, heading out after Pentecost and during the Apostolic fast "with nothing for their journey save a staff only, no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse" (Mark 6:8).

Look for us in your hometown. We may be that group singing traditional gospel hymns and playing acoustic folk music spontaneously in your shopping mall or especially in some forgotten and darker corner of your town. We may be those people with garbage bags cleaning up some neglected street that could use some cheering up. We may appear on the doorstep of a lonely neighbor asking how we can be of help that day or just simply singing a bright song that could even lead into a spontaneous dance or "one of those moments".

This is our joyful noise unto the Lord. These types of random acts of kindness is what young people (and older) secretly crave to do in this world that is rushing through its days in much useless busyness and dry talk. Our young people have this type of energy and zeal to share with others but they need shepherds who are willing to guide their steps into the service and joy of Our Lord who loves all mankind. "I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice to-

gether” (John 4:36,37).

We will report on our adventure in future editions of the Eagle. Until then perhaps we will see you in the field? If you see us, come and join the song, you already know the words and the melody.

From Heaven to Earth!!

— Fr. Paisius



### *National Day of Prayer and Coast Guard Ties*

On May 9, Fr. Paisius De Lucia and the Academy staff and students were invited to the Coast Guard base to tell the Academy story to Kodiak’s ministers and Coast Guard officers at the National Day of Prayer breakfast. Afterwards the Coast Guard officers asked if, in the future, the Academy could come to the base and work informally with the young men and women there by providing ministerial support and spiritual inspiration. They also requested that the Academy do its music, festivals, and other activities there whenever possible.

An article in the Kodiak Daily Mirror reporting on the Prayer Breakfast began as follows:

“Clergy members from the community of Kodiak joined Coast Guard personnel and clergy for a special breakfast observing the National Day of Prayer.

The event, observed this year on May 9, was held at the Integrated Support Command Kodiak galley in conjunction with the regular Wednesday morning prayer breakfast at the facility.

The National Day of Prayer has been a part of this country since 1775 when it first became implemented by the Continental Congress.

In 1982, a National Prayer Committee was created to formally commemorate this day. Across America, participants in this day of spiritual observance focus on matters of national importance as the subject of their prayers.



A COMMUNITY PRAYER — Father Paisius DeLucia and the members of the St. Innocent's Academy choir perform at the National Day of Prayer Breakfast. (Winn Mete Photo)

Guest speaker for the event, Father Paisius De Lucia of the Russian Orthodox Church, is the Dean of St. Innocent's Academy in Kodiak. In his ministry, Fr. De Lucia manages a home for troubled teens that combines tough love with religious service. St. Innocent's Academy Choir provided music for the event.

Following the breakfast, the community clergy and Academy members were invited to a commanding officers' briefing on the mission of the Coast Guard and the unit missions of the commands around the base.

Participants also took a tour of Air Station Kodiak for a close-up view of a C-130 aircraft and two different types of helicopters housed on base. Additionally, they toured the cutter Storis.”

*Thanks to Winn Mete and the Kodiak Daily Mirror for the above quotes from the article about the event, and the accompanying picture.*

## *A Visit to Alaska*

*The Academy received the following letter, written to friends of the author, following a visit from friends during Pascha.*

April, 2001

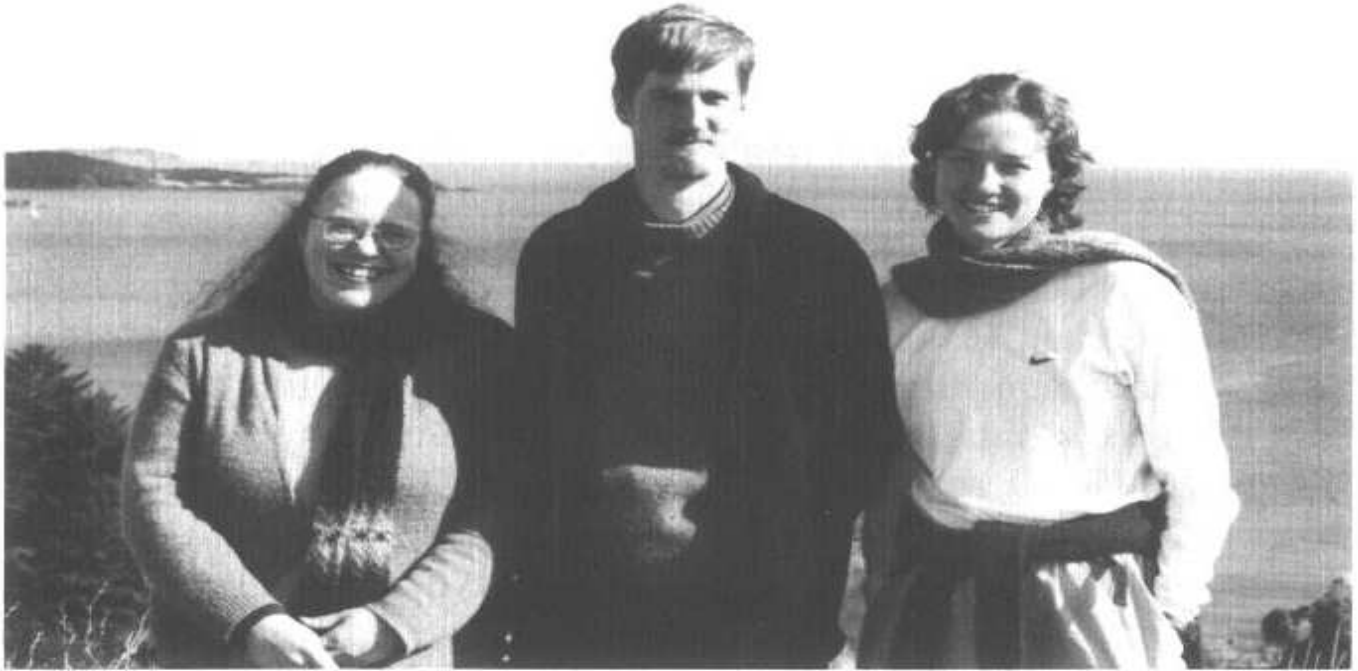
Happy Easter! Christ is Risen!

Over Easter, I was blessed with a 10-day journey to Alaska. What an amazing place! I am still processing all that I learned; this trip was as much a spiritual retreat as a chance to retreat from the city to God's vast and awing wilderness. I would like to share a couple of truths that I learned on my Alaskan adventure, as well as the message God wants us to hear and to bear witness to every Easter. Christ is Risen!

My journey began when my close friend Matthew, who lives in San Francisco, asked me if I would like to join him in visiting his friend Mary Butler at St. Innocent's Academy, an all boys school on Kodiak Island. This was a trip he had wanted to make in the past few years and was finally being blessed with the opportunity to go. I agreed to go after some thought, prayers, and my parents' blessings. Little did I know how God would use this experience in my life!

I spent a few days in the Anchorage area with Matthew's aunt and uncle, visiting the art and history museums and the Alaska Experience Theater. All were efforts to learn about Alaska and its history. During this time, I was impressed that the vast majority of Alaska remains untouched by human hands and remains in the care of nature. I rejoiced in knowing this. I also began to realize that this fact is primarily due to the harsh weather conditions that exist in Alaska 6-8 months out of the year, a condition that keeps man away.

A day after Matthew arrived in Anchorage, we flew to Kodiak, where we were warmly welcomed to the Pascha celebration at St. Innocent's Academy. This was my first experience at an Orthodox Christian service and community. What an uplifting and enriching experience it was! My senses and body, my mind and soul were all being nourished. The celebration of Easter at the Academy continued through the week - also called "Bright Week."



*Heidi Smith (right) with her friend Matthew and Sr. Mary Butler.*

The Academy is an amazing mission which allows young men to grow spiritually, intellectually, and physically. The teaching of theology, the classics, and craftsmanship focuses on strengthening souls. The Academy's location in Kodiak, a fishing town of 14,000 surrounded by God's beautiful wilderness, minimizes the number of society's inundating messages that can be damaging to the human soul. This is not to say that society is not present and growing in Kodiak, but the influential presence is less compared to Portland or Eugene, Oregon. From my weeklong experience, I felt the healing power present within the Academy's community. What a blessing! I will continue to pray for the young men, the volunteers, the teachers, and all those associated with the Academy.

During the week, I fell in love with the mountainous terrain bordering the ocean. One afternoon as I sat on the rocky shore with virtually no one else around me, I felt like I was looking at God's playground - His beautiful and awesome playground! What a precious gift that we have been given and must protect. Exploring the prolific tide pools also reminded me that one must quiet his or her mind and body to see and appreciate all of God's creatures and creation. Nature put me in a state of repose.

Also during the week, I reflected and was reminded why we

celebrate Pascha (Easter). The day allows us to remember the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His death and resurrection signifies the forgiveness of our sins and the end of fear of death through eternal life in God's kingdom.

By the end of the week, I asked myself, "Why Had God brought me to this amazing place? Why was I going home?" The answer came quietly to me from God: to witness and to share in the celebration with those back home the good news that Christ is risen; and to also share with them the story of St. Innocent's Academy and my adventures there. Perhaps you will decide to visit the Academy if you find yourself in Kodiak, Alaska.

I pray and hope that with God's blessing I will journey to St. Innocent's Academy again. Until then, I will continue to seek a deeper understanding of Truth and nurture my own soul.

God blessed the trip in many ways: a free plane ticket, unusual sunny weather, a prayer answered for spiritual enlightenment and direction, an opportunity to live within a community striving to live as Christ taught us to live, meeting new friends in Christ, and sharing these experiences with a good friend. All glory and thanks be to God.

In His Name,  
Heidi

*Heidi Smith will be entering medical school in Portland, Oregon in the fall.*

### Wish List

- \* Gardening tools, any and all: rakes, hoes, shovels, clippers, etc. \*
- \* Standup string bass \*
- \* Small used laser printers \*
- \* 20 quart dough mixer \*
- \* Commercial toaster \*
- \* Candle followers: 7 for the altar, 6 for the chandelier, and one for the side altar table – 14 in all. \*



Alexander Simeonoff celebrates his graduation in true Kodiak style.

### *Congratulations!*

Michael Jones received his A.A.S. from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Kodiak College on May 11. He is the first graduate in the Academy's College Level Program!

Alexander (Keith) Simeonoff of the village of Akhiok was presented with his GED diploma on May 11 at the Kodiak College graduation.

Mamas Monroe Pousson read his essay entitled "2x4" at the Kodiak College Showcase for Excellence and was honored with the third prize of \$200 in the category of creative writing. Mamas is enrolled in the Academy's College Program.

Congratulations to all graduates and award winners.

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