



# The Eagle

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FRIENDS OF ST. INNOCENT'S ACADEMY

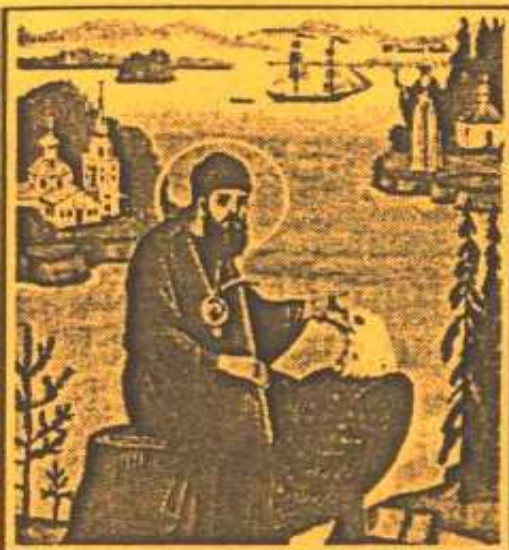
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*Tucked-away, in the far corner of the north, the joyful tidings of God's gift to earth are reflected in the activities of the household of St. Innocent's Academy. Let us hear a word from the students themselves...*

## *CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS AT ST. INNOCENT'S...*

FROM the unquarried obscurities of bashful youth, voices strong and full of life have exploded into the unenlightened world, singing Christmas carols. The students have been finding their voices and singing together, spreading Christian manliness of spirit. They were the angelic choir for a live creche scene that was put on by the Baptist mission, which is next door. Eric Prost and John Lemmel were shepherds for the scene. At Monk's Rock their voices were put to use singing Christmas tunes after a performance by the Island String Ensemble which eventually resulted in a newspaper article on St. Innocent's Academy students. The students went caroling (on the Eve of St. Herman's Day) to depressed apartment complexes and even to one of the local bars, cheering and softening hearts with the festal spirit.

Christmas-time at the Academy is much like being in a large family. Early on, everyone submitted their name in a hat and drew another out of it. The idea was to secretly make a gift from the heart for that person, and throughout the Nativity Season to be their





“Christmas Angel.” This was accomplished by leaving treats and gifts in unexpected places for the unknowing recipient to stumble upon, and by performing acts of kindness anonymously. These presents were made in the shop, along with gifts for friends and family. Some of the projects have been wooden crosses, miniature boxes made of choice wood, ornamented picture frames, and Christmas tree ornaments.

The Academy’s Christmas tree was brought from Kodiak’s wilderness. One afternoon everyone piled into cars and headed off to bring back a tree. We brought along sleds for the hills we would be near. The snow was nearly two feet deep on the ground, powdery and picturesque as it lay on the trees. Walking through the woods in the snow was like seeing the world through a new pair of eyes. We found two good trees, cut them down and dragged them all the way back to the truck. There was hot chocolate to warm the cold fingers from the inside out. Back at the school the tree was decorated and provides the final touches of the seasonal decorations that illuminate the Academy.

—Matthew Sutton

### *ALL THE KING’S MEN PRESENTS...*

On December 27th, the students and staff of St. Innocent’s Academy made their theatrical debut, presenting the convicting and moving drama, *A Christmas Carol*. Well-known and beloved for its heartfelt meaning, their performance of Dickens’ masterpiece was a stunning success. The spirit, mustered and poured into the production by the students, not only thoroughly entertained but moved the standing-room-only crowd.

The first dramatic enterprise of the Academy, Dickens’ masterpiece introduced the untried students to the harsher realities which confront the earnest actor, both in the floodlights and, symbolically, upon the stage of life. Depths heretofore unplunged were exploited by our talented director, Phanourious Shelton, who generously gave his time and energy to the production. The dining room was transformed into a 19th-century English parlor, dimly lit and masterfully decked out. The initially infamous Scrooge was portrayed with startlingly persuasive skill by Christopher Jones. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, was brought to life by Brendan Schettig. Eric Prost played



the tormented ghost of Scrooge's business partner, Jacob Marley, complete with moans and tortuous shakes of chain. Ian Shipley was the dashing buoyant Nephew Fred. The ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future were masterfully enacted by Caleb Wood, John Lemmel and Leonty Seabrook. Young Scrooge was played with morbid accuracy by Matthew Sutton; the Collector was played convincingly by Keith Simeonoff; and Telia and Nicholas McCoy filled the roles of Scrooge's fiance and of sound effects. The Cratchit children were played by Antonia and Melania DeLucia and Hanna Wood. The costumes and stage sets made by Mary DeLucia were convincingly dramatic. Music by Fr. Paisius DeLucia and lighting by Justin Wood brought the sets to life. Josiah Wood, as Tiny Tim, iced the production's cake with the most memorable line: "God bless us everyone!"

Many of the students have had little or no experience on the stage and have surpassed their own expectations by baring their artistic identities. Due to the short amount of time in which the play was produced—four weeks—the rehearsals had an intensity which demanded that the students stand and deliver. It required students' concentration in the learning of lines and cues, and patience in receiving professional critique. The two most challenging aspects of this experience were humbling oneself to criticism in front of our brothers, and bringing out and developing the character we were cast. However, the real significance of the production was found in the experience of ministry through the arts where the students discovered the ability to move the souls of each other and those in the audience to quiet reflection.

—Matthew Sutton

### *ACTS OF CHARITY...*

As the sun rises in the east the St. Innocent's Academy men anticipate the work that lies ahead—for through the night God has graced the community of Kodiak with snow. As these young men gather round their leader they grab their shovels, and one by one they pile into the minivan. As they leave the Academy they sing and pray God to grace them throughout their day. Arriving at the first house ten men jump out of the minivan and attack the snow as if practicing an emergency drill. The men quickly shovel the driveway and as



quietly as they came they leave it clean. It is just the beginning of a long and hard day of shoveling driveways. At times they get cold and wet, but the men don't grumble because they know their work pleases God. The Trailblazers, as they like to be called, have become knights in shining armor in the community because of their service to elderly widows and handicapped people. They do not expect to get paid for their work, knowing that God will grace them later in heaven. They warm up and talk about the grace of the day God has given them.

—John Mark Lemmel

### *BLESSINGS FROM FR. DAMASCENE...*

Hieromonk Damascene from Platina has recently come to stay with us and has now been at the Academy for a few weeks. He originally came only to stay for about three weeks but by God's grace was allowed to stay through Nativity. Having Fr. Damascene with us has been quite a blessing, both in our church services and our theology classes. The attempt at St. Innocent's Academy to live together as a community of brothers has been challenging and rewarding. The struggles of daily life have caused us to ask many questions about ourselves and our aim in life as Christian men. Fr. Damascene has been teaching courses that explain the reason for our being here. The first lecture we were given was on the topic of manhood, the importance of the man in Christian family and the created world. It helped us to understand more clearly that as men, we must be leaders, strong and brave, but as leaders we must be in obedience to God and therefore possess grace and mercy. He also has been giving a course (2 hours a day) on "The History of Reality," which is the Orthodox understanding of life and its meaning. It is a treasure of knowledge that will help guide us through the deception of modern times and give us the framework to measure all things with a complete, whole Christian perspective.

—Ian Shipley

*As we all turn our gaze to that "Silent Night, Holy Night,"  
when our Saviour was born in the flesh to save His sinful world,  
let us remember in our hearts these young men, striving mightily  
to give their lives to God, and with them let us proclaim:*

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*