

# THE ORTHODOX WORD

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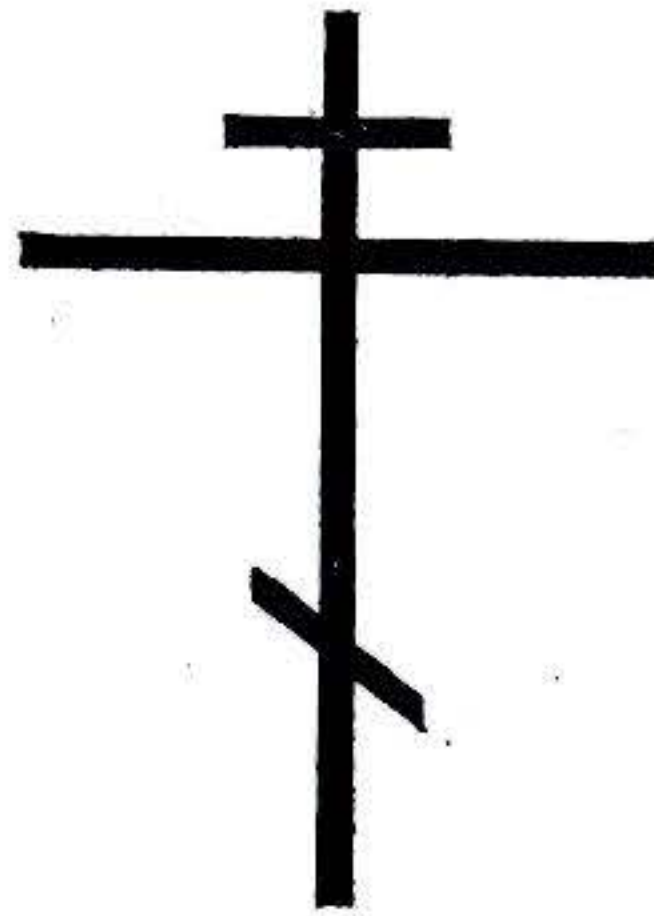
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**ILLUSTRATIONS** Cover, New Russian Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco (uncompleted), taken January, 1965, Socrates Camera Shop (see p. 28). Page 2: Icon of Fr. Herman, Miracle-worker of Alaska, and troparion to him, both prepared in the event of his canonization. Page 25: Icon of the Mother of God *The Joy of All Who Sorrow*, to which the Cathedral Church in San Francisco is dedicated. Page 37: Official portrait of Metropolitan Innocent Veniaminov.

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May the Lord bless the preaching of the Orthodox Word.

Christ commanded His disciples,

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of  
the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,  
teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

May this preaching serve for the strengthening of true  
Orthodox faith and Christian life in North America,

with the help and the prayers of

Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,

whose sanctity was manifested on this continent,

and the Aleut Martyr Peter,

who suffered martyrdom in San Francisco.

Epiphany of the Lord  
1965

Archbishop John  
(Of San Francisco  
and Western America,  
Russian Orthodox Church  
Outside of Russia)





Troparion, Tone 4


*Blessed dweller of the northern wilds  
and gracious intercessor for the whole world,  
teacher of the Orthodox Faith, good and most wonderful enlightener,  
adornment of Alaska and joy of all America,  
Holy Father Herman, pray that Christ, the King of Glory, may save our souls.*



# FATHER HERMAN, ALASKA'S SAINT

By F. A. GOLDER

*Though not yet canonized, Father Herman of Alaska,  
as his life and miracles attest, may already be justly called  
America's first Orthodox Saint. His relics are preserved today on  
Spruce Island. The following account of his life was the first to  
appear in English in America. It was written by an  
American expert on the North Pacific and was first printed  
early in this century in Pullman, Washington.*

HE ALASKA tourist who visits Kodiak in the summer never forgets the beauty of the island, the arcadian village of St. Paul, the blue sea, the green hills, the grassy slopes, the flowery valleys, the babbling brooks, the plaintive note of the golden crowned sparrow. Kodiak is well worth remembering for other reasons: it is of historic importance, it is a sacred spot. The first Christian missionaries in the American Northwest landed on this island and the first Christian church in our North Pacific was built in this village. There is still another reason: for over forty years a man of God, Father Herman, lived and labored among the people of Kodiak and the neighboring islands. They still revere his memory, treasure his sayings, glory in his deeds, and adore him as a saint. It is the purpose of this little book to tell the story of this holy man as it is told by the natives of Kodiak and by his brother monks.

Father Herman was born not far from Moscow in the year 1756; but neither the exact place of his birth nor his name before becoming a monk is known. It would seem that his parents were of the merchant class and they gave him some educational advantages, enough to read the New Testament and the Lives of the Saints. At the age of sixteen he entered the Troitsky-Sergiev Monastery, but



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did not live in the monastery proper but in one of its isolated stations near the Gulf of Finland, where he was undisturbed in his devotions. While in this place he had reason to believe that the Holy Virgin had taken him under her special care. A sore broke out under his chin, causing him much suffering and slowly undermining his strength. In his sorrow he spent the whole night praying and weeping before the image of Our Lady. Towards the morning he wiped the picture with a cloth, which he then wrapped over the sore, and fell on the floor exhausted. In his sleep he saw the Virgin standing near him and felt her touching his swollen face. He woke with a start and found himself well; the sore was gone and only a slight scar was left to remind him of the miraculous cure.

In this deserted spot he lived five or six years and then entered the Valaam Monastery, situated on Valaam Island in Lake Ladoga. Father Herman was attracted by the solitude of Valaam, which during eight months of the year is ice-bound and during the other four months is reached only with difficulty. The monastery was far removed from the temptations of the world and was famed for its piety. Father Herman's attractive personality and kindly ways soon made him a favorite with the other monks, so much so that even at this day they speak of him as the holiest man that has ever gone from them. They point to the place named after him *Hermanova*, where he was wont to wander off and pray for days at a time until the brothers had to go and bring him back. They tell of his religious ardor, of his gentleness, and of his sweet tenor voice, which was like that of an angel. Father Herman had the soul of a poet and there was much about the monastery and the island that appealed to his sense of beauty: the flowery fields, the shady forests, the wild birds, the snow-clad trees, the ice-covered lake, the mighty wind and raging storm. It was one of his duties to catch the fish with which to feed the hungry multitudes who came to pray. On such occasions Father Herman would pull away from shore and, after casting his nets, sit and contemplate in secret silence his beloved Valaam, its



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white walls and green woods, golden domes and blue sky, picturesque chapels and emerald isles, holy shrines and towering cliffs. From afar he watched the procession of the pilgrim bands with banners flying and candles glimmering and listened to the sweet music and the chiming of the bells as they came floating through the balmy air and over the silvery sea. To the fisherman Valaam was Jerusalem the Golden.

*O, sweet and blessed country,  
The home of God's elect.*

But more than his surroundings he loved his fellow monks, their simplicity, their humility, their guilelessness, their childlikeness. Their time was not spent in scholastic disputations and literary compositions, but in toiling in the fields and working in the shops, in feeding the hungry and praying with the dying. Years afterwards, when enduring the curses of Baranov and the sneers of his minions, Father Herman's mind fondly turned to the days of his young manhood, to his Valaam, to his brothers. In a letter written to the abbot in 1795, he says: "The frightful places of Siberia cannot destroy, the black forests cannot hide, the mighty rivers cannot efface, the stormy ocean cannot put out the warm affection that I have for my beloved Valaam. Often I close my eyes, and see you across the waters."

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**W**HEN IN 1793 the Holy Synod decided to organize a Kodiak Mission and called for volunteers to go to America to preach the Gospel to the Aleuts, Father Herman was one of the first to offer himself and one of the first to be accepted. This was no ordinary undertaking, it was the first mission ever sent out by Russia across the sea. The men selected were the best the monastery had to offer, they were full of the spirit of the Apostles, and they were eager to give their lives to advance the Kingdom of God. They



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were eight in number: Archimandrite Ioasaph the leader, monks Juvenaly, Macary, Afanasy, Ioasaph, Herman, deacons Stephen and Nectary. These men were plain peasant and fisher folk of limited education and restricted outlook, but zealous in the faith and ardent in their devotions.<sup>1</sup> They had never been far from their village homes and out-of-the-way monasteries, and the journey to the new field of labor was an important event in their lives. They set out from Moscow on January 22, 1794, and moved gradually across Siberia to Okhotsk where they took ship for Kodiak, reaching their destination on September 24 of that same year.

As soon as they walked ashore the leader called his followers together on a knoll to discuss plans for the work. It is inspiring to read the account of this first religious conference in the Northwest and to note with what eagerness the brothers contended among themselves for the most difficult and dangerous task. It is said that one of the monks, while walking along the beach saw an empty skiff into which he stepped and, lifting his hands to heaven, prayed that he might be guided to a place where he could be of most service. A wind came up and blew the skiff on Nuchek and there the monk preached salvation to the heathen.

The winter that followed their arrival was a busy one for Father Herman and the other missionaries, who went from village to village telling the people of the Saviour. On May 19, 1795 the

1. The information here is not quite correct. Rev. Hierodeacon Stephen, former officer, and Rev. Hieromonk Juvenaly, at one time a mining engineer, were not of such simple background as the author states. As for the Archimandrite Ioasaph (before monasticism Ivan Ilyich Bolotoff), he was the son of a priest from the Kashensky region and was educated in Tver and Jaroslavl Seminaries. After completing his studies he taught for four years in the Uglitzky Theological School and in 1784 entered the monastic life. In 1793 he was appointed head of the Kodiak Mission as recommended by the Abbot of Valaam Monastery, Nazary, advisor to the first publication of the PHILOKALIA in Russia. On April 10, 1805 Ioasaph was consecrated bishop. He was the author of an extensive and systematic work published in 1805, describing life on Kodiak Island.



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Archimandrite wrote: "The Lord be praised! We have baptized more than seven thousand Americans and have performed more than two thousand marriage ceremonies ... We love them and they love us; they are good but poor. They are so willing to be baptized that they have destroyed and burned their idolatrous things. We were afraid that they were naked, but God be thanked they are not altogether without modesty ... their bird-skin shirts come down sufficiently far in front.. " During the year 1795 Hieromonk Juvenaly baptized seven hundred natives on Nuchek and all the inhabitants of Cook Inlet. In the following summer he crossed over to the mainland and exhorted the people living along the shores of Iliamna Lake to give up their polygamous and heathenish practices and lead Christian lives. Many heeded his words and were baptized; but others, led by their shamans, sought to destroy him. When he had gone from their village they waylaid him and killed him. But as the murderers started back for their home Hieromonk Juvenaly rose from the dead and followed them. Once more they discharged their arrows into his bleeding body and once more he pursued them. This happened several times. In their desperation they hacked his body into small pieces and ran away, but as they glanced back they observed a column of smoke ascending heavenward from the mutilated body.

The work so auspiciously begun aroused much interest in Russia. The Holy Synod decided to enlarge the field of labor and to increase the force of workers. It called Archimandrite Ioasaph to Irkutsk to be consecrated bishop so that on his return he would train and ordain native priests who should go over the length and breadth of the Northwest to carry light to those who lived in darkness. This grand conception, promising so much for the glory of God, was never realized. The ship *Phoenix*, the first boat built in Alaska, on which the bishop with his assistants, including Fathers Makary, Stephen, and others, was returning from Okhotsk to



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Kodiak in 1799, foundered at sea with all on board. From this sad loss the mission never fully recovered.<sup>1</sup>

There were still four missionaries in America and under the guidance of Father Herman, they could have continued the work had they not been so bitterly opposed by the officers of the Russian American Company. It was the old fight between the missionary and the trader. The priests reproached Baranov and his associates for their licentious lives and for their brutal treatment of the islanders, and later brought the matter before the Holy Synod. Baranov neither forgot nor forgave this injury and he swore that he would be avenged on the informers. As soon as it became known that the bishop was lost, Baranov set about venting his wrath on Father Herman and his fellow workers. He was all-powerful, he was coarse, he was cruel. It used to be a common saying among the hunters of his day, that, "God is in Heaven, the Tsar is in Russia, Baranov is in America; let us, therefore, bow before Baranov." He drove the monks from the natives and unmercifully abused the natives if they went near the monks. By dragging one of their number to the church and threatening to hang him from the steeple, Baranov secured the keys to the building and kept it locked after that. He was determined to hound the missionaries from the island and out of his sight; and at the same time his friends in the capital were powerful enough to oppose the petitions of the poor men to be allowed to return to Russia. They were caught between the devil Baranov and the deep Pacific Ocean. These adversities and discouragements crushed the independent spirit of Father Herman's associates; they lost confidence in themselves and the respect of the people. After much pleading Father Nectary was allowed, in 1806, to go to Siberia; Father Afanasy, weak in body and spirit, retired to Afognak; Brother Joseph became demoralized and dragged out a

1. *Outline of the History of the American Orthodox Mission* (in Russian), Valaam Monastery, St. Petersburg, 1894.



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pitiful existence in the village of St. Paul. Father Herman remained steadfast in the faith. Trials and tribulations made him only stronger and he would under no circumstances desert his people and let them slip back into the power of the devil. Realizing, however, that the cause of God could be advanced more quickly away from Baranov and his satanic crew, Father Herman withdrew from their presence and opened a mission on the uninhabited island of Elovoi (Spruce), which he named New Valaam in memory of the Holy Island in Lake Ladoga.

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NEW VALAAM is a small island not many miles from Kodiak. Here the father built himself a cell, a chapel, and a house to accomodate the native orphan children. After a time a number of Aleut families settled on the island, but they lived some distance from the father, who sought a life of solitude. A man asked him once: "Father Herman, do you live alone in the forest? Do you never become lonely?" "No, I am not alone," he said, "God is there as He is everywhere. His angels are there. Is it possible to be lonely in their society? Is it not better to be in their company than in that of people?"

A traveller who saw Father Herman in 1819 described him as of medium height and delicate constitution. His face was pale and kindly and his soft blue eyes invited confidence and bespoke sympathy. His gentle and friendly voice drew people to him, especially the children. His body was girded with a fifteen-pound chain, his shirt was a deer hide, his sandals a piece of rough leather, though at times he went barefoot, and over all he wore a patched monastic cloak. Thus scantily clad he walked over hill and dale, through snow and rain, in heat and in cold, wherever duty called him. A bench covered with a seal skin served for a bed, two bricks



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for a pillow, and a board for a blanket. His personal habits were simple: he ate sparingly, slept little, prayed long and worked hard. He was tolerant of the weaknesses of others and did not urge them to lead the same ascetic life he did. He was kind to wild animals, the birds and the squirrels were his companions, and the savage bear fed out of his hand.

If he led a secluded life it was not in order to escape the cares of the world, for whenever his presence could serve some useful purpose he came forth. His great object in life was to help and uplift the Aleuts, whom he regarded as mere children in need of protection and guidance. He was ever pleading for them with the officers of the company. "I, the lowest servant of these poor people," he wrote to Ianovsky, "with tears in my eyes ask this favor: be our father and protector. I have no fine speeches to make, but from the bottom of my heart I pray you to wipe the tears from the eyes of the defenseless orphans, relieve the suffering of the oppressed people and show them what it means to be merciful."

Father Herman was a nurse of the natives in a literal as well as a figurative sense. When an epidemic broke out in Kodiak and carried off scores of people, he never left the village, but went from house to house, nursing the sick, comforting the afflicted and praying with the dying. It is no wonder that the natives loved him and came from afar to hear him tell the story of Christ and His love for them. Father Herman fed the hungry, cheered the troubled, turned strife into concord, and all who came to him discouraged he sent away with God's peace in their hearts. He gave to the orphan children a home, he taught them to read and write, and trained them to do useful and honest work. His daily food he secured through his own efforts and with the help of his pupils. They planted gardens, caught fish, picked wild berries, and dried mushrooms. His influence over the people was remarkable. One Sunday morning he told the natives that Jesus gave His life to save humanity and that it was the duty of every person to help mankind.



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When he had concluded, a young woman, Sophia Vlasova, stepped up and offered herself for God's service. The good father saw the hand of God in this sacrifice, for at the time he was in need of a woman to look after his little children, and made Sophia the matron of the orphanage.

The Aleuts were not the only people for whom he labored. Father Herman worked with equal zeal in behalf of the white men and through his efforts many were led to give up their lives of sin and follow the teachings of the Saviour. One of his converts was Baranov's successor, Ianovsky, who when he reached Kodiak boasted of his infidelity and spoke contemptuously of Christianity. He heard of the pious monk and invited him over to Kodiak where night after night the two men discussed questions of faith, immortality, and salvation. The simple words and strong faith of the monk sank deeply into the heart of the naval officer, and years later he and his son and daughters gave up all that they possessed and entered cloisters. Another of his converts was an educated German sea-captain in the employ of the company. He engaged the father in a religious argument and before it ended the captain acknowledged his errors, renounced the heretical doctrines of Luther, and asked to be received into the Orthodox Church.

One day the captain and officers of a Russian man-of-war invited Father Herman on board to dine with them. In the course of the conversation he put this question to them. "What do you, gentlemen, regard as most worthy of love and what do you most wish for your happiness?" One man said he desired riches, a second glory, a third a beautiful wife, a fourth the command of a fine ship. The others present expressed themselves in some similar manner. "Is it not true," said Father Herman, "that all your wishes can be summarized in this short sentence: each of you desires that which he thinks is most worthy of love?" To this statement they all agreed. "If this is true," he continued, "what can there be better,



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higher, nobler, and more worthy of love than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Author of all living beings, Who provides for all, Who loves all, and Who is the incarnation of love? Should we not above all love God, seek Him and desire Him?" The officers were quite confused and replied that what he said was true, was self-evident. He then asked them if they loved God. "To be sure," said they, "we love God. How could anyone not love Him?" Hearing these words the old man bowed his head and said: "I, a poor sinner, for forty years have tried to love God and I cannot say that I love Him as I should. To love God is to think of Him always, to serve Him day and night, and to do His will. Do you, gentlemen, love God in this manner, do you often pray to Him, do you always do his will?" With shame they acknowledged their short-comings. "Then let me beseech you, my friends, that from this day forth, from this hour, from this minute, you will love God above all." The officers marveled at his words and long remembered them.

Whenever the workmen of the company got into difficulty with their officers they besought Father Herman to intercede for them. Though old, feeble, and blind, he was always ready to undertake these offices of mercy. One day he pleaded hard with the agent in Kodiak in behalf of a hunter, trying to point out to the officer the Christian duty of forgiveness and the need of charity; but it was to no purpose. The hard-heartedness of the man moved the old father to tears and he exclaimed: "Woe unto him who is not merciful, for no mercy shall be shown to him!" The wife of the agent, who was standing by, retorted by saying: "Father Herman, we are merciful and we give charity four times a year." "What you give to the poor belongs to God and not to you. There will come a time when you, too, will be in trouble and in want and then you will know what mercy means." Turning to the agent he added, "In two years from now you will be transferred to a less



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desirable place and you will then think of my words." As he said so it came to pass: two years later the agent was carried in chains to Sitka.

Because he was so outspoken in his condemnation of all that was coarse and wicked there were some who hated him and sought to do him harm. One night a party of the company's men invaded his cell in search of furs and money which, they claimed, he had taken from the Aleuts. They ransacked his hut from top to bottom without finding anything of value. This angered them and one of the men took up an axe and commenced tearing up the floor in the hopes of discovering something incriminating. Father Herman watched them sorrowfully and said: "My friend, you have lifted up the axe to no good purpose, for by it you shall die." Not many months afterwards this man with others was sent to Cook Inlet to put down a native uprising and one night a hostile native stole into the camp, picked up the axe and slew him with it.

In 1834 Baron Ferdinand Wrangell, at the time a captain in the Imperial Navy, arrived in Kodiak and went unannounced to make a call on the old father, who was then seventy-eight years of age and blind. Notwithstanding that, he knew who his visitor was and greeted him with the title of "Admiral". Captain Wrangell tried to set him right but the old man told him that on such and such a day he had been named "Admiral", which, as it later proved, was really true.

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**W**HEN FATHER HERMAN first came to New Valaam, the devil and his agents tried to get him into their power. They presented themselves to him in the form of human beings to tempt him and in the shape of wild beasts to frighten him; but they



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wrought no evil in him for by calling on the Saints he drove them off. He was ever on guard against their machinations, and he permitted no one to engage him in conversation or to enter his cell without first making the Sign of the Cross.

As he grew older and holier the good father was allowed to see angels, he was given control over the elements, and was granted the gift of prophecy. On certain holy nights<sup>1</sup> he watched by the seaside for the angels to appear and dip the cross in the water, and this holy water he gave to the sick and cripples and they became whole. When an inundation threatened to submerge New Valaam Father Herman checked its force by placing the icon of the Holy Virgin on the beach and ordering the waves not to advance beyond it. Another time he saved his people from a forest fire by marking the limits beyond which the flames were not to spread. A year before it was generally known in Kodiak he told the Aleuts that the Metropolitan of Moscow had passed away. He foretold that an epidemic was coming which would kill off a large part of the native population and that those who were left living would be gathered into fewer villages. Two or three years before his death he told an agent of the company that the time was not far off when a bishop would be appointed for Alaska. The prophecies just mentioned have already come to pass, and other prophecies made by him will come true in God's good time.

When Father Herman realized that his days on earth were numbered and that it was time to join the saints, he called to him Sophia Vlasov with the girls and Gerasim, his helper. He asked that Sophia spend the remainder of her years on the island and that when she died she be buried at his feet. He advised the girls to

1. On the feast of the Baptism of our Lord the Holy Church blesses water to be used by the faithful throughout the whole year. After 1825 there was no priest in Alaska to perform this blessing. Gerasim reported having seen an angel bless the waters of the bay for Father Herman.



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marry and the same advice he gave to Gerasim, whom he asked to make his home on New Valaam. Continuing he said: "When I die, don't send for a priest; he will never come! Do not wash my body. Put it on a board, fold my hands on my chest, place me in my monk's mantle; with its lappets cover my face, and with the klo-buk my head. If anyone wishes to bid farewell to me, let him kiss my cross. Do not show my face to anybody."<sup>1</sup> Several days after the above conversation he called for Gerasim to light the candles and read from the Acts of the Apostles. While Gerasim was reading the countenance of the old father was lighted up with a heavenly light and he was heard to say, "Glory to Thee, O Lord." He then told Gerasim to put aside the holy book, for God had granted him another week of life. At the end of that time he again summoned Gerasim and requested him to light the candles and to read from the Acts of the Apostles. In the midst of the reading Gerasim became aware that the cell was filled with light and that a halo played around the holy father's head. Gerasim then knew that Father Herman was a saint and that he had gone to join the heavenly choir.

On the night that Father Herman died the people of Afognak Island saw hovering over New Valaam a column of light. At this wonderful sight they fell on their knees exclaiming, "Our holy man has gone from us." In another village the people observed that same night an object like a human being borne aloft from New Valaam towards Heaven.

Gerasim and the girls became frightened at what they had witnessed and immediately dispatched a messenger to Kodiak to tell what had happened. The officer of the company sent back word not to inter the body until he came over with a priest and a casket. But before he could start, there blew up such a storm as had never been seen, and no one dared to venture out to sea for a whole

1. The face must be covered according to the monastic rules.



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month. During that whole time the body of the saint lay in his cell without any decomposition setting in. Seeing the hand of God in the storm and recalling Father Herman's last words, Gerasim and the girls buried the father according to his wishes. Immediately the wind died down, the sea became calm, and the sun came out.

In 1842 the ship on which Bishop Innokenty was sailing from Kamachatka to Alaska ran into a severe storm which threatened to wreck it. The good bishop prayed for help to the saints, and remembering the pious Father Herman he said to himself, "If you have pleased God, Father Herman, make the wind change." Immediately a fair wind sprung up and in good time the boat was safe in the harbor of St. Paul. In gratitude for the deliverance, the bishop held a service over the grave of Father Herman.

Thirty years after the death of the saint the priest of Kodiak visited his resting place and found that the grass on the grave is ever green, summer and winter, and that the cross is as new and as sound as the day it went up.

The natives of Kodiak love to tell the story of Father Herman, Alaska's Saint, who is so near and dear to them. He left no picturesque missions or learned colleges to speak of his achievements, but he planted Christianity in the hearts of the Aleuts and that shall endure as long as the Aleuts live. On the walls of Valaam Monastery may be seen hanging a picture of New Valaam and a likeness of Father Herman and as the monks pass by they cross themselves and pray that the time may soon come when his bones shall rest in the sacred ground of the monastery and when the Church shall officially recognize him as a saint.

*The Brotherhood of Father Herman of Alaska is collecting further information about the life and miracles of Father Herman. If any of our readers possesses any such information, we urge him to send it to us in care of The Orthodox Word.*



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*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

St. Matthew 28: 19-20

**T**HE ORTHODOX WORD has one single reason for existing: to preach the truths of Orthodox Christianity, and in so doing to draw together those of like mind so as to offer a united witness of these truths. It is addressed to Orthodox of all nationalities, to converts to the Orthodox faith, and to those outside the Church who desire to learn more of her faith and practice.

The editors are fully conscious of their total inadequacy to fulfill the intentions thus set forth. No one man, or group of men, can himself speak for the Church of Christ. It is nonetheless possible to speak from within the Church, in conformity with Orthodox tradition; and it is this that we shall attempt to do. The editors are members of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and obedient to the Synod of that Church; but our collaborators will include members of other Orthodox Churches who are concerned to preserve Orthodox truth and tradition in their fullness. Outwardly, it is true, the Orthodox Churches present a divided front to the world. Historical circumstances since even before



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the fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth century have dictated the development of national Orthodox Churches in relative isolation from each other; and in the twentieth century modernist ideas and capitulation to Communist governments have caused division within some Orthodox Churches and swerved many from the path of faithfulness to our Lord. But in all Orthodox countries today there is at least a faithful remnant of believers who stand ready to witness their faith uncompromisingly before the contemporary world, even as far as to share the martyrdom which many of our Orthodox brothers have suffered in this century. Among such believers there exists a unity that is quite independent of international or Pan-Orthodox conferences; it is the unity of all who rightly believe and confess the Orthodox faith. The Orthodox Church of Christ is one and indivisible in all her members who have remained faithful to the truth which each local Church has possessed from its foundation.

Of reliable material concerning the Orthodox Church comparatively little has as yet appeared in English, whereas in several of the traditional Orthodox languages--in particular Greek and Russian--there is a veritable treasure-house of texts that await translation. One of the purposes of this journal will be to begin to open this treasure-house and distribute its riches to those who hunger for them. It is, after all, the proper function of a treasure, not to sit idle in a closed vault, but to be used; the treasures of Holy Orthodoxy are above all a current currency the value of which can best be proved in the lives of contemporary Christians.

Among the most important Orthodox treasures are the lives of the saints, which give us examples of a true life in Christ. The lives of recent saints are no less instructive in this regard than the lives of the early saints; and the inclusion of both in *The Orthodox Word* should serve to emphasize the fact that the Christian life has not become outmoded in the contemporary world, but in fact has changed not at all throughout the centuries. The twentieth century too has had its saints: one of



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the very greatest of Russian saints died as recently as 1908, and the martyrs of this century probably outnumber those of the entire age of martyrs that sustained the early Church.

Another valuable Orthodox treasure consists of the writings of the saints and holy fathers of the Church, both on the practical problems of the Christian life and on more general subjects such as Orthodox doctrine, the sacraments, Church history, services, and the major feast-days of the Church year. Yet another source of spiritual riches for Orthodox Christians are the icons of our Lord, His Most Holy Mother, the saints, and feast-days. It is planned that at least one of these will be reproduced in each issue, together with an explanation of its meaning and an account of its history and miracles.

This, then, will be the primary function of *The Orthodox Word*: to make more generally available some of the basic sources of the Orthodox faith. In some cases this will involve explanatory or introductory essays, so as to make accessible to contemporary readers material which might be easily misinterpreted by those who are not intimately acquainted with the life and thought of the Church. Besides this, the periodical will present information on contemporary happenings in the Orthodox world. Orthodoxy, it need hardly be said, is now "in the news". The dispersal of Orthodox of every nationality into the West, the increase of converts to Orthodoxy in Western Europe and America, the state of the suffering Church behind the Iron Curtain, meetings on an official as well as a personal level with Roman Catholics and Protestants, as for example at the Vatican Council and in the World Council of Churches, and critical events within the Orthodox world itself--all these and other factors combine to attract the attention of a Western world which, until recently, had virtually ignored the existence of the Orthodox Church for centuries, or had regarded her at best as a part of the "fossilized" East.

But if Orthodoxy has become "newsworthy", by no means all of the news about her has been good. The position of Orthodoxy in the world, her relations with other Churches, and even the relations of



## THE ORTHODOX WORD

Orthodox Churches among themselves, are quite complicated and they must be viewed critically and soundly interpreted in the light of Orthodox truth and tradition, with the intention of remaining absolutely faithful to these, in spirit as well as letter. In their own poor way the editors of *The Orthodox Word* will attempt to fulfill this solemn duty.

Always we shall hope to be guided by the awareness that governs the lives of all faithful Orthodox Christians, an awareness which no temporary complications should efface. The Orthodox Church is not merely one Church among many, not merely a "fourth major faith", but the one true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ to which all men are called and against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (St. Matt. 16:18). She is not merely one of many "newsworthy" items, but the sole container of the whole mystery of God's creation and His plan for mankind.

It is thus with a basically missionary purpose that this journal has been begun. That is why our patron and heavenly protector is Father Herman of Alaska, one of the first Orthodox missionaries to the American continent and exemplar of the life of asceticism, prayer, and faithfulness to our Lord's commandments to which every Christian, according to his strength, is called. It is as the joint labor of a brotherhood in the name of Father Herman that we present this journal, with an earnest appeal to others of like mind to join us, with articles and translations, with comments, and most of all with prayer, that this labor may be, with God's blessing, for the good use of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The Editors.*



THE MIRACULOUS ICONS  
OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

## “THE JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW”

*From henceforth all generations shall call Me blessed.*  
St. Luke 1: 48

**N**O ASPECT of Orthodox practice is more deeply rooted and more firmly established than the veneration of holy icons. One of the great feasts of the Church year, the Triumph of Orthodoxy celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent, was instituted on the occasion of the restoration of images after the period of iconoclasm, and the most important part of the work of the Seventh Ecumenical Council was the theological justification of icon-veneration. Many misconceptions about this veneration nonetheless continue to exist, particularly among non-Orthodox, and so a few words would not be out of place here on the source and nature of this veneration, before we turn more particularly to the icons of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The most extreme, and yet the most common, accusation levelled against the Orthodox veneration of icons, is that it is “idolatry” or “idol-worship”, that it (like the veneration of the relics of saints, with which it is closely connected) is a perversion of a spiritual in favor of a materialistic Christianity. Such a view is the result of a very basic misconception as to the nature of Christianity; it is rooted in a failure to understand the full meaning of the Christian Revelation.

The basis of icon veneration is to be found in the Incarnation of the Son of God, in the very source of Christian faith. The kontakion



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sung on the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy indicates this:

*The illimitable Word of the Father accepted limitation by incarnation from Thee, O Mother of God; and He transformed our defiled image to its original state and transfused it with the Divine beauty.... (Tone 8)*

It is thus because God has taken human form and so restored this form to its original likeness to Himself, that it is proper for us to reverence images of our Lord, His Most Holy Mother, and the saints, in whom the Divine image has also been restored.

Icon-veneration is a consequence of the Incarnation; so too it illuminates for us the meaning of the Incarnation. Salvation has come to the world; God has given us means appropriate to our humble state whereby we may return to Him. The wisdom of the Church has been evident in her insistence on discipline of the body as well as of the soul; ours is a religion not of ideas and abstractions, but of practice and even of hard work. The body, which through its weakness would often lead us astray and ruin the best of intentions and the noblest of purposes,—it too must be chastened and taught to please not itself but God. That is one reason for our fasts, prostrations, for making the sign of the cross, and for the veneration of icons and relics.

Such are some of the principles that underlie the veneration of icons, and Orthodox practice is in perfect accord with them. No right-believing Orthodox person has ever been guilty of idolatry, of mistaking a piece of wood for God; nor has there ever been any confusion concerning the meaning of our reverence for the Mother of God and the saints. We worship, as St. John Damascene says, “not the material, but that which is represented; just as we do not venerate the material of the Gospels or of the Cross, but that which they represent.” Concerning the Mother of God, as the same Saint continues, “the honor which is given to Her is referred to Him Who was made incarnate of Her”; and regarding the saints, “the honor given to the best of one’s fellow-servants



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is a proof of one's love for the common Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Every Orthodox icon that has been properly blessed is a means of grace; but beyond this a special place is reserved for icons that have become known for their miracles. The great majority of miraculous icons are of the Mother of God, and there is a special reason for this. As the chosen vessel of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Mother of God occupies by right a central place in Christian worship. Further, as the *kontakion* for Orthodoxy Sunday implies, it was through birth from Her that the formless God assumed a form that could be represented. These theological facts are confirmed in Orthodox experience; for it is above all the Mother of God Who has aided and protected Orthodox people, revealing Her mercies at critical times for individuals and whole Christian communities, particularly through miracles wrought in connection with Her holy images.

The miracles to be described in this and future issues of *The Orthodox Word* will seem frankly incredible to many non-Orthodox, and we will doubtless be criticized for our simplicity in accepting them. There is one reason for our simplicity. We, unworthy as we are, and living as we do in the least Christian of all ages, have yet witnessed such miracles ourselves; and what we have seen with our own eyes we have no reason to doubt when recounted by the saints and fathers who have preceded us. In our own time icons have become miraculously brightened or renewed, or they have shed tears, and healings have occurred in their presence. Surely no one who has seen the tears streaming down the cheeks of the Mother of God in any of the recent weeping icons, and has known the tearful repentance which they evoke, can doubt that miracles occur or that they have a special meaning for us. The continued occurrence among us of such miracles is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church. The scepticism and critical attitude of non-Orthodox in general towards miracles, ending in the attempt to explain

1. *On the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 6.



## "THE JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW"

them away, is perhaps due, more than to anything else, to lack of experience; for it is indeed true that outside the Orthodox Church miracles have become so rare as to seem freakish and phenomenal. For Orthodox believers miracles are still, if not commonplace, then at least something familiar and understandable; they are an important part of the normal spiritual life of the devout believer.

The abundance of Divine grace that has manifested itself through the intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God has given rise to a variety of icon-types, each one of which represents one instance or aspect of Her help and protection of sinful mankind. These icon-types are named either after the place of their revelation or miracles (such as the well-known images of Vladimir and Kazan), or after phrases, usually taken from an akathist or other service to the Mother of God, describing the function or meaning of the particular icon (such as the icon to be described below, "The Joy of All Who Sorrow"). The types are distinguished by such details as the position of the Child, the inclination of the head and direction of the glance of both Mother and Child, and gestures of the hands. Further, in addition to the basic types there are usually copies that differ from the original in small details; these copies often become known as being miraculous in their own right. If everything is considered, the study of the icons of the Mother of God is a science in itself, a science, as it might be called, of God's grace. Our attempt in these short articles will be to give no more than an introduction to this science, with emphasis upon the history and practical meaning of each icon.

## "THE JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW"

The origin of the Russian icon of the Mother of God known by this name is uncertain. It is not known whether it, like many other Russian icons, was derived from a Byzantine prototype; but in any case it existed quite early, already in Kievan Russia. What was apparently the oldest icon of this type was located near the Monastery of the Caves





Troparion, Tone 2 To the melody: "When from the Tree..."

*Joy of all who sorrow and intercessor of the offended,  
feeder of the hungry, consolation of travellers, harbor of the storm-tossed,  
visitation of the sick, protection and intercessor of the infirm,  
staff of old age, Mother of God on High, Thou art the Immaculate;  
hasten, we pray, and save Thy slaves.*



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in Kiev (Kievo-Pechersky Lavra), in the church of the hospital founded in 1106 by St. Nikola Svyatosha (the Saintly), great-grandson of Yaroslav the Wise. It is quite possible that the icon was placed there by the Saint himself.

An old tradition states that this icon was responsible for miraculous healings at a very early date. It is related that a gatekeeper several times saw a lady going into the hospital at night and noticed that after each such visit some patient would receive healing. Astonished by this, the gatekeeper asked the patients who this lady was. They replied that it was someone unknown to them who, when asked her name, would answer, “I am the joy of those who sorrow”. One night the gatekeeper followed the lady on one of her visits, which led to the cell of a monk who was fatally ill. There, on the wall over the bed of the dying monk, he saw the icon of the Mother of God and realized for the first time the true identity of the nocturnal visitor. This monk also was healed.

Many other miraculous icons of “The Joy of All Who Sorrow” were in existence before the eighteenth century, and the very name became as it were a magnet for those suffering all manner of afflictions. One of the oldest was located in a prison in the town of Vologda and occupied a place in every church procession in that town after the year 1522. Another icon in Tsarskoe Selo was noted for healing of the mentally ill; one in Pskov, for healing of diseased eyes; one in Tver, for miraculous help during an epidemic of cholera; one in Tobolsk, for protection of fishermen and merchants. In Perm there was a monastery dedicated to the icon.

The main feast-day of the icon, which is celebrated on October 24, was established in the year 1648 on the occasion of a miraculous healing by an icon in the city of Moscow. A sister of the Patriarch of Moscow Ioakim, Evfimia, suffered a deep wound in the side. Expecting to die, she nonetheless did not lose hope in Divine aid, and in answer to her fervent prayer to the Mother of God she heard a voice saying, “Evfimia, why do you not turn in your suffering to Her Who heals all?”



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“But where can I find such a healer?” replied Evfimia. “My image is in the church of the Transfiguration of My Son; it is called ‘The Joy of All Who Sorrow’... Call a priest from this church with the image, and after he has served a moleben with the blessing of water, you will be healed. And then do not forget My mercy to you, and confess it for the glory of My name.” All was done as the voice had indicated, and Evfimia was indeed healed on October 24, the date on which this icon has been commemorated since then.

The more recent popularity of “The Joy of All Who Sorrow” is owing to the miracles performed by another icon located just outside St. Petersburg in a chapel near a glass factory. During a thunderstorm on July 23, 1888, lightning struck the chapel and burned or singed everything inside, including the other icons, with the single exception of this icon. The icon slid to the floor from the shock, and the face of the Mother of God, which had darkened from age and soot, became suddenly bright. The nearby poor-box broke open at the same time and twelve small coins from it became somehow attached to the face of the icon; these coins are always shown in subsequent copies of this particular icon.

News of the miraculous preservation and renewal of the icon quickly spread throughout the capital, and from early morning of the following day the burned chapel was surrounded by a multitude of people who marvelled at this sign of Divine mercy. At noon that day the first moleben was served before the icon, and thereafter, as the news spread to the rest of Russia, ever larger crowds came to pray, and several miraculous healings occurred. The Emperor Alexander III, after himself coming to venerate the icon, donated a piece of land for the erection of a stone church dedicated to it; this church was consecrated in 1898. The icon is commemorated by the Church on the date of its renewal, July 23.

The various types of “The Joy of All Who Sorrow” possess in common certain basic characteristics. The Mother of God is always shown in full stature, sometimes with and sometimes without the Child in Her arms. Beneath Her are groups of people suffering various sorrows



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and afflictions, appealing for Her aid; above or among them are angels sent by the Mother of God to minister to their needs. Beyond these common characteristics the different types present a variety in the representation of details such as is seen in very few other icons of the Mother of God. This variety can partly be accounted for by the complexity of the icon itself; but, as we shall now see more precisely, it is most easily to be explained in terms of different renditions of an identical subject-matter.

The exceptionally fine icon illustrated here on page 25 is located in the cathedral church of San Francisco, which is dedicated precisely to “The Joy of All Who Sorrow”. It is executed in perfect traditional style and makes complete use of the symbolic language of traditional iconography, thus making it possible to express the full meaning of the icon with the greatest economy of means.

The Mother of God is shown here, as also in the St. Petersburg type, without the Child and with Her arms outspread in the manner of the celebrated icon of the “Protection” (*Pokrov*). In Her right hand the Mother of God holds a scepter, symbol of sovereignty; this symbol is present in only a few other of Her icons, most notably in the icon of the “Reigning Mother of God”.<sup>1</sup> Some other types of “The Joy of All Who Sorrow” lack the scepter but express the same meaning through the use of a crown placed on or above the head of the Mother of God. The meaning is clear: She is Queen of Heaven, enthroned in glory. Heaven is here indicated, not by naturalistic clouds as in certain modern versions of this icon, but by the gold background, which always symbolizes heaven, and by another, perhaps the most striking, feature of the icon: the flowers. These are obviously no earthly flowers; they are the blossoms of another world, of an entirely new creation--flowers of paradise. Even in such a detail as this, sacred iconography raises our minds above all things earthly and gives a foreglimpse of things as they will be in the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. For an account in English of this icon, see *Orthodox Life* (publ. by Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York), 1963, No. 4.



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The Mother of God, though in paradise, is also near to men; and use of iconographic symbolism allows these two facts to be expressed simultaneously. Instead of being far removed from the world, above the clouds, She stands here in its midst, immediately accessible to all who seek Her. It is thus emphasized that the door to paradise is near and that at certain times--as in the case of miracles wrought by the intercession of the Mother of God--men are actually touched by Divine grace and glimpse, if only for a moment, paradise itself. On both sides sorrowing people appeal to the mercy of the Mother of God. The texts written on banners in Slavonic letters are the petitions of different groups of the afflicted that She may be for them the staff of old age, clothing and warmth of the naked, healing of the sick, joy of the sorrowing, intercessor of the offended, feeder of the hungry, companion of travellers. These and other petitions the Mother of God answers by sending angels to comfort and heal, Herself giving with the left hand heavenly nourishment in answer to the petition, "feed us with the bread of Thy mercy." At the top of the icon to the left is the sun, and to the right the moon, a motif that appears sometimes in icons of the Crucifixion, but rarely in icons of the Mother of God; it symbolizes here perhaps the universality of Her sovereignty and of Her power of intercession. At the very top in the center stands the Saviour as Pantocrator, Ruler of All: He from Whom the Mother of God derives Her sovereignty.

The origin and history of this particular icon are unfortunately almost entirely unknown. It apparently remained in the Soviet Union until after the Second World War, when it somehow was brought to Paris. There it was purchased at an exhibition by an American, and it finally found its way into the window of an antique shop in San Francisco, where it was purchased by some members of the parish and presented as a gift to the cathedral church.

There are signs on the icon of once having been encased in a metal riza such as has long been used to protect and adorn valuable icons; of this it was apparently despoiled while still in the Soviet Union. It is



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obviously quite old, a fact corroborated by experts who examined it in San Francisco; a reasonable estimate of its date would place it in perhaps the 16th or 17th century. From these facts, and from the fineness of the icon itself, one may surmise that the icon was in fact one of the well-known images of this type that existed in pre-Revolutionary Russia; but nothing more definite can as yet be stated about it.

The cathedral church in San Francisco which is dedicated to this icon may itself be taken as a living example of its meaning. Formed in 1927 by a group of those faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia who wished to remain in the canonical Synod and reject the schism of the American Metropolia, it began in sorrow and tribulation as virtually the only loyal parish in America. From that time to this it has partaken of every tribulation of the suffering Russian people in exile, as well as others peculiar to itself devised by the devil for the division of the faithful. But through all its trials it has remained loyal to the canonical Russian Church abroad, and God has rewarded this faithfulness with a multitude of spiritual joys, not the least of which is the magnificent new cathedral, pictured on the cover of this issue of *The Orthodox Word*, which has been built for what has become the largest parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. It stands as a witness of the unbroken continuity of the Orthodox Faith first planted in the New World by Father Herman of Alaska.

The experience of this parish is repeated in the life of every Orthodox Christian who knows in his own experience the meaning of the words of our Saviour, “Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (St. John 16:20). This life has been given us for trial, and in trial there is inevitably tribulation and sorrow; but the goal of human life is the joy that awaits those who pass the trial. This joy we know already even in the small tribulations of our life, if we face them with Christian faith and with the aid of the Divine grace bestowed in the sacraments and through the intercession of the Mother of God and the saints; and this



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is for us a foretaste of the never-ending joy that awaits us in the next life. The very Lord of life was crucified and buried; but He rose from the dead and opened to all the door of eternal life. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (St. John 16:33).

In the Resurrection of our Saviour is the guarantee of our eternal joy; and in the intercession of His Most Holy Mother is the surest means of approach, outside the sacraments themselves, to this eternal joy. She is an ever-ready recourse in our tribulations, a merciful bestower of blessings and joy even when there seems to be no hope. May the prayer of the troparion to Her icon be our own prayer: "Joy of all who sorrow, hasten, we pray, and save Thy slaves."

Note: The historical material on pp. 24-27 was taken from E. Poselyanin, *The Mother of God* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, n.d.


*Eugene Rose.*

*A reproduction in color, 8x11 inches in size, of the icon illustrated on page 25 is being prepared in San Francisco and will become available about March first. It can be obtained after that date for \$1.00 (\$1.20 with mailing) from Orthodox Christian Books and Icons in San Francisco.*



# A NEW ORTHODOX SAINT

*SAINT JOHN (SERGIEFF) OF KRONSTADT*  
1829 - 1908

N OCTOBER 19 (November 1), 1964, in the Cathedral dedicated to the icon of the Mother of God of the Sign in New York City, the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia solemnly canonized a new Saint of the Orthodox Church: St. John of Kronstadt. This Saint, who died only in 1908 after a long life of service to the Church as a parish priest and spiritual guide of the faithful, was famous already in his own lifetime for the abundance of Divine grace which was manifested through him, particularly in miraculous healings of the sick. He continued to work miracles after his death, and among devout Russians of the emigration he has long been revered as a saint. His canonization, the first one which the Russian Orthodox Church has performed in the difficult years since the Revolution, came in answer to this popular veneration, and also to the conviction of the bishops, shared by many believers, that the time was now ripe for this act.

This great Saint has had a special part to play in the life of the Orthodox Russian people. He was a prophet who foresaw the fall of the Russian Empire and the exile of the Russian faithful. Seeing the spiritual cause of this fall in the worldliness and lack of living faith that were so widespread in the last period of the Empire, he called Orthodox faithful to repentance and renewed awareness of their Christian vocation and responsibility. His appeal is still heard today, and if the Orthodox Russian people dispersed in exile throughout the world are still one people -- even if only a faithful remnant -- and still true to Holy Orthodoxy, it is in part due to his still-living example and his holy prayers.



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The significance of St. John for the Russian people is therefore unquestioned. But there is something extraordinary about his canonization: it occurred not in Russia but in America. For believing Russians, to be sure, there is nothing unusual about this. The Russian land is enslaved, and the largest number of believers as well as the seat of the Synod of Bishops of the free Russian Orthodox Church are now located in America; as often in the past, so now the recognition of a universal Russian Saint begins on a regional level, his open acknowledgement by the whole Russian people being necessarily deferred to an indefinite future. For non-Russians, however, it is his broader significance that is of interest.

Up to this time, one might say, St. John has belonged to the Orthodox Russian people; but now, while remaining the spiritual patron of the suffering Russian people, he has become a Saint of the universal Orthodox Church of Christ, and his holy example of a life in Christ has been held up for the whole world to see. It is no accident that his canonization has taken place outside of Russia; he himself foresaw that the Russian people would be dispersed abroad and that Orthodox churches would be erected throughout the world as a testimony of Christian Truth before the unbelieving world. To this unbelieving world, in all the languages in which his words have been and will yet be translated, he now speaks the same message that he spoke to the Russian people in his own lifetime. This world, with its imposing outward structure that makes it seem to some so secure, is actually tottering, its foundation rotting away from the self-love and unbelief with which even those who think to defend it are filled. Its fall is at hand, and the same beast of godless Communism that once swallowed the holy Russian land now stands ready to devour the rest of the world and, completing now what it began then, to exterminate the last Christians and lead apostate humanity in its worship of Antichrist.

This, perhaps, is what lies before us if we do not return to the path of righteous Christian life. There are many who would object that



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such thoughts, as well as thoughts of the Second Coming of Christ and the terrible Last Judgement, which St. John believed might well be at hand, are too "negative". But if our response to these thoughts and warnings is right, if it is Christian, we will be filled, not with fear and terror, but with tearful repentance, with zeal to lead a truly Christian life, with trust in our Lord Who is with us in all our trials, even to martyrdom itself (and especially then), and with fervent hope in the Kingdom of Heaven which is our true home, and no mere earthly dwelling.

It is to nothing but simple and profound Christian faith that St. John recalls us. In an age when too many pastors preach a "new Christianity" that is only worldliness in disguise, his is a rare and much needed voice -- not for Russians alone, not for Orthodox Christians alone, but for the whole world, if it will but listen.

Holy Saint of Christ, John of Kronstadt, pray to God for us.

*Eugene Rose.*

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*The second issue of The Orthodox Word will contain more detailed information on St. John and his canonization. At present the following books by and about him are available in English:*

*My Life in Christ, vol. II, 320 pp., \$2.50.*

*D. A. Arapova, Life of Father John of Kronstadt, illus., 26 pp., \$ .50.*

*The standard icon of St. John is available in three sizes, all in color:*

*6½x9½ in., \$1.50.*

*4½x6½ in., .75.*

*2x3 in., plastic-coated, .35.*

*All of these may be obtained from Orthodox Christian Books and Icons.*



# ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

## PERSECUTION OF RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION

*It is difficult for us in the free world even to conceive under what conditions believers live behind the Iron Curtain. But those who are being persecuted and martyred by the Communist regime are our brothers in faith, and we cannot close our eyes to their sufferings; more, it is our duty to find out and make known the privations, indeed the tortures and deaths they are undergoing for the Orthodox Faith. Almost unknown to the world a new and fierce persecution, rivalling those of the '20s and '30s, was undertaken by the Soviet power in 1959. The Orthodox Word will make it a policy to present information on this persecution as well as lives of the earlier martyrs of this century. The following news item, translated in full from the San Francisco newspaper Russian Life (Sept. 17, 1964), will serve without comment as an introduction to a martyrology of the 20th century.*

### CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL BLOWN UP IN MOSCOW

Frankfurt-am-Main, Sept. 16.--

The information division of the NTS informs that according to intelligence received from Moscow, at 4 a.m. on July 11 of this year the church dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul in Moscow was blown up.

The Soviet authorities, according to this communication, had long been eyeing this church in Moscow, but as long as the parish was headed by the energetic rector Archpriest Sergy, they undertook no decisive measures. At the beginning of summer Fr. Sergy fell ill. He was placed in a hospital, where he died early in July. Immediately after the death of the rector the church was closed by order of the Soviet authorities.

On July 10 the rumor went through Moscow that the church was going to be blown up at night. Towards evening believers began to gather at the church. The whole district was surrounded by troops, but believers broke through the cordon of the militia and filled up the whole square in front of the church.

Eyewitnesses assert that at least six to seven thousand believers had gathered. As a further measure, the church itself was surrounded by troops, but a small group of believers succeeded in forcing their way into the church. In this group there were twelve people.

The militia attempted to remove the believers from the church, but they refused to leave. At the door of the church



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there was an argument with the militia. One woman brought out a pamphlet of Soviet laws and told the militia that it had no right to blow up the church. One of the members of the militia was heard by the crowd to shout in reply: "To us everything is permitted! If you want, stay here. With you or without you--all the same we're going to blow up the church!"

Exactly at 4 a.m. on July 11 the explosion went off and the church collapsed. A

large number of those who were present at the square have attested the fact that at the time of the explosion the believers were in the church praying, and all were killed.

*Ed note: The church referred to is the one that was located on the Square of the Transfiguration. It is not mentioned in the article whether this Soviet atrocity was deliberately planned to occur the day before the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (and of the church) -- July 12 (June 29, OS).*

## FIRST FRENCH ORTHODOX BISHOP

The Orthodox Catholic Church of France received its first bishop in a service in the Russian Cathedral in San Francisco on November 11, 1964. The head of the French Church, the Rev. Evgraph Kovalevsky, was consecrated during the Divine Liturgy by His Eminence Archbishop John (Maximovich) of San Francisco and Western America, and His Eminence Bishop Theophilos of the Roumanian Orthodox Church in Exile.

The French Orthodox Church, which entered the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in 1959 while Archbishop John was Archbishop of Brussels and Western Europe, is nonetheless purely French and completely distinct from Russian parishes in

France. The new bishop is the only Russian among its clergy. All services are in French and in the Western Rite. There are at present 20 parishes, the largest in Paris, and about 5000 members.

Fr. Evgraph, who was accompanied to San Francisco by two French priests and several laymen, received, according to French custom, a double name at his consecration: Jean-Nectaire, after two recently-canonized saints, the Russian St. John of Kronstadt (d. 1908), and the Greek St. Nectarios of Pentapolis (d. 1920).

By a ukase of Oct. 17 (30), 1964, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church entrusted in Archbishop John future care of the French Church and all other Churches of the Western Rite.





## BISHOP INNOCENT

**BISHOP INNOCENT**, founder of American Orthodoxy. By Procius Yasuo Ushimaru. 44 pp. (Metropolitan Council Publications Committee. Bridgeport, Conn. 1964).

If Fr. Herman of Alaska was to America what the Apostles Andrew the First

called, Peter, and John the Theologian were to Christendom as a whole, then Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow could rightly be called the St. Paul of America. His work on this continent is as good a model as any of the true missionary spirit. His significance continues to be immense even to this day; but despite the fact that one can not imagine the history of Orthodoxy in America without him, up to now there has actually been no literature on



## NEW BOOKS

him in English. Thanks to a young Orthodox Japanese priest, at least a brief biographical account has now been made available, and we highly recommend it to all who know little about this important Church Father of the 19th century who was one of the greatest missionaries of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The main accomplishments of his life may be briefly set forth. Brought up in Irkutsk under the heavenly protection of St. Innocent of that city, he went as a young man in 1824 to Alaska as a missionary, taking with him wife, mother, and children. Settling in Unalaska, he built all by himself a house for his family and a church. He studied the local languages, compiled an Aleutian alphabet and grammar, and himself wrote the first work to appear in the Aleutian language. He translated the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Divine Liturgy, and a short catechism into Aleutian. His geographical, ethnographic, and social descriptions of the islands are considered very valuable. An able educator, he opened a missionary school with a dormitory for 300 boys and taught not only grammar and Divine Law, but various crafts as well. He was also a physician to the local populace. When he became a bishop in Sitka, he founded a seminary and personally administered it for the nine years he was there. As an archbishop in Siberia he travelled thousands of miles under extremely difficult conditions in the performance of

his pastoral duties. Finally, in 1868 he was elected the successor of the famous Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, and in this post reorganized the Orthodox Missionary Society, which operated with conspicuous success until 1917.

It seems, at first sight, a curious fact that the work of education and enlightenment of such a great man should have passed into such apparent oblivion and not been continued by his immediate successors; but the explanation of this is actually quite simple. His work, like all the missionary activity of the Russian Church, was directed to the conversion of the pagan inhabitants of the Russian land, *i e.*, those who had never known Christ; that was Russia's sacred mission and the real reason for the growth of the Empire. The people he educated were Aleuts and Indians who, with the sale of Alaska to the United States, were to be engulfed by an entirely different cultural heritage--the 19th-century Anglo-Saxon. The episcopal see was moved in 1872 to San Francisco, and in 1905 to New York, and during this time when the Church found itself in an English-speaking environment there was no missionary undertaking in the least resembling that of Bishop Innocent. By an article inserted at the insistence of Bishop Innocent into the agreement whereby Alaska was sold, all Church property remained in the possession of the Russian Church, and a decision of the Holy Synod provided one



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per cent of the purchase price yearly (\$72000) as financial support for the Church in America; nonetheless, effective contact with the mother country was broken off and a new chapter was begun in the Orthodox mission to America. Metropolitan Innocent remained a model of inspiration and encouragement, but a new problem presented itself to the Orthodox missionary in America: the preaching of an Orthodox Christian message among non-Orthodox Christians. The Orthodox position in this new environment became uncertain. The clergy became rather emigrants than missionaries, and the process of Americanization--*i.e.*, assimilation by the non-Orthodox environment--automatically opposed the spread of Orthodoxy. Attempts were made to use English more widely in Church services, especially while the future Patriarch Tikhon was head of the Orthodox Church in America, but the work required too much time and conditions were not favorable. Then the Revolution in Russia introduced complications into Church life in America from which Orthodoxy has not recovered to this day.

Turning back to the book that names Metropolitan Innocent in its title "the founder of American Orthodoxy", one can hardly agree with this assertion. He never had the opportunity to plant the seeds of Orthodox Truth in the ground of Anglo-Saxon America, as the foreword would lead one to believe. Father Her-

man might be taken as the symbolic founder of American Orthodoxy in general, since his example is purely a spiritual one and he lives on in the hearts of praying Christians and in the life of the Church as She chants, "a righteous man lives forever." Metropolitan Innocent's labors, on the other hand, were in the practical realm of religious education directed to one small group of Americans; in this sense he might be called the founder of Alaskan or Aleutian Orthodoxy (which, incidentally, has since not enjoyed the attention and love he devoted to it and has in fact been sadly neglected). Orthodoxy in America today has no founder in this practical sense as had, to take another nearby example, Japanese Orthodoxy in the person of the great missionary Nicholas Kassatkin; it rather has taken shape under the influence of historical vicissitudes.

All of these reflections lead up to a single question which many Orthodox in this country, probably, have already asked themselves: what is the purpose and goal of Orthodoxy in America, what is its reason for being? Lacking the direction and example supplied by a literal founder, where is American Orthodoxy to find its inspiration and guide for the future?

To reason in this way is, perhaps, to make the situation more complicated than it actually is. It is true enough that the physical, and even more the psychological, conditions and obstacles facing



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the Orthodox missionary in America today are quite different from those Bishop Innocent faced a century ago. The Christian life, however, has not changed. In his book, *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven*, written in 1833 and since translated into many languages, Bishop Innocent set forth the basic principles of the Christian life, emphasizing especially the carrying of one's cross in the daily toil of a life oriented not to oneself but to Christ. This is an aspect of Christianity not often emphasized today, but it is precisely that without which there is no Christianity at all.

Caught between the ever-increasing world anarchy and anti-Christianity that herald the approach of the lawless Antichrist, and the pointless optimism of an ecumenism that only uses Christianity for its own extraneous ends, all who would be faithful to the Lord in these perilous times must return to this unromantic but absolutely central message of Christian living. Bishop Innocent, resourceful as he was, would no doubt have skillfully utilized or devised means appropriate to our time with which to make

this message alive for men today; and we who follow him, even with our poor means, have still the same message to preach.

Our inspiration, our guide, our missionary purpose as Orthodox Christians in America, -- are nothing but life in Christ. Divine Providence has dispersed Orthodox Christians throughout the world, not by chance, but to be witnesses of Christian Truth and examples of Christian life. In our day when very little organized missionary activity exists as such, every Orthodox Christian becomes a missionary to those among whom he lives. Our very existence in a non-Orthodox land is a missionary witness; we are each of us responsible for carrying on, in some small way, that part of the labors of Bishop Innocent which is not regional but universal, because it concerns personal holiness. May every Orthodox Christian in America reflect well on this!

*Gleb Podmoshensky.*

*The booklet reviewed here may be purchased from Orthodox Christian Books & Icons for 40 cents.*



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