

Prayers offered for Guardsmen who may go to Persian Gulf



Participating in the service are, from left, John Oyaluk, Pete Suskuk, Anushka Ishnook and Father Joseph Kreta.

KODIAK — Five National Guardsmen from the village of Koliganek on the Nushagak River who are facing the possibility of being sent to the Persian Gulf at any time, were prayed for recently during a Molieben (prayer) service led by Bishop Gregory of Alaska.

One of the Guardsmen, Anushka Ishnook, is a former student of St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak. Other Guardsmen included Tom Hiratsuka, John Oyaluk, Moxie Oyaluk and Peter Suskuk.

The service was held at St. Michael the Archangel Chapel, Koliganek, during the Alaska Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America's Nushagak River Conference.

Also participating in the service were Father Joseph Kreta, chancellor of the diocese and dean of St. Herman's Seminary, and clergy from the Yukon/Kuskokwim and Nushagak areas, all of whom are graduates of St. Herman's Theological Seminary.

Services were also held at St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church in Dillingham and St. Sergius Orthodox Church in New Stuyahok.

Chris Meholic, registrar at St. Herman's, who accompanied the clergy, recruited seven students from Nushagak River villages. Meholic, who comes from Pennsylvania, said this conference, as well as those on the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers and Lake Iliamna, showed her the "incomparable hospitality" of the Alaskan people.

"The door is always open. Tables overflowed with food," she said.

At each village, the visitors were greeted warmly by a crowd of people, she said. In Koliganek they waited patiently for the clergy who traveled from New Stuyahok on a plane that was over two hours late.

Meholic made the trip on a skiff operated by Evan Chunak, former student of St. Herman's Seminary.

"The ride was beautiful," she said, noting that people in a skiff behind them slowed to pet caribou as they crossed the river.

At the Kuskokwim River conference in Kasigluk, seminarian Sergie Active and St. Herman's alumnus Victor Nick were ordained into the diaconate. Graduate Seraphim Rohlman, was ordained into the priesthood at the Iliamna conference in Nondalton.