



Many celebrations are being planned to mark the Bicentennial of St. Paul Island, including the 15th annual Diocesan Assembly Sept. 17-21. See story, page 9.

Tundra Times file photo

St. Paul plans historic service

by Father George Pletnikoff
for the Tundra Times

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church of St. Paul Island will be the host parish of the Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and Alaska during its 15th annual Diocesan Assembly Sept. 17-21.

This year is also the 200th year of the founding of St. Paul Island, around which many celebrations are being planned to celebrate the Bicentennial of St. Paul.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius, primate of the Orthodox Church in America, His Grace Gregory, the Bishop of Sitka and Alaska and the 32 Reverend Fathers serving the 84 Orthodox parishes of this diocese and many faithful are to convene on St. Paul Island to worship, celebrate and meet in this historic occasion, the first of its kind ever to be held on the Pribilofs.

The agenda is fully laden with parish reports, workshops and plans for church growth. The theme of this assembly is *Evangelization*.

The Aleuts and the Pribilofs are not only celebrating 200 years of the founding and settling of St. Paul Island, but also 200 years of Christianity as well.

St. Paul Island has the unique



distinctions of not only being the largest *Unungen* — the name the Aleuts called themselves prior to Russian contact — settlement in the world, but also the only community within the United States to be celebrating its Bicentennial with the U.S. Constitution.

Legend also has it that the Aleuts of the Aleutians also knew of the existence of the Pribilof Islands prior to the Russian fur traders, when Igadik, the son of the Unimak Island chief spent a season here on Amiq, the seal islands of the north.

The Aleuts could not subsist on these islands year-round so they chose not to make permanent settlements here.

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The history of the Pribilofs has been filled with many difficult and trying times. However, today we are a group of people who have a great deal to be thankful for. Our heritage is one built on the common good for all with great understanding and respect for our environment and the ways which our elders taught.

Anyone who wishes to take part in this historic celebration is encouraged to contact: Father George Pletnikoff, Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, P.O. Box 46, St. Paul 99660; telephone, 546-2383.

Travel will be through Reeve Aleutian Airways, which has served the Pribilofs and the Aleutians faithfully for 45 years. The cost of this trip has been kept at a low rate of \$250 round-trip — Anchorage-St. Paul-Anchorage — with hotel and meals extra.