

St. Herman's Seminary joins in crowning event.

by Mike Rostad

Students at St. Herman's Seminary joined Orthodox faithful from throughout the state to celebrate the crowning event of the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America. Father Yakov Netsvetov, the Russian/Aleut priest who evangelized the Natives of the Aleutians and the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions, was canonized in elaborate services at the new St. Innocent Bicentennial Cathedral in Anchorage last October. During that weekend, the Cathedral was consecrated.

For John Peck, a freshman from Michigan, the canonization was "definitely the most magnificent spectacle" he's ever attended, he says. "The whole church came together for this event; hierarchies and priests from all over. People from all over Alaska came to-

gether for one purpose, singing the same songs."

Robert Poquiz, a freshman from Sitka, says that "it was a very special and blessed event to be a part of."

Says Ivan Gumlickpuk, a third

year student from New Stuyahok on the Nushagak River, "It was an experience I'll never forget."

The consecration of St. Innocent's Cathedral was also very memorable for Gumlickpuk. "It was the first time I got to see



Father Martin Nicolai of Kwethluk, directs choir which sings in Yup'ik Eskimo at the canonization.

Photo by Mike Rostad



Seminarian, Steven Ephook, displays one of the items sold at a student bake sale

Photo by Mike Rostad

an altar washed and cleansed."

"It was impressive to see many priests from Alaska," notes St. Herman's Patristic professor, Joost van Rossum. "Many of them were students of St. Herman's Seminary."

Obedying that teacher impulse to make a point, van Rossum adds, "The Church doesn't make saints, it only recognizes them. There are many saints that we don't know about."

Yakov Netsvetov could have

easily been one of them. Orthodox faithful believe that it wasn't sheer accident that 20 years ago, Bishop Gregory of Alaska and Father Joseph Kreta, dean of the Seminary, came across Netsvetov's journals in a church attic at Russian Mission.

They pulled the documents out of obscurity and Dr. Lydia Black of the University of Alaska (Fairbanks) translated them into English. Father Michael Oleksa, former priest of Old Harbor, served on the committee which recommended canonization of Fr. Netsvetov.

Being a part of the services in Anchorage has been a dream of many seminarians ever since the forthcoming canonization was announced. At the beginning of the school year, students planned a number of fundraising activities to help pay for their trip to Anchorage. Under the direction of Mathushka Margaret Zabinko of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, they put on a bake sale which netted over \$2,000.