

Father Oleksa talks at St. Mary's H.S.

Father Michael Oleksa, a Russian Orthodox priest and a professor at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, recently spoke at St. Mary's Catholic High School.

Sponsored by the school's Upward Bound program, Fr.

Oleksa spoke to all the students and staff about the "Integration of Alaska Native Values and Christianity." He traced the similarities in both the Native Alaskan and the Christian heritages. He explained how each completes

the other and challenged his listeners to think about how they live out their own values in the context of their culture and their Christian beliefs.

He spoke with the senior class on the importance of their taking leadership positions in

the coming years. He presented the early historical achievements of Native Alaskans in mapping present day Alaska and in keeping journals of historical importance. He then discussed the importance of moving out of the "depen-

dence cycle" wherein people can allow others to do things for them—often leading to poor self-image and violence.

He encouraged them to go for further education or training so that they may take on the many influential positions; they can and should replace the "outside" experts; they can control their own lives.