

Archpriest Joseph P. Kreta Honored at Dinner



Father Joseph Kreta and Matushka Marie

By IONE NORTON

"Always be on top of everything that happens in your parish. To be a good administrator as well as a good priest; it is your duty to find out all that is

going on." This was the advice Father Joseph Kreta gave to his son, newly ordained Father Deacon Peter Kreta.

But on June 1st, Father Joseph did not know what was coming off in his own parish as

he appeared with His Grace, Bishop Gregory, of Sitka and Alaska at the Elk's Hall to attend a "dinner for the Diocesan Council." Only to be met by a banquet hall full of parishoners, dignitaries, priests, visitors, well wishers and family for a celebration of his 25th anniversary of his life as a priest. The Parish Council and St. Herman's Sisterhood made up of lay members of the Holy Resurrection Church had managed to keep the whole banquet celebration a complete secret from Father Joseph and Matushka Marie until the very opening of the banquet.

In attendance for the celebration were His Grace, Bishop Gregory, Father Joseph's family including his charming and gracious Matushka Marie; his mother, Matushka Anna Kreta from Phoenix, Arizona; his eldest son, Father Deacon Peter Kreta with his Matushka twin sons, Stephen from the California Maritime Academy and John from the University of Alaska, his daughter, Maria, a sophomore at Kodiak High School and a member of the track and basketball teams.

Father Paul Merculief acting as master of ceremonies made the introductions presenting His Grace, Bishop Gregory, family members, members of the Kodiak Parish Council--Joe Heitman, Ione Norton, Thomas Frost, Anne Koppang, Zack Chichenoff, and Kalumpi Kapshon, plus the officers of the St. Herman's Sisterhood, Anne Koppang, Presidents; Feckla rokin, Justine Hartman, and Phyllis Sholl.

Seated as guests of honor were members of the Diocesan Council, Archpriest Nicholas Harris of Anchorage, Father Michael Lestenkoff of St. Paul Island, Mr. Tomas Young of

Sitka, Peter Bourdokofsky of Anchorage, and others, Father Theodore Fryntzko of Juneau, Father Yahov and Matushka Daria Parsells of Ouzinkie, Father John and Elena of St. Herman's Seminary and Father Paul's Matushka Elizabeth.

Bishop Gregory, on behalf of the Bishops of the Holy Synnod gave Father Joseph a gramata--a certificate for

recognition of his labors and services to the Orthodox Church. Archpriest Nicholas Harris expressed the brotherly love of the Diocesan Council and all clergy with a gift and Peter Bourdokofsky of Anchorage also presented one on behalf of the Anchorage parish as did Thomas Young of Sitka. Representing and expressing the love and

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gratitude of Father Joseph's flock of Kodiak was Ione Norton, Parish Council member who presented him with an Alaskan jade cross featuring a gold crucifix and gold nuggets and to both Father Joseph and Matushka Marie, a plaque, made by Roger Page, showing the five churches they have served in the past twenty years with an inscription commemorating the dates of their labors. Speaking for the Kreta family was their son, newly ordained Father Deacon Peter, affectionately referred to by Bishop Gregory on many occasions as

"The Cathedral Kid". Father Deacon Peter gave a resume of their family life in the church and touchingly closed his talk by stating "Dad-our gift to you is all our love."

Father Joseph first came to Alaska in May of 1972 as Administrator of the Diocese when Alaska was without a Bishop and his dream of his original petition to come to Alaska finally materialized when he and his family arrived in Sitka in August of 1972. He has been instrumental in his work in the Diocese and was given recognition for his many works in the church, some of them being; establishment of the Diocesan Council, rebirth of the building program of St. Michael's Cathedral, re-establishment of relationship with the historical societies, the building of St. Herman's Seminary, visitations to many parishes that have not seen a priest in years, re-enactment of the ceremony of the lowering of the Russian flag and raising of the American One, growth and flourishing of life in many parishes and recently as ap-

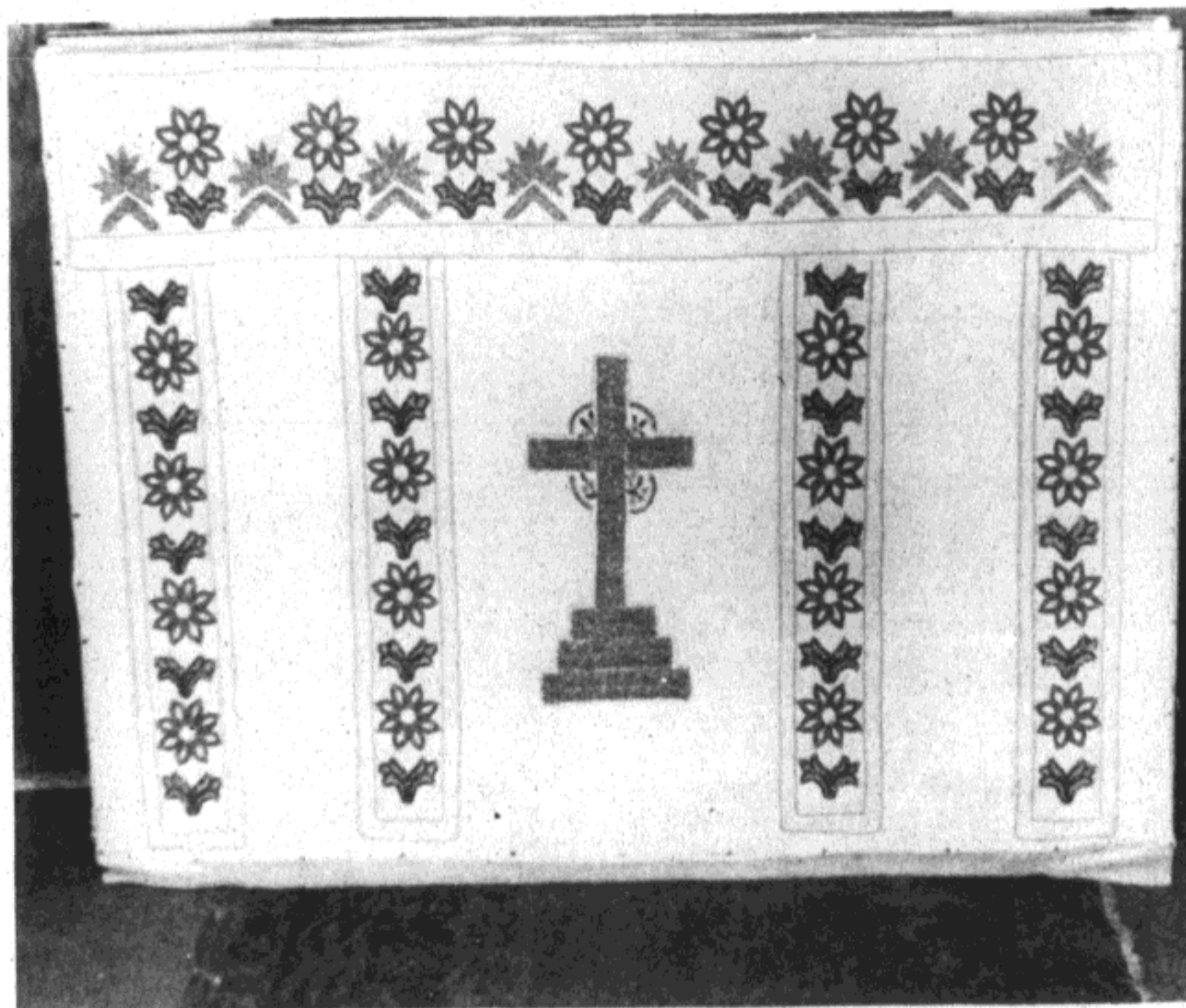
pointed by Governor Hammond to the State Records and Historic Commission. He also conducted a complete survey of all churches and properties in Alaska a task that was very time consuming.

Father Joseph's family has the distinction of having three Matushkas, his mother,

Matushka Anna Kreta; his wife, Matushka Marie; and his daughter-in-law Matushka Marilyn. In the Orthodox Church, Matushka is an affectionate term meaning "little mother" and the faithful always address clergymen's wives as such.

Father Joseph is the Spiritual Father of the faithful of the

Holy Resurrection Orthodox church in Kodiak, the place that has the distinction of being "The cradle of Orthodoxy" and also the place of repose of the relics of our Blessed Father Herman of Alaska. He is also the Chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska and Dean of St. Herman's Seminary.



BEADED ALTERPIECE--Fairbanks Native Association Project NOW students recently visiting Old Crow in Yukon Territory were impressed with the beautifully beaded alterpiece made by the women of the Anglican Church.

--Nadine Obrien Photo