



PILGRIMS STRAIN to place the cross in its upright position atop Mount Herman

Yearly Pilgrimage to Kodiak

Since 1970 when the monk Herman (one of the original band of missionaries to bring Christianity to the shores of Alaska in 1794), was canonized by the Orthodox Church in America as Saint Herman of Alaska, there has been a yearly pilgrimage on August 7, 8 and 9 to Kodiak and Spruce Island where Father Herman lived.

Local tradition has it that years ago a cross stood at the summit of Mount Herman on Spruce Island; and over the past two years several attempts, spurred by Archpriest Joseph P. Kreta of Kodiak have been made to place a cross there again.

During this year's St. Herman Pilgrimage the effort at last succeeded. A 25 foot high, three-barred cross, made of spruce logs by villagers of Port Lions and weighing half a ton, was secured into its upright position by pilgrims atop the mountain from where it can now be seen for miles around and will serve as a landmark for boats and planes in the Kodiak area.

The cross was originally brought from Port Lions to Kodiak by ferry, and in July a combined effort of ERA helicopters and the Shell Oil Co. attempted to bring the cross from Kodiak to Mount Herman — only to find that the cross was too heavy and could not be lifted

by the helicopter at hand.

Then, on August 5, the U. S. Coast Guard, true to its tradition of "coming to the rescue" undertook the project presenting the people of Kodiak with an awesome spectacle: the majestic cross swinging and tossing from the helicopter over the city on its way to Mount Herman.

On August 8 over a hundred pilgrims reached the summit after an arduous climb of three hours, led by His Grace, Gregory, Bishop of Sitka and Alaska. The ascent was punctuated by halts during which portions of the Akathist (prayer service) to Saint Herman were sung by clergy and faithful together.

The youngest pilgrim to reach the top was 2 year old Sarah Culhane of Anchorage, and the eldest was the Rev. Ellary Gromof, 74, pastor of St. George Orthodox Church on St. George Island in the Pribilofs.

With the concerted effort of the pilgrims the cross was lifted, eased into its erect position and secured with guide wires and concrete prepared on the spot.

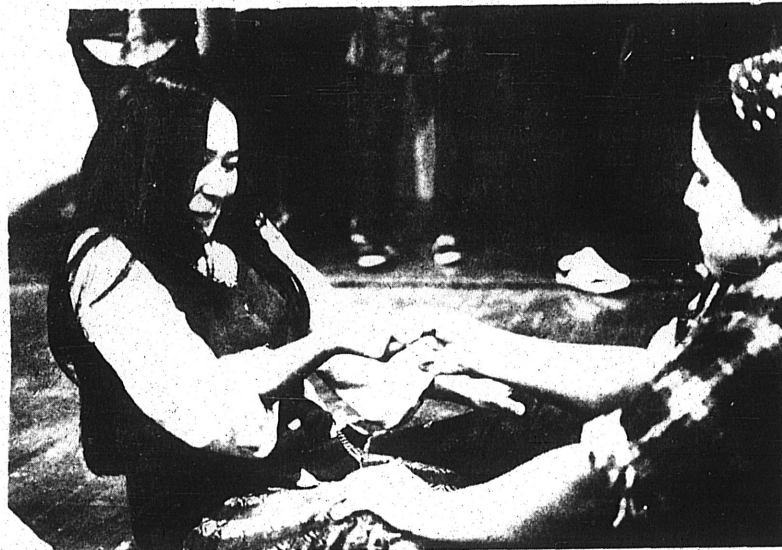
Following the descent, the pilgrims stopped at Monk's Lagoon, the site of St. Herman's hermitage, where services were held in the Chapel of SS. Herman and Sergius of Valaam.

Then they returned by fishing boat to Kodiak for evening

services at the Holy Resurrection Church where the relics of St. Herman today repose.

The pilgrimage ended the following day, August 9, St. Herman's Feast Day with a Divine Liturgy.

The Liturgy was marked by two special events: Bishop Gregory ordained Father Eugene Burdoukowsky, a native of St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, to the priesthood of the Orthodox Church and ground was broken for the new buildings of Saint Herman's Pastoral School, the theological school operated by the Orthodox Church in Alaska.



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