

# BISHOP THEODOSIUS ADOPTED BY TLINGITS



**MRS. JAMES ADOPTS BISHOP**—Mrs. Scotty James is talking with His Grace Bishop Theodosius of Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, Diocese of Sitka and Alaska at Sitka. In adopting Bishop Theodosius, Mrs. James spoke in Tlingit which was translated into English by one of her grandsons, Mark Jacobs, Jr. The event has been labeled as truly a historic one since it was the first of its kind ever conferred.

—JONES PHOTOS Photograph

Bishop Theodosius was adopted by Mrs. Scotty James in an impressive ceremony Sunday, May 3, 1970, at the ANB Hall in Sitka.

Following a banquet served to about 150 persons by Mrs. James' family, speeches were given and greetings exchanged. Mrs. James spoke at some length about the history of the name given to the Bishop — "Guh-Naylth," which had belonged to her grandfather. Mrs. James spoke in Tlingit. Her address was translated by one of her grandsons, Mark Jacobs, Jr., of Sitka.

In responding to Mrs. James speech, Bishop Theodosius recalled the Old Testament figure of Saint Ruth, who left her own people and became a member of a new people. His Grace noted that he felt as Saint Ruth had felt, and considered himself one with the native people of Alaska who compose the majority of his flock.

His Grace went on to note the aptness of Guh-Naylth's role among the Tlinget peoples as an ambassador — His Grace had barely returned from a diplomatic journey to Russia where he had attended the funeral of His Holiness, Patriarch Alexis, the primate of the Orthodox Church in America. And within a few days His Grace was to return to Russia, this time to lead the

tion in difficult times.

"During the disastrous fire of 1966 which destroyed most of Sitka's business district, our Church was also destroyed. It was a terrible experience to realize that the place of worship which we could remember from our childhood had gone up in smoke. A heavy depression set in over our souls and we were at a loss as to what to do. It was during those difficult days that we were notified of the coming of a new Bishop in the near future. This good news gladdened us, and was the source of renewed courage. Our morale was greatly improved.

"After his arrival, our new Bishop Theodosius told us that our Church would be rebuilt as it had been before, and that, as a beginning, a basement would be completed. When this became a reality we were overjoyed to again have a place of worship. When the Bishop arrived it was suggested that he be given an appropriate Indian name.

"Such an occasion is not loosely handled, nor is the name chosen carelessly. The name must have value, and considerable sentimental feeling. It also has a history and is part of some great historical event. After careful thinking and much soul-searching for more than a year, my thoughts went back to my dear grandfather who was born in Chilkat country in the village of Klukwan.

"Grandfather was taught and trained in accordance with Indian customs by the Kogwanton Tribe. With this training he grew strong and energetic and became very wise. His wise sayings and philosophy were often the solutions to some perplexing situations. Often they were vital to the maintenance of peace and harmony.

"Because of this unique gift of wisdom, he was usually called upon as a messenger or ambassador, or was given some diplomatic instructions when the situation was urgent. After being informed about the situation, the rest was left to him to select appropriate words. He never failed to achieve the desired result.

"Even in some of the most unpleasant situations, the outcome would usually be joyful.

"Such a man was Guh-Naylth

and his reputation was widely known.

"There was a trail along the river from Chilkat to Klukwan that was in constant use. Eventually it was noticed that someone had carved out wooden dippers, called 'shee'n' in the Tlingit language, and placed them in strategic locations for use by thirsty travelers. Though this is an act which overcame a minor inconvenience — stooping down to drink the water — some one mentioned how thoughtful someone had been to go to this extra effort for the comfort of others.

"The question was raised, who is this kindly person doing this good work? The answer could not be concealed. It had been the thoughtfulness of Guh-

Naylth. Certainly only a man with Guh-Naylth's character would have taken the pains to do this.

"Since his good works were many, the Elders and leaders of Klukwan applauded him according to Tlingit custom with a great expression, 'Ah-Ho Guh-Naylth-Uh'. He has been the salvation to Klukwan and so now, in like manner, our Bishop Theodosius is the source of salvation for Sitka.

"And so, with a feeling of deep gratitude, I give the name of my grandfather to Bishop Theodosius: Guh-Naylth-Uh; Guh-Naylth-Uh. The emphasis -Uh indicates 'real', 'genuine', 'authentic.' Synonyms for Guh-Naylth are 'savior', 'messenger', 'rescuer', 'ambassador', 'refuge.'



**ADOPTED GRANDDAUGHTER**—After being adopted into the Tlingit Indian Tribe, Bishop Theodosius is welcomed by one of his granddaughters. —JONES PHOTOS Photograph

American delegation which will receive the papers granting full independence to the Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada from the Church in Russia.

His Grace noted the deep respect which the Russian Orthodox Church had always held for the native languages and cultures of Alaska, and hoped that he would prove a worthy heir to both that Russian Orthodox tradition and also of the name and memory of the great Tlingit statesman, Guh-Naylth.

Following this, John Dapcevic, who represented the Mayor of Sitka, extended his greetings members of Mrs. James' immediate family followed with words of welcome, and members of the community address their own remarks — Chief Alex Andrews, Charlie Dick, Parish Council member Emeritus at St. Michael's Cathedral.

Mrs. James presented the new Guh-Naylth with Tlinget objects carved by the distinguished artist, Peter Nielsen, member of the Cathedral choir; and a beautifully painted statue of a Tlingit leader in ceremonial dress.

The Master of Ceremonies for the occasion was William Brady "Guh-Naylth is a name belonging to the Chookah-Nadi Tribe. the name has become a password for solutions to hard problems, and also a means of salva-