



THE GOOD SEEDS

SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
-ESTABLISHED IN 1991-
62 HARVARD AVENUE, ALLSTON, MA, 02134

“From this day, from this hour, from this moment, let us strive to
love God and fulfill His Holy Will”

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From the Desk of the Headmaster...

The Weight Bearing Pillars of Education: The Church, the Home, and the School

By Father Patrick Tishel
Headmaster

Years ago I lived in a house that was undergoing renovations. The brunt of the work focused on creating more space, and by the end of the project the workers had enlarged many of the rooms, giving the house a seemingly new and improved flare. Yet, to their horror, as one of the workers bounded up the stairs to the second floor, the house began to sway back and forth. It so happened that they had taken down certain walls that bore the weight of the structure. Without these walls in place, the house lost its strong foundation and was affected by the slightest movement. It is clear in all "construction" projects that all of the "finish" work must be done after the house has been furnished with strong, weight-bearing pillars. The same must be true in a Child's formation. If the educational foundation is not in place, then all of the knowledge gained in specialized disciplines will be for naught. Often parents assume that such a foundation is simply found in school—in *any* school. Yet as a foundation affects the *entire* house and not merely certain sections, it is clear that the foundation must include all areas of life. For this reason the three weight-bearing pillars of a Child's education are primarily the Church, the Home and the School. If we begin to see these divinely ordained institutions as rich fountains of wisdom and grace, flowing with the living water of Truth then we will expect of them *unity* and *cooperation* in the midst of their particular functions. Instead, given the secularization of curricula in schools, busy home lives and minimal church attendance, we are left with weakened relationships and an unstable foundation. This discord sows confusion and hampers and deadens the real human potential of education. While there might be a presumption that Church is for Sundays, home is for the evenings, and school is for weekdays, in fact their influences overlap and interconnect. Whatever happens in Church, at home or in school deeply affect each other and the overall education of our children. The winds of varied influences batter against the house of the souls of children today—whether it is from society, from peers, or from powers and principalities. Without a solid foundation in self-knowledge, knowledge of God, Faith and a true understanding of the world, our children will become victims or slaves of false ideas instead of light and salt as they are called to be. (St. Matthew 5:13, 14.)

The role of education must go beyond a mere imparting of facts and skills. Education involves the whole person. We do not simply create wise men and women through memorizing facts. We should ask with T.S. Eliot: “Where is all the knowledge we have lost in information? Our labors should help deliver to the children the provisions God intended for the unique journey of their lives with Christ—their pilgrimage, their contribution, their sacrifice.

The Church is the most prominent and foundational of the three pillars. St. Timothy calls it *the pillar and ground of the truth* (I Tim 3:15). And it is upon this ground and under the umbrella of the Church that the home and school operate. Our life in Christ is founded upon a living faith—a revelation from God delivered

to us by the Son of God Himself When we are baptized into Christ, we become part of His Body—the Church—and are re-planted into new soil. The children (and parents) need to know the fullness of the Faith. They need to know the specifics as well as the generalities, the dogmas as well as the praxis. Piety with knowledge should be the end result—faith and works, knowledge and love.

The rhythm and heart beat of the Church and Home and School is felt through the daily Divine Services. The Divine Services express the ineffable wonder of living in the fearsome, awesome presence of the Living God. The prayers of the Hours and the celebration of the Feasts lead us to understand Christ's life. The Gospel is preached and the heart and mind are given wings to soar to the throne of God. We *learn* to reach for the hem of the Lord's garment. In His Garment we find an indescribable source of Grace, which is transmitted to us by the mere touching of it. This is one form of education. We must teach and encourage the children to breathe in the air of the Church—to stand boldly upon its foundation clad with the full armor of Christ. The home and the family are close to the heart of the Church—the Little Church. This is where the heart of a child is formed, the feeling for prayer, the zeal for the commandments, and the love of God and neighbor in the heart of the child. The love of God is nourished within them while they stand before the icons during morning and evening prayers. The love of neighbor starts with those closest to us. Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters are the first neighbors we are required to love. The exalted life of Heaven dwells within this cave of Bethlehem—the home. The children's future longings, loves and desires are formed here.

The bridge between the home and the Church (and servant of both) is the third pillar—the school. During the Turkish enslavement of Greece, St. Cosmas Aiotola, an apostle and martyr from Mt. Athos, dedicated his entire life to establishing schools throughout Greece. Ignorance, he feared, was a greater yoke of enslavement than political totalitarianism. St. Cosmas claimed that schools would build the church and fill the monasteries. By his tireless efforts, he left a legacy behind that resounded throughout the centuries. Our schools should also build up the churches and monasteries.

The school is a workshop for servants of Christ to enter into human society and make a difference. They have to learn to think, to discern, and to speak intelligently and convincingly in the context of the world—in a language that non-Christians can also understand. Just as a brain surgeon's training must be thorough in their vital work, so too our children must know their faith thoroughly and possess a right understanding of the world. We should all be concerned about our schools, not only because of Columbine-type tragedies, but because of the more insidious precursors of this type of bloodshed—apostasy and ignorance and coldness towards God and neighbor.

We must uphold these three pillars of education—The Church, the Home, the School—in order to fulfill our Lord's command to *suffer the little children to come unto Me*. This means that parents, godparents and pastors need to labor to ensure that all three pillars are in order and ready to support the edifice. Sports and social events have their rightful place, but if we sacrificed as much to make it to the Feasts and vigils as we do to go to soccer game and violin recitals (even on Sunday during Divine Services), the children would see in living color the hierarchy of what *we* valued on their behalf.

Life in the Church should be full. Young people thrive off of intensity and rich experiences. If they do not find it in Church, in the richness and variation of the services, then they will look for it in music, society and relationships. Life at home should be full. If children do not find the Church in the home, then they will never be at home in Church. Draw upon the grace of the Church and let there be warmth and joy at home; and the school, acting as the bridge, should be the servant of the home and the Church by teaching the children the academic subject built upon the first principle of the Logos—the Word. The Light of Christ Illumines All! If the school teaches history, science, language arts in a principled way then they will equip the child with the right understanding of how to walk in Truth in the midst of the world, how to live fully for God in the context of the world—how to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. Christian children must be prepared to be witnesses and apologists, defenders and promoters, students and teachers—obedient yet unbending in the faith. The particular gifts implanted by Christ in their souls and nurtured by the Church, Home and School will then radiate forth *and shine before all men* (St. Matt. 5:16) within their particular vocation.

News from Saint Herman of Alaska School:

- **The Living Flag: The Children** participated in the Living Flag Centennial Event, where they were part of a human flag with other neighborhood school-children. It was wonderful to participate in this community-wide event, and we felt like we were part of the Allston/Brighton Community! We were able to meet some educators in the A/B neighborhood and hear their approach to education and also to share some insights from our perspective. Overall it was a great opportunity for outreach and building community relationships (see picture page). <http://www.townonline.com/allston/homepage/x1624693192>
- **Teo Anastasoai** will be joining the ranks of teachers here at St. Herman's in the fall. He has years of experience in Secondary Education in Romania, as an instructor and student life supervisor. Teo is finishing up his Masters in Theology at Holy Cross Seminary, and is recently married and living in Jamaica Plan, MA.
- **Curriculum Development:** the summer months have seen significant progress in the area of curriculum development. Please pray for continued progress in this vital labor!
- **CSB Grant:** the school is pleased to announce that it received a substantial Grant from Christ the Savior Brotherhood for developing an onsite ESL program and for general development.

Pictures from Saint Herman School:



JUNE 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Staff Development Day. Dinner Theater 7.00 pm	9
10	11	12 Closing Assembly. Final Day for Children's Garden. "Julius Cesar" Play Class II Noon dismissal all classes.	13 Final Day for Upper Classes. Noon dismissal all classes.	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Parent Teacher Confer- ences (drop-ins)	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30