



# 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”

September, 2007  
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The Lord blessed us to start our 17th year at Saint Herman of Alaska Christian School . Offering a Christian foundation in education remains our main focus. The culture of the mind and spirit needs to be in the Spirit in order to have eternal value and to bring Eternity into our midst. Metropolitan Joseph, our beloved hierarch and caretaker in the Lord, blessed the school, staff, students and parents in this holy work.

*“Dear Fr. Patrick,*

*On the occasion of the beginning of the new 17th school year I greet you, the staff and all the students and parents of St. Herman's school.*

*You are a wonderful community of hope, where your students receive perhaps the greatest gift that you could ever give - the gift of extraordinary and excellent education.*

*The education that your students are receiving at St. Herman's school is an extraordinary education, because it is rooted in the inexhaustible wealth of our magnificent Orthodox faith and the invaluable riches of our Orthodox tradition.*

*May the Lord God, through the intercessions of Saint Herman and Saint. Innocent of Alaska, bless all of you and send each of you the wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (acc. James 3:17).*

*With love and prayer in Christ our Saviour,*

*+ Metropolitan Joseph”*

Thank you Dedo Vladika for your good care and unceasingly prayers!

*This is the way the world will end....not with a bang but with a whimper.*

T.S. Eliot

Dear Parents and friends of St. Herman's School,

Everywhere you go, you see Halloween preparations. Since we do not recognize Halloween at school, nor do we encourage the celebration of Halloween. I wanted to explain why so that we can contribute to the conversation which poses the question: *Should Christians participate in Halloween?*

If the marks of the early Christian Church were fidelity to the message of Christ and a critical and discerning spirit, the mark of our times are in contrast a spirit of all-inclusiveness, willingness to accept anything even from other faiths and opposing world-views. When the Lord returns, will he find faith, the Faith that He delivered through His Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection?

Many families I know used to make the best of Halloween and have a non-ghoulish dress-up party for the children, a *positive* Halloween. When they finally became clear about the roots of Halloween they made a clean break with the celebration and decided to celebrate our own day in the Church dedicated to the saint of the day, in this case, St. John of Kronstadt, one of the most celebrated saints of the Russian land.

To critique Halloween is easy. It stems from pagan Druidic practices. Games started as means of divinization. Fallen spirits were called upon to predict future marriages. In Celtic Ireland gatherings were opened with sacrifice to their gods and victims were consumed by fire. Presently Halloween is a real Sabbath for practicing witches and sorcerers. Commercialization has softened the edges and made palatable what might have in the past made Christians recoil.

*Burn incense before the altar of the gods and your life will be spared. Worship our gods or die!*

This was the choice given to our forefathers and mothers in the Faith. Why did so many of them profess the Faith and choose death over false worship? Would we have done the same? There was a collective push towards perfection and a love for Christ that inspired them. Lukewarmness was trampled under the enthusiasm to fully live the Faith. Why should we celebrate a festival of the pagan past from which Christianity freed us? We already proclaimed ourselves in our Baptism when we said: "I renounce satan and all his angels and all his service and all his pride!"

We yearn for collective celebration. This is what Halloween offers us. We can be with our neighbors and meet new friends. We can do something with our children. But is it true that the pagan elements of Halloween have been deactivated and it is now a secular holiday of candy and fun? Maybe, but I think that just as a fruit is connected to the branch; the branch to the

trunk and the trunk to the roots, that Halloween is still connected to its past and by celebrating it we are bringing these elements into our own consciousness and that of our family even in an invisible though noxious way.

We need to honor our own celebrations. The faith of our soul is meant to be expressed in our life and witnessed. Be careful not to be distracted from the clear fresh waters of the Spirit of God and drink from muddy waters.

Halloween isn't the problem, per se. Being lukewarm or having divided allegiance in the face of the Truth is more the problem we face.

Let us be encouraged to take up and participate in the life of the Church and the feasts of Christ and His saints. Orthodoxy is in an unusually isolated situation in America so it is a task that will take more effort but it will be fruitful being rooted in Christ and the Kingdom.

With love in Christ,  
Fr. Patrick

- From the Administrator's Office:

Our 17<sup>th</sup> year at Saint Herman of Alaska School started with the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph and with the prayers for the beginning of instruction for students. Thank you for encouraging us, for sustaining us financially, for helping us by your labors. It would be almost impossible to continue this holy ministry without your support.

Summer was a time of honest reflection. We tried to see which are our strong points and how to develop them even more, but also what we need to correct. We think that is extremely important to be as transparent as possible towards our community of parents and friends. This is why we are working as we speak at finishing the development of our website. You'll be able to find there our mission statement, our curriculum, and our newsletters. Hopefully in a month or so it will be fully functional (thank you Leonid for all your great work, so far). The 2007-2008 educational year brought to life at Saint Herman School two more initiatives that are meant to serve our children and our community: we have hired a private tutor and have the additional help of another tutor from Belmont Public School System for our students with special needs. They will come at least three times per week to work with selective students, helping and guiding them in the educational process. Also thanks to the grant we were given, we are ready to start for the first time in SHAS's history a fully functional ESL program, using both the Rosetta Stone program and other written ESL sources.

During this summer we were able to repaint and clean a number of the classrooms and offices of our school. We plan, if the Lord will bless us, to renovate some of the interior space of the school. It will take work and we hope you will continue to help us as you have been doing.. Thanking you for all your support, we ask you to keep on praying for all of our labors to bring the little children to the Lord as he expects.

- Some Gems from St. Siloan the Athonite

We may study as much as we will but we shall still not come to know the Lord unless we live according to His commandments, for the Lord is not made known through learning but by the Holy Spirit. Many philosophers and scholars have arrived at a belief in the existence of God but they have not come to know God. And we monks apply ourselves day and night to the study of the Lord's command but not all of us by a long way have come to know the Lord, although we believe in Him.

To believe that God exists is one thing, to know God another. (P.354 St. Siloan the Athonite)

Pride is at the root of unbelief. The proud man would acquire things through his mind and his studying, but it is not given to him to learn to know God, in that the Lord reveals Himself only to the lowly in heart...With the mere mind we can only come to know the things of this earth, and then only in part, while God and all that is heaven are known through the Holy Spirit.

Some there are who spend their whole lives trying to find out what there is on the sun or the moon, or in seeking like knowledge, yet this is of no profit to the soul. But if we take pains to explore the human heart, this is what we shall see: The Kingdom of Heaven in the soul of the saint but in the soul of the sinner---darkness and torment.

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## Autumn Greetings in the Season of the Earth's Harvest

Traditionally, the harvest was a sign of God's love, pleasure and plenty. And so it continues to be, even in our modern age. Our Lord truly does sustain us from year to year and if it were not for His mercy and love for us, we would perish. In recognition of our Heavenly Father as the source of our every supply and in honor of the feast of *The Theotokos, She Who Ripens the Grain* (October 15/28), St. Herman's School will be hosting its annual

# Autumn Harvest Festival

Thursday, October 25, 2007

9:30 am – 1:00 pm

The school's Harvest Festival is one of the bright stars of the autumn season and a beloved tradition of the St. Herman's School. We warmly invite your family and friends to join us. May God bless each of us as we rejoice in the fullness of our lives in Christ!

*Dress for the event is your country best – long skirts, overalls, bandanas, flannels, bonnets and straw hats!*

**Out of the mouths of babes(of Saint Herman School’s students):**

- 1. Mr. Theo: “First God created Adam...”  
Alexey: “And he also created a friend for Adam...”  
Luke: “Or at least a wife!”
  
- 2. F.P.: “ Give me an example of a commandment.”  
Dennis” “Honor your father and mother!”  
F.P.: “That’s one of the Ten Commandments!”  
Dennis: “Ten?!?! I thought we have a million commandments!”

**1000 Good Friends**

**In the fall of 2007 we entered our 17th year of providing classical and Christ-centered education for students K-8. Our goal for “1000 Good Friends” is to raise \$15,000. Please help us fulfill this goal to continue the godly labor of Christian education. We need your most generous donation in support of this ministry.**

\_\_\_\$500.00    \_\_\_\$100.00    \_\_\_\$50.00    \_\_\_other(\$\_\_\_\_.\_\_\_\_)

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**Send to: St. Herman of Alaska School**      **My Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Box 627**      **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Allston, MA, 02134**      \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the names of anyone you would like us to remember in our cycle of prayers (indicate living or deceased). Return this list with your check, cash or money order. A receipt for your donation will be sent.

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