



THE GOOD SEEDS

SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
-ESTABLISHED 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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Dear School families,

If you look at the school calendar you will notice the half days and days off at this time of the year, from the beginning of Great Lent through Pascha (Easter) and Bright Week. We have combined some of these days of spiritual and religious significance to coincide with our Spring break. For those new to us this year and as a review for our “old timers,” I want to share with you the tone and Orthodox practices of this holy season.

From ancient times and over the span of history the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord has always been considered the jewel of the Church year. The setting upon which this jewel is placed is Great Lent — the time of preparation. Every significant event in our lives the birth of a child, marriage, a journey over seas, is more often than not preceded by a time of preparation. The more significant the occurrence, the more serious is the preparation. Great Lent is likened to going on a pilgrimage: the journey provides the preparation for the arrival. You could say the same about our earthly life: the journey of our life in this world is the preparation for the arrival — Eternal Life.

Seasons change and the earth is draped with a different garment; so is it also true with the liturgical seasons. The feasts of the liturgical year are similar to seasons in the natural world. God crowned the year with four seasons and each is adorned with a special quality and tone. The change of seasons, both natural and liturgical, appears at St. Herman’s in many ways. Soon you will notice the central icons of Christ and the Mother of God draped in dark (penitential) cloths. Our morning prayers will include devotions particular to Lent. The prayers are a little longer with themes of repentance. In the midst of these prayers are prostrations — an outward sign of an inward striving to humble ourselves before God. With Heaven’s help, this simple physical act brings us to the spiritual sense of humbling ourselves before the ever present, all powerful and all knowing Creator.

Two of the Lenten prayers which are said repeatedly have special importance. One of these is the prayer sung at our Matins vigil: *Open to me the doors of repentance, O life giver* It is a deeply reverent and penitential hymn with which you may hear us open our morning devotions. The other significant prayer we will do each morning was written by St. Ephraim the Syrian, a friend and contemporary of St. Basil the Great (4th Century). His writings and hymns adorn the prayer life of the early Church. His most esteemed composition is this Lenten prayer:

O Lord and master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition and idle-talking give me not. [prostration]

But rather a spirit of chastity, humble mindedness, patience and love bestow upon me Thy servant. [prostration]

Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother, for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. [prostration]

The Apostle Paul instructs us: “Offer up your own body as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, the worship that your reason dictates.” (Rm. 12:1) Great Lent and its many special prayers and practices offer us the time and attention to the very important details of preparing ourselves to partake of the great and glorious Resurrection of Our Lord.

The end of Great Lent brings us to Holy Week (April 21-April 25) which is filled with deeply solemn and beautiful evening services that express the Passion of Christ up to his Crucifixion, Death and Burial. Pascha (Orthodox Easter, April 27 this year) services begin late Saturday evening (April 26) and do not end until almost 4:00 a.m. Sunday morning, bringing us from the empty tomb to the realization of the source of joy for all Christians — He is Risen! Throughout Bright Week (April 28- May 2) we rejoice and celebrate His Resurrection with special services, feasting, and joyous hymns. Divine Liturgy is served each morning (Refer to our schedule www.hrocBoston.org) with the Paschal. All of the many services throughout Great Lent, Holy Week, and Bright Week are deeply moving, ancient in origin, and virtually unchanged. You are invited to attend them as your schedules allow. I can provide you with a calendar of these services if you need one. Please join us!

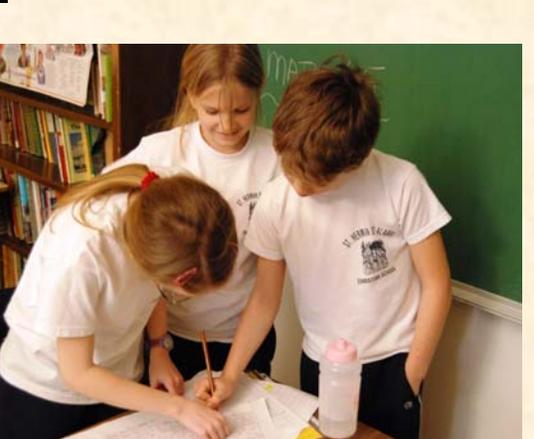
May God bless each of your families on this Lenten journey to the joy of His Resurrection!

Love in Christ

Fr. Patrick.

Our school in pictures







Capturing the Grace of the Day

Rip Van Winkle's sleep reminds us of the fruits of inattention. As he awoke after a 100 year sleep to find everyone he knew gone and life different so too in heedlessness and inattention we lose contact with reality. We should value the moment. St. Herman exhorts us that from this day from this hour from this moment let us love God and strive to do his holy will. We have to be awake in order to capture the grace of the day and not lose the day and the many moments of the day.

Heedfulness, attentiveness, these are blessings that bring us into the awareness of God's presence. One holy priest said: I don't want to have a vision of God or the Lord. I want to rather continue to know that He is with me and within me.

The Lord said we could be His friends giving a very unusual requirement. You are My Friends *if you do everything I tell you*. We are Christians in deed when we care about pleasing Him and being His friend.

Why do we seek special gifts, special circumstances in life. Every circumstance and every day provides ample opportunity to fulfill God's will...*if you do everything I tell you*.

Just as a person's fingerprint is unique, telling us or proclaiming the uniqueness of the person each day is also unique never to appear again for all eternity.

"The Elder [Nektary] also used to say that each day has its own special grace assigned to it. This grace is found in the assigned daily readings of the Gospels, the Epistles, the stichera, and the troparia. The thoughts contained therein are designated for that day as also the daily commemoration of specific saints. This he said is connected with God's Providence assigned for the day." OW #169 1993, p.76

The other part of the day is the opportunities that occur, the people we meet and the experience of the day. *Help me to greet all that this day may bring* (from the prayer of the Optina Elders). If we will be attentive to the occurrences of the day, not so much whether they make us happy or not, but rather to how we respond to them; for we are under obedience to follow the commandments of the Lord; to do that which He commands us; to love God and love our neighbor. But there is more detail and dimension. Read the Gospels and record every command of the Lord...Matt. 4.17- Repent!, the beatitudes and the commands of the Sermon on the Mount, etc.

One winter a young man looked out his window and saw a beautiful cardinal, Perched on a telephone wire in the midst of winter, he sang his piercing song despite the unnatural surroundings. We should be the same. We should be like the cardinal giving voice to gratitude, love, worship, regardless of the surroundings and within the context of our circumstances. The saints are a great example for us of people like ourselves doing this. The saints are the proof and the model of those who lived their lives *to do all that I command you*. We should study their lives and imitate them.

"Just as painters, in working from models, constantly gaze at their exemplar and thus strive to transfer the expression of the original to their own artistry, so too he who is eager to make himself perfect in all kinds of virtue must gaze upon the Lives of the Saints as upon a statue, so to speak, that move and act, and must make their excellence his own by imitation." St. Basil the Great, quoted from **Holiness, Man's Supreme Destiny**, Constantine Cavarnos, Inst. For Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmont, MA p.35

Christian brothers and sisters, the grace of the day is there for us to capture for our own salvation and for the glory of God and His ministries. Let us attend!



Announcements:

- The Home School Association will be meeting for a discussion Thursday, **March 27th (7.00 pm)** at Saint Herman School. As it states in our student handbook, the HSA meetings “*provide a forum for the lively exchange of ideas, information and inspiration*” between home and school, those two great pillars in the education of children. Please make an effort and join us for discussions and a cup of hot tea in the main room of the school. Our expectation is that one parent from each family be in attendance at these meetings. Also, please know that we have excitement news to share with you. We look forward to seeing you Thursday, March 27th !
- Our morning meetings (“*Coffee with the Headmaster*”) continue. Our next meeting is scheduled for **April 10th, 8.00 am to 8.30 am** (please save the date!). We will mainly discuss matters related to education in our present-day secular society along with additional topics. All the families and friends of Saint Herman School are welcomed!
- Also, please **let everyone know** that we are accepting registrations for **2008-2009** school year **K-1 to grade 8**. For CG classes are offered **5 days per week, 8.00 am to 12.00 am** (the children must be **4 years**). For **1st to 8th** grades the schedule is **8.00 am to 2.45 pm, Monday to Thursday**. **Early dismissal** for **grades 1 to 5 , 2.45 pm** dismissal for **grades 6- 8** on Friday.

**I would like to support Saint Herman of Alaska Christian School
with a donation of:**

___\$500.00 ___\$100.00 ___\$50.00 ___other(\$____.____)

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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SCHOOL
-ESTABLISHED 1991-

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April 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Patriot's Day/ Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	22 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	23 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	24 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	25 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	26
27 <u>Holy Pascha</u>	28 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	29 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)	30 Paschal/Spring Break (no classes)			