



## Submitted by Mary Ann Khoury – 2013 Travel

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen! As I write this on Bright Friday, all at St. Mary parish is planning for the Mediterranean Food Festival – a wonderful event for our church. Completing all of the Pascha activities, I will be leaving for my 18<sup>th</sup> trip to Alaska on Monday, May 13. Since first traveling there in 1999, many programs have come to fruition for Holy Orthodoxy in America's Holy Land and our country's Great Frontier. My paid work and the lack of an assigned bishop from the OCA for the Diocese of Alaska, had taken me away the past few years from doing the things I wanted to do for **Outreach Alaska**. Retirement from the DUI Victim Center of Kansas in December, after 25 years, now makes it possible for me to be more active in the Alaska Mission. More time can be focused on **Outreach Alaska** projects and furtherance of activities, making people more familiar with our needs.

My travel this year will be specific to Kodiak for the seminary commencement on May 19. Meeting times have been scheduled with the seminarians on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday all day – May 15 and 16. These are scheduled times for us to discuss the Adopt a Seminarian project, the St. Julianna Food Pantry and how they are doing with their studies and adjusting to seminary life. This is helpful to me and to the students to determine what to expect from them for the upcoming year and where they may be placed once they are graduated. These meetings provide information used when I return to produce updated reports for the "Adopt a Seminarian" sponsors. I like telling them about their sponsored seminarians and how their support is helping them and their families with the studies for them to become educated for Orthodoxy in Alaska. Fr. John Dunlop, Seminary Dean, has done a wonderful job following Fr. Chad Hatfield in this position. He keeps the seminary full with new students every year. Seminary 2013/2014 will be very challenging for our "Adopt a Seminarian" project. It will be necessary for me to place 7 new sponsors for the new students. A total of 14 will be on this program for the new year – the most at one time since beginning this program in 2001. For the first time, last year there was one student who I did not have sponsored. I have now placed him with St. Michael the Archangel in Wichita. They are so excited to sponsor a seminarian and I am so pleased to have them placed with this wonderful student.

A Ladies Luncheon will be catered on Friday, May 17 for all the ladies of the seminary – seminary wives, faculty, clergy wives, specific friends of the seminary and other women. This is always a very successful time since there is not much there done specifically for the women. It provides a wonderful support setting where the ladies talk about their challenges and accomplishments at the seminary. They look forward to this each year.



On Saturday, I will attend the seminary Board of Trustees meeting and meet the new administrator for the OCA Diocese of Alaska. They will receive my "Outreach Alaska" report for our 2012/13 projects. The "St. Julianna Food Pantry" has been a blessing for the seminary. These students come with their children and often are out of food before the end of a month. The pantry provides them with incidentals for their children as well as supplementing the food provided by the seminary for their meals. **Outreach Alaska** raises funds to pay for these foods, diapers, over the counter medical needs, etc. The seminary shops at the local Safeway and then an invoice is sent to me for payment. This year the need increased and more funds will be needed to maintain the food pantry for the upcoming seminary year. An annual need of \$7,000 is projected. This will be raised from church functions specifically donated to the project and some monthly contributions. The seminary is in great need of refurbishing the refractory. Last year this was an approved vote for the next year.



### Commencement 2012

Commencement activities will begin on Sunday morning, May 19 with Divine Liturgy followed by the Commencement and Banquet later Sunday afternoon. It will be an exciting time for all the students, faculty and guests. My participation will be to present sponsor gifts to this year's graduate –Nathan Anderson. He is the only graduate from St. Herman Theological Seminary. His sponsor, St. John of Damascus in Poway, CA, says they are sponsoring the entire class of 2013. Next year we expect 7 graduates.

Next year will be 15 years since I first traveled to Alaska – and a significant Birthday for me. I am planning to take a group for Spiritual Travel to Alaska next summer – final dates TBD - with the highlight to participate in the St. Herman Spruce Island Pilgrimage August 8-10. This year will include some time to plan this travel and determine routing/costs. I will meet with touring professionals in Anchorage. If you would be interested in learning more about this "Spiritual Travel", please email me at [maktoob@cox.net](mailto:maktoob@cox.net). I will keep you informed as the plans/costs come together. Some special plans are being made for this "Spiritual Travel" that would include visiting the St. Sophia Russian Orthodox Church in Bethell, AK and the grave of Mother Olga Fisher in Kwethluk, Ak – both on the Kuskokwim River in "bush" Alaska.

Over the coming years, I pray to increase the "St. Innocent of Alaska Missionary Prayer Society" and the "Sister Parish" projects. I also am hoping to learn how to develop a newsletter to keep our supporters informed of the work that is being completed through **Outreach Alaska**.

When I return from this May visit, I will be home about one week before going to the Antiochian Parish Life Conference in Kansas City. It has been several years since I have been able to attend a conference. This is very important because it provides an opportunity for people to be reminded of the **Outreach Alaska** mission and helps get the word out about our programs and needs. In closing, I ask your prayers for safe and healthy travel. I also ask that our risen Lord will bless this work and lead me in the way I should go to further the growth and strength of His Holy Orthodox Church in this Great and Holy Land of Alaska.