Pilgrims Plant Cross on Mt. St. Herman

Archpriest Krest asked those who were unsure of their stamina to wait at the foot of the mountain until the others returned. Having read once more the first part of the Akathist, however, the majority decided to give themselves over into the safekeeping of St. Herman, and the two-hour vertical ascent was begun. At the top of the mountain, the pilgrims erected a large, twenty-foot-high cross, now visible from the Pacific Ocean at the entrance to the gulf. Although the ascent was even more difficult than the ascent, all agreed that the breathtakingly beautiful scenery and the deep sense of spiritual peace were well worth the effort.

After a brief stop at Monk's Lagoon for holy water, the pilgrims returned to Kodiak.

By the time everyone had assembled at Holy Resurrection Church, it was 10:30 p.m. The local faithful had been patiently awaiting the pilgrims and clergy since 7:30. Because of the late hour, only Vaasers with Lilla were served, followed with anointing by Bishop Gregory. By the time services were concluded it was nearly midnight, but the altar of Holy Resurrection Church had graciously prepared a repast for all the guests.

On August 9, the Feast of St. Herman, the hour of people for confession began at 7:30 a.m. By 9, confessions had been heard, and the vesting of the bishop had begun. Five priests consecrated Holy Eucharist with Bishop Gregory and Herman. Nearly everyone present received Holy Communion. Following services, a banquet took place in the church hall.

Girls' Octet Sings

Concluding the three-day festival, a concert was held in the local theater by St. John's Octet, who sang a number of religious and secular pieces.

The tradition of pilgrimages is of venerable antiquity in the Orthodox Church. Yet, there is a basic difference between those pilgrimages of past years and pilgrimages today. In our day pilgrimages do not impose such deprivation and self-sacrifice as was the case in earlier times, and in the Old World. Today, the greater part of the pilgrimage may be completed in modern airplanes, complete with all conveniences. If a pilgrimage to spruce island is planned for enough in advance, and as part of a regular summer vacation, there is no loss of working time or pay. And yet, despite all this, only half a dozen pilgrims came from the "Lover of 40" this year to participate in the St. Herman Pilgrimage. We are sure that those who did come will treasure their memories of this spiritual pilgrimage for the rest of their days. With all the talk of the "spiritual vacuum" that seems to be enveloping our beloved nation, one can only pray that St. Herman will strengthen our intercessions before the Throne of Almighty God, that the Orthodox Faith, which offers the answers to man's deepest and most perplexing problems, may be firmly established in our land. To this end and ought we, who profess Orthodoxy, show our genuine commitment by means of spiritual pilgrimage? That Orthodox classic, "The Way of a Pilgrim," begins with these words: "by the grace of God I am a Christian man, by my actions a great sinner, and by calling a homeless wanderer of the humblest birth who roams from place to place. My worldly goods are a kag bezel with some dried bread in it on my back, and in my breast-pocket a Bible. And that is all." We have so much more, Or have we?