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September 15, 2021
Martyr Mamas

Beloved Supporters of Saint Herman Theological Seminary,

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

The 2021 Nativity semester here at Saint Herman Theological Seminary has begun with in-person classes. We have 13 students that have all come from various deaneries throughout the Diocese of Alaska. The previous school year was quite challenging because the pandemic closed our doors to in-person teaching. Even though our students faced the difficult circumstances of distance learning, they were, glory to God, all able to complete a full year of study. This year, we are so very grateful to the Lord God that our students will be able to participate fully in campus life and to receive the necessary seminary formation to cultivate and strengthen their God-given gifts.

The formation of future priests is a mystery wrought by the hand of the Most High, but with the cooperation of our humble efforts here on earth. Saint Herman Seminary offers seminarians a sacred oasis where they can be shaped by their interactions with the faculty and with each other as they learn together, live together, work together, and pray together in a spirit of Christ-like love and self-sacrifice. This year, in particular, the seminarians have the privilege of being taught by veteran priests who come in for two week periods to share their experience and wisdom cultivated from their own labors in God's vineyard. This is not only an opportunity for mentorship, but also for establishing lasting bonds that can be of service when the seminarian one day is called to face the challenges of parish ministry. Each student, and at times their whole families, also participate in the daily cycle of sacred services at our beloved All Saints of Alaska chapel. All the students and their families work together to build up a blessed community, governed by the sacred Gospel of the God-man Christ and striving to become a model and even an icon for the kind of vibrant parishes the Diocese of Alaska needs so that the light of Holy Orthodoxy might shine like the sun in this land.

In the Diocese of Alaska the presence of our Lord can be greatly felt among His children. The Grace of God blesses this His vineyard and makes it beautiful and fruitful. As laborers, we are blessed to work in this vineyard. And as children, we are blessed to partake of its life-giving fruits.

Nevertheless, it is also true that we face many grave challenges in this diocese, for our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8), especially with alcoholism, assault, suicide, domestic violence, and drug abuse. By supporting us and our seminarians, you are also providing much needed help to those that are affected by these afflictions in our Diocese.

We ask that you give so that our needful ministry may continue at this time and for many years to come. May God Bless you and keep you; May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you Peace.

With the love of our merciful Christ,

Locum Tenens Bishop of Sitka and Alaska
Rector of St. Herman Seminary

Archpriest Vasily Fisher
Dean of St. Herman Seminary