



# St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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*"An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County"*  
[www.sainthermanchurch.org](http://www.sainthermanchurch.org)



## Important This Week:

Thursday, 01Aug, **NO** Adult Study; Friday, 02Aug, **NO** Enquirer's Class  
Saturday, 03Aug, **6PM** Vespers  
Sunday, 04Aug, **930AM**, Divine Liturgy

28Jul24

5th Sunday After Pentecost/Tone 4

## The Greatest Gift of God

*[The following is a posting from "orthochristian.com," described as "fragments" of a homily delivered at St. Elizabeth Convent in Minsk on 13Jun24 by Archpriest Andrew Lemeshonok. Praying that you find it worthy of your time.]*

Love is the greatest gift of God that man can receive in this temporary world... Burdened with all kinds of problems that, in general, are worthless, we torment ourselves and others. But when you're standing at the grave of a loved one, nothing that happened matters anymore. And when you're lying in the ICU, not knowing if you're going to survive, you no longer have any problems with arguments about "mine or yours," because it all becomes unnecessary. If we live before God, then what difference does it make what people said about you, what people thought about you, what you gained and what you lost?... The most important thing is not to lose eternity. And if we're in God, we won't lose it.

Sobering up and coming to our senses, we realize that here, in this world today, we're in exile. We've been sent here in exile. Man, left without God, has turned his life into hard labor. He suffers by the sweat of his brow, laboring for his bread, yet he still lacks everything. He tries to find some special doctors, special medicine, health improvement systems (everyone wants to improve their health now), but he'll still die—that's the thing. No matter how much you recover, sooner or later you'll die. Those are our prospects without God. But when man begins to live spiritually and pulls himself up, crawls out of these swamps he's stuck in, there are completely different prospects. If we're

truly people of faith, God gives us everything we need. However, we lose a lot due to our stupidity and sins.

No need to fantasize and build yourself castles in the sky—they won't stand. Appreciate what you have today. Here we are in church today. And everyone who received Communion—what else do you want, what else do you need? Chocolate, candy, lemonade? Yes, we have everything! We've already received everything that's possible to receive in this temporary life—we've received the Body and Blood of Christ. We're richer than any billionaire, the mighty of this age, because Christ is in us. We have to not lose Christ. Otherwise, we won't pull ourselves away from the dead, stinking corpse that we will turn into sooner or later after death. Of course, it's not beautiful, not very romantic, and aesthetically pleasing, but our body will be eaten by worms. We can't get away from this, no matter how much we want to; no matter what kind of coffin we order for ourselves—oak or some other wood—it will rot.

The Lord called to Lazarus, the Four-Days Dead: "Come forth from this tomb! Follow Me!" (cf. Jn. 11:43, Mt. 8:22), and he came out of the grave and became a bishop and martyr. The Lord leads us in the same way, realizing that, under the weight of life's problems, we can't break away from what will happen tomorrow. We think about how to spend vacation, how to improve our health with vitamins, berries, and fruits. But in fact, Christ heals us with His love. And if we're healed by Christ's love, then we'll live eternally. And the rest will follow.

We're in church today, and we know

that it's a school and hospital and ambulance when the priest hears our confession—and even, perhaps, intensive care. And most importantly—it's food for our souls, the immortal soul of man. Just imagine if there were no church... What would we do? Once upon a time, in the 70s, Schemanun Seraphima, who led the cathedral choir, told me that in 1937, when all the churches were closed in Minsk, people would come to the closed church, get down on their knees, and kiss the bricks of the church. Do you understand what it was like then? Frightening! Therefore, we should appreciate that the Lord has given us the chance to be in church today, to commune of the Body and Blood of Christ, and to be absolved of all our misunderstandings, all our doubts in Holy Communion (and they are truly absolved); and then go forward not with the sense of doom that sooner or later we'll be buried, but to prepare for our ascent.

We can be compared to astronauts getting ready for a flight. But, this flight, you know, isn't easy. You have to overcome the earth's gravity, lighten your soul, your body, your thoughts and feelings in order to break away from your dead body and fly to the Lord; to the place where, apart from the love of God, there will be nothing else, and we won't argue about whether something is yours or mine, who loves whom more, who owes whom more. There, God's love will be in everything. Get ready for this flight! We don't know when we'll take off. But at some point, we'll hear: "That's it! Get ready!" What will you take with you? Nothing! Only your immortal soul.

**This Week's Prayer Requests**

**For Health—St. Herman's:** Met. Joseph, Pat Blazosky, Sandra, Richard, Sam, Judy, Mitchell  
**Others:** Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Don, Hannah, Natalie & Scott, Nora & Bob  
**For the Departed:** Patriarchs Maxim and Neofit, Metropolitans Theodosius and Maximos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou, Lainey Kay, Katherine, Jeanne

**Weekly Statistics**

Saturday	Vespers	20Jul	14 faithful	NotRecorded
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	21Jul	38 faithful	14 views
Wednesday	Adult Study	25Jul	5 faithful	

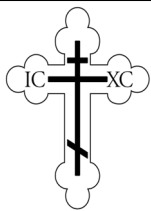
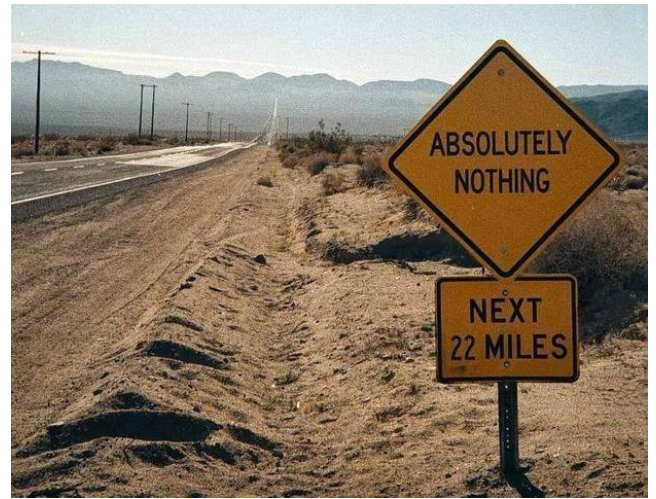
**In the News**

Videos of services can be found at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH\\_FIDe8SoWOWw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_FIDe8SoWOWw)

Thanks to all who came and helped with the Craft Show yesterday! Thanks especially to Lissa and Michael Molchan for all of their anchoring efforts, to Christian Munoz and Alex Arther for their supporting roles, and to any and all who pitched in to make the day as successful as it was!

Next on the agenda is the upcoming Dormition Fast (starting this Thursday), followed shortly thereafter by the Feast of our 5)Lord's Transfiguration (Vespereal Liturgy on Monday evening, Aug 5th at 6PM).

**Have You Ever Been to Nevada?**



*If we condemn ourselves, we will not be condemned then, at the great and eternal judgment.*

**(St. Ephraim the Syrian)**

**Take the Time** *(Abbot Tryphon)*

We all need a good dose of silent prayer each and every day. Finding that perfect place in your home that can become your cave, or prayer closet, gives you that sacred space where you can go deep into the heart and connect with God. It will be that place where you can close off your family, your worries, your job, your distractions, and go deep into your heart where you find the peace that comes from Christ.

The Jesus Prayer is the perfect prayer, for it

is a prayer of adoration and praise, and a prayer that proclaims that Jesus the is Lord that can grant mercy upon you. The simple prayer which invokes the Holy Name of Jesus can transform your life, and take you into the very Heart of God. This prayer is known as the Prayer of the Heart for the very reason that it is of the heart.

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” Said with the aid of a Prayer Rope (thus bringing your body into

the action of the prayer), this prayer accomplishes Saint Paul’s admonition that we should “pray always.” It is a prayer that takes you out of yourself and into communion with Christ. It is a prayer that can change your life because through this prayer you can taste the presence of Christ beside you.

“In prayer, cast aside all earthly thoughts, however important they may seem. Render to God the things that are God’s and you will have time for what is necessary for temporal life.”  
 - St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

**5th Sunday After Pentecost** (*pravmir.com*)

Today's Gospel concerns the casting out of demons from two possessed men, their entry into a herd of swine and the suicide of those swine. There are several things that we can learn from this Gospel.

Firstly, we should note that the Gergesenes who owned the swine were disobeying the Jewish Law. The Jews did not and do not eat pork. The Jews who lived in this region were therefore disobeying their own Law. That is why the swineherd 'besought' Christ to leave their area, virtually chasing the Son of God away. We cannot help thinking that the disobedience of these people explains why two of them at least had become possessed.

Therefore we learn that disobedience of God leads to misfortune.

Secondly, it is clear from the Gospel that devils exist and that they can possess men. All too often we meet naive people who call themselves Christians but have been so hoodwinked by the Devil that they maintain that devils do not exist and that they most certainly cannot enter into men. Such people have clearly not read the Gospel with understanding and have little experience of life. In this context we may ask ourselves about the meaning of the word 'possession'. The Fathers of the Church, many of whom we commemorate, tell us that that we cannot simply become possessed overnight. Possession is the ultimate stage in a process. The first stage of that process is when we begin to surrender our free will and we 'entertain' demons and demonic thoughts in a habitual manner. The second stage is when demons come to obsess us; we are almost unable to fight against demonic influence over us. Demonic thoughts stalk us, becoming an obsession. The third stage is possession, when demons actually come to live inside us, to own or possess us as their property. This is when we have totally surrendered our free will to resist.

Therefore we learn that the Devil and demonic possession are realities.

Thirdly, in today's Gospel we should notice three characteristics of the devils. First of all, they dwell in tombs. They live in tombs because the devils are spiritually dead. Also the devils are violent, alien to the spirit of peace, 'exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way'. Finally, the devils are also believers. This should not surprise us. For the devils are bodiless, spiritual beings, fallen angels. Here we should remember that there are many sorts of spirituality, one of which is the spirituality of the demons. Unlike men, who are made foolish because they are deluded by bodily, material things, the devils see reality as it is, they see the spiritual basis of all things. Thus they confess Christ as He really is: as the 'Son of God'. They have no illusions that Christ may only be some man, albeit a prophet, or a mere man though of great intelligence or giftedness. No, He is the Son of God and that is clear to them. The devils know spiritual reality. According to one Father of the Church, St Simeon the New Theologian, the devils lack only one thing: Love. Indeed, according to him: 'theology without love is the theology of the demons'.

Therefore we learn that Love is the abiding characteristic of God.

Lastly, we see from today's Gospel that animals may sometimes behave better than men. For what do the two men possessed by devils do? They survive, living among tombs. On the other hand, the entry of devils inside animals is enough to make them commit suicide. They cannot bear the presence of evil within them. Yet very often we hear that some people have 'behaved like animals'. This is often untrue and unjust. Animals, for example, do not kill their own species. Animals are sensitive to the presence of evil and fear the presence of supernatural demons, running away from them. This is because animals, who have no eternal, immortal souls, belong to the natural world and fear the supernatural. Men, on the other hand, belong partly to that natural, material, bodily world, but partly to the spiritual world. They are therefore subject to the influence of spirits, whether the spirits of God from the angelic world, or else to the spirits of Evil, from Satan.

Therefore we learn that we are all subject to spiritual influences, to the spirit of evil or to the spirit of good.

What are we to do? Let us flee the spirit of evil. Otherwise we too will finish by living in the tombs of the spiritually dead. Otherwise we too will be owned by devils and none will pass our way. Otherwise we too will run 'violently down a steep place into the sea and perish in the waters'.

And let us instead of all this cleave to the Spirit of God, which we know from the Gospels, from the Apostles, from the Fathers and from the Saints of the Church of God.

We welcome you to our humble church, and we pray that your experience here will be spiritually rewarding, calling you back to pray with us at our next scheduled service.

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church is established with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of New York, and is one of approximately 30 parishes or missions that are all part of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, Bulgarian Patriarchate.

Our worship is exclusively in English, and we use “contemporary” English translations of liturgical texts wherever possible. Singing is congregational. The Divine Liturgy is literally “the work of the people”, and as such your presence and participation in the service are essential parts of our worship. The worship of others here present is diminished when you are absent or unable to participate.

Participation in the Eucharist is important to us, and as such we ask you to recognize that it is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared for receiving the very Body and Blood of our Lord. Preparation includes fasting from the previous evening and recent confession. If you are not known to our priest, please let him know as you approach that you are Orthodox and prepared to receive! Please do not be offended if the priest so questions your approach—this is important, truly “our Life”!

**Troparion for the Day:** (Tone 4) *When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: ‘Death is overthrown! Christ our God is Risen, granting the world great mercy!’*

**Troparion to Saint Herman:** *O blessed Father Herman of Alaska,/ north-star of Christ’s holy Church,/ the light of your holy life and great deeds/ guides those who follow the Orthodox way./ Together we lift high the Holy Cross/ you planted firmly in America./ Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,/ singing His holy Resurrection.*

**Troparion to Saint Sophia :** *You blossomed in the courts of the Lord as a fruitful olive tree, holy martyr Sophia. In your contest, you offered to Christ the sweet fruit of your womb, your daughters Faith, Hope and Love. Together with them intercede for us all.*

**Glory to the Father....**

**Kontakion of the Day:** (Tone 4) *My Savior and Redeemer, as God, rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day.*

**Now and ever....**

**Kontakion to the Theotokos:** *Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, but in your goodness speedily come to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.*

**Epistle:** Rom 10:1-10

**Gospel:** Mat 8:28-9:1

**Monthly Financial Tracker**

May Total Income \$7784  
 May Total Expenses \$1310  
 May Net Income (Loss) \$6474

**Web Tracker**

StHerman Google Bus Site 659 interacts/28 days  
 Blog Site Views 45766 Total Views  
 Web Site Views 15262 Total Views  
 Facebook Followers 5539 Total

**St. Herman of Alaska  
 Eastern Orthodox Church  
 VRevFrBasil Rusen, Pastor**

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**CURRENT WEEK  
 HIGHLIGHTED**

July 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Sunday of All Saints</b> 30 T8 Divine Liturgy 930AM Heb 11:33-12:2 Mat 10:32-33, 37-38	1 Rom 2:28-3:18 Mat 6:31-34, 7:9-11	2 Rom 4:4-12 Mat 7:15-21	3 Rom 4:13-25 Mat 7:21-23	4 NO Adult Study Rom 5:10-16 Mat 8:23-27	5 NO Enq'rs Class Rom 5:17-6:2 Mat 9:14-17	6 NO Vespers/Conf Rom 3:19-26 Mat 7:1-8
<b>2nd Sunday</b> 7 All Regional Sts T1 Divine Liturgy 930AM Rom 2:10-16 Mat 4:18-23	8 Rom 7:1-13 Mat 9:36-10:8	9 Rom 7:14-8:2 Mat 10:9-15	10 Rom 8:2-13 Mat 10:16-22	11 Adult Study 7PM Rom 8:22-27 Mat 10:23-31	12 Enq'rs Class 7PM Rom 9:6-19 Mat 10:32-36,11:1	13 Vespers/Conf 6PM Rom 3:28-4:3 Mat 7:24-8:4
<b>3rd Sunday</b> 14 After Pentecost T2 Divine Liturgy 930AM Rom 5:1-10 Mat 6:22-33	<b>St. Vladimir</b> 15 Gal 1:11-19 John 10:1-9	16 Rom 10:11-11:2 Mat 11:16-20	17 Rom 11:2-12 Mat 11:20-26	18 Adult Study 7PM Rom 11:13-24 Mat 11:27-30	19 Enq'rs Class 7PM Rom 11:25-36 Mat 12:1-8	20 Prophet Elias Rom 12:1-3 Luke 4:22-30
<b>4th Sunday</b> 21 After Pentecost T3 Divine Liturgy 930AM Rom 6:18-23 Mat 8:5-13	22 Rom 12:4-5,15-21 Mat 12:9-13	23 Rom 14:9-18 Mat 12:14-16,22-30	24 Rom 15:7-16 Mat 12:38-45	25 NO Adult Study Rom 15:17-29 Mat 12:46-13:3	26 CRAFT SHOW SETUP - EVENING Rom 16:1-16 Mat 13:4-9	27 CRAFT SHOW ALL DAY Vespers/Conf NONE Rom 12:1-3 Mat 10:37-11:1
<b>5th Sunday</b> 28 After Pentecost T4 Divine Liturgy 930AM Rom 10:1-10 Mat 8:28-9:1	29 Rom 16:17-24 Mat 13:10-23	30 1Cor 1:1-9 Mat 13:24-30	31 1Cor 2:9-3:8 Mat 13:31-36	<b>Dormition Fast</b> 1 Begins Adult Study 7PM 1Cor 3:18-23 Mat 13:36-43	2 Enq'rs Class 7PM 1Cor 4:5-8 Mat 13:44-54	3 Vespers/Conf 6PM Rom 9:1-5 Mat 9:18-26