

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023
HOLY PROTOMARTYR THECLA
NEW-MARTYRS OF ALASKA:
PRIESTMONK JUVENALY AND PETER THE ALEUT

On the anniversary of the arrival of the Russian missionaries in Alaska (9/24/1794), we remember Saint Herman of Alaska, Saint Innocent, Saint Jacob Netsvetev, and the New Martyrs Saint Peter the Aleut, Protomartyr of America, and Saint Juvenal.

Saint Peter the Aleut is mentioned in the Life of Saint Herman of Alaska (December 13). Simeon Yanovsky (who ended his life as the schemamonk Sergius in the Saint Tikhon of Kaluga Monastery), has left the following account:

“On another occasion I was relating to him how the Spanish in California had imprisoned fourteen Aleuts, and how the Jesuits (actually Franciscans) were forcing all of them to accept the Catholic Faith. But the Aleuts would not agree under any circumstances, saying, ‘We are Christians.’ The Jesuits argued, ‘That’s not true, you are heretics and schismatics. If you do not agree to accept our faith then we will torture all of you to death.’ Then the Aleuts were placed in prisons two to a cell. That evening, the Jesuits came to the prison with lanterns and lighted candles. Again they tried to persuade two Aleuts in the cell to accept the Catholic Faith. ‘We are Christians,’ the Aleuts replied, ‘and we will not change our Faith.’ Then the Jesuits began to torture them, at first the one while his companion was a witness. They cut off one of the joints of his feet, and then the other joint. Then they cut the first joint on the fingers of his hands, and then the other joint. Then they cut off his feet, and his hands. The blood flowed, but the martyr endured all and firmly repeated one thing: ‘I am a Christian.’ He died in such suffering, due to a loss of blood. The Jesuit also promised to torture his comrade to death the next day. “But that night an order was received from Monterey stating that the imprisoned Aleuts were to be released immediately, and sent there under escort. Therefore, in the morning all were sent to Monterey with the exception of the dead Aleut. This was related to

me by a witness, the same Aleut who had escaped torture, and who was the friend of the martyred Aleut. I reported this incident to the authorities in Saint Petersburg. When I finished my story, Father Herman asked, ‘What was the name of the martyred Aleut?’ I answered, ‘Peter. I do not remember his family name.’ The Elder stood reverently before an icon, made the Sign of the Cross and said, ‘Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us!’”

We know very little about Saint Peter, except that he was from Kodiak, and was arrested and put to death by the Spaniards in California because he refused to convert to Catholicism. The circumstances of his martyrdom recall the torture of Saint James the Persian (November 27).

Both in his sufferings and in his steadfast confession of the Faith, Saint Peter is the equal of the martyrs of old, and also of the New Martyrs who have shone forth in more recent times. Now he rejoices with them in the heavenly Kingdom, glorifying God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, throughout all ages.

Saint Juvenal, the Protomartyr of America, was born in 1761 in Nerchinsk, Siberia. His secular name was John Feodorovich Hovorukhin, and he was trained as a mining engineer. In a letter to Abbot Nazarius of Valaam (December 13, 1819), Saint Herman says that Saint Juvenal “had been an assistant at our monastery and was a former officer.”

After his wife died in 1791, John entered a monastery at Saint Petersburg (Saint Herman’s Letter of December 13, 1819) and was tonsured with the name Juvenal. Three years later, he went to Alaska as a missionary.

During 1794, the hieromonks Juvenal and Macarius spent two months in the area around Kodiak teaching the inhabitants about Christ and baptizing them. They traveled in small boats of hide in all sorts of weather, dividing up the territory among themselves. Saint Herman tells of a conversation he heard one day as he walked with the hieromonks to a small hill on the south side of the harbor. They sat down facing the sea, and spoke of various things. Soon they began to discuss where each of them should go to preach. Aflame with zeal and eager to set out on their journey, a friendly argument ensued between Father Macarius and Father Juvenal.

Father Macarius said he intended to go north to the Aleutian Islands, and then make his way to the Alaskan mainland, where the inhabitants had invited him to visit. The monks had a map of Captain Cook's which indicated that some Russians were living near a certain river in that particular area, and Father Macarius hoped to find them.

Father Juvenal interrupted, saying that he believed that the Alaskan mainland was his territory. "I beg you to yield to me and not offend me in this," he told Father Macarius, "since the ship is leaving for Yakutan. I shall begin preaching in the south, proceeding north along the ocean, cross the Kenai peninsula, then from the port there I shall cross to Alaska."

Father Macarius became sorrowful and said, "No, Father. Do not restrict me in this way. You know the Aleutian chain of islands is joined to Alaska, therefore it belongs to me, and also the whole northern shore. As for you, the southern part of America is sufficient for your whole lifetime, if you please."

As he listened to their apostolic fervor, Saint Herman says he "went from joy to rapture" (Letter to Abbot Nazarius, May 19, 1795).

In 1795, Father Juvenal baptized over 700 Chugatchi at Nushek, then he crossed Kenai Bay and baptized the local people there. In 1796, according to native oral tradition, Saint Juvenal came to the mouth of the Kuskokwim near the present village of Quinahgak, where he was killed by a hunting party. (There is a forged diary attributed to Ivan Petroff which gives a slanderous version of Father Juvenal's death, and alleges that he was martyred at Lake Iliamna.)

The precise reason for Saint Juvenal's murder by the natives is not known. However, they later told Saint Innocent something about his death. They said that Saint Juvenal did not try to defend himself when attacked, nor did he make any attempt to escape. After being struck from behind, he turned to face his attackers and begged them to spare the natives he had baptized.

The natives told Saint Innocent that after they had killed Saint Juvenal, he got up and followed them, urging them to repent. The fell upon him again and gave him a savage beating. Once more, he

got to his feet and called them to repentance. This happened several times, then finally the natives hacked him to pieces. Thus, the zealous Hieromonk Juvenal became the first Orthodox Christian in America to receive the crown of martyrdom. His unnamed guide, possibly a Tanaina Indian convert, was also martyred at the same time.

It is said that a local shaman removed Saint Juvenal's brass pectoral cross from his body and attempted to cast a spell. Unexpectedly, the shaman was lifted up off the ground. He made three more tries with the same result, then concluded that there was a greater power than his own at work here. Years later, a man showed up at the Nushagak Trading Post wearing a brass pectoral cross exactly like the one worn by Saint Juvenal.

A column of light arose from his holy relics and reached up to Heaven. It is not known how long this phenomenon continued. Saint Juvenal, in his tireless evangelization of the native peoples of Alaska, served the Church more than all the other missionaries combined.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7 (spiral bound Vespers book), followed by six stikhera for the New Martyrs

New Martyrs, tone 2:

With joy the enlightener of Alaska, Innocent, joins our blessed Father Herman of New Valaam in celebrating the feast of the Holy Martyrs of America. The glorified bishop and the venerable monk invite all to this radiant festival, // praising God who is wonderful in His saints.

Today the natives of Kenai rejoice in faith, for their apostle, the priest-monk Juvenaly is glorified. He labored without concern for personal gain or earthly reward to enlighten an ancient people sitting in darkness.

Like the first Apostles, he too was granted a martyr's death,//
and together with them he intercedes for our souls.

Today the Aleut Nation celebrates a feast of joy,
for one of its own race is exalted by God.
Together with our venerable Elder, Herman of Spruce Island,
we cry out to the warrior who shed his blood for the faith://
"O holy New-martyr Peter, pray to God for us!"

Come all Orthodox believers of America!
Let us celebrate this feast of faith!
In their devotion to Christ, the holy martyrs suffered willingly.
Recalling the Lord's promise that the Kingdom of God belongs to
those who suffer for Him.
Having fought the good fight and received their crowns,//
they stand before the Lord and intercede for our souls.

Come all Orthodox believers in America!
Let us rejoice at this feast of hope!
The vision of the future growth of the Church in America
inspired the martyred Hieromonk Juvenaly in his apostolic work.
Committing his soul to the Lord, he rejoiced in the hope of eternal
life.
And the young Aleut, Peter of Kodiak Island, accepted to offer
himself as a living sacrifice,
trusting that in the world to come he would receive his reward://
Now in the Kingdom of heaven they intercede for our souls.

Come all Orthodox believers in America!
Let us sing for joy at this festival full of joy and love!
For greater love has no man than that he lay down his life.
And in imitation of the Savior,
both the monk and the boy suffered, confessing their faith.
Their love for Christ and His Holy Church could not be destroyed.
They have joined the noble chorus of martyrs who stand before the
throne of God,//
where they intercede for our souls.

GLORY... New Martyrs, tone 3:

The first martyr came from a distant land;
the second was born in Russian America.
Juvenaly received the benefits of a formal education;
while Peter was taught how to survive in the wilderness.
The monk dedicated his life to Christ as a man of prayer;
the boy became a witness to Christ, accepting torture and death.
Now both are glorified equally by God,
the God Who loves all men.
Remembering their loving sacrifice,//
may we also grow to the fullness of love, revealed to us in Christ.

***NOW AND EVER... the Resurrection Dogmatikon in
tone 7 (spiral bound Vespers book)***

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The reading from Isaiah. Thus saith the Lord: All the nations
gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold
this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their
witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say,
"It is true." "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, and my
servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor
will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from
me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed -
I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,"
declares the LORD, "that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I
am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can
reverse it?" **(Isaiah 43:9-14)**

The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon. But the souls of the
righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment can ever touch
them. In the eyes of the foolish, they seem to have died, and their
departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to
be their destruction - but they are at peace.
For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is
full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will
receive great good, because God tested them and found them
worthy of Himself; like gold in a furnace He tried them, and like a

sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in Him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with Him in love, because grace and mercy are upon His elect, and He watches over His holy ones. **(Wis.3:1-9)**

The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon. But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because He will cover them with His right hand, and with His arm He will shield them. The Lord will take His zeal as His whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel His enemies; He will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; He will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with Him to fight against the madmen. Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim, and will leap to the target as from a well-drawn bow of clouds, and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them; a mighty wind will rise against them, and like a tempest it will winnow them away. Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth, and evil-doing will overturn the thrones of rulers. Listen, therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given to you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High, who will search out your works and inquire into your plans. **(Wis. 5:15-6:3)**

APOSTIKHA: all stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7(spiral bound Vespers book)

GLORY...New Martyrs, tone 6:

Greater love has no man than this,
that he lay down his life for his friends.
You, holy martyrs, have shown yourselves to be friends of the

Lord,
for by your death you confessed His Resurrection.
By suffering you have entered eternal joy.
By sacrificing all, you have inherited everything.
In this world you had tribulation, as the Lord had said,//
but now you rejoice, for He has overcome the world.

***NOW AND EVER...the Theotokion of the Resurrection in tone 6
(spiral bound Vespers book)***

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 7

By Your Cross You destroyed death.
To the thief You opened Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that You are risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

New Martyrs, tone 4

Today Alaska rejoices and America celebrates,
for the New World has been sanctified by martyrdom.
Kodiak echoes with songs of thanksgiving,
Iliamna and Kenai observe the festival of faith.
The apostle and martyr Juvenaly is glorified,
and Peter the Aleut is exalted by his voluntary sacrifice.
In their devotion and love for the Lord
they willingly endured persecution and death for the truth.//
Now in the kingdom of heaven they intercede for our souls.

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 4

The mystery of all eternity,
unknown even by Angels,
through you, Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:
God incarnate by union without confusion.
He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,
by which He resurrected the first-created man,//
saving our souls from death.

Saint John of Damascus Orthodox Church

Rector: Father Michael Anderson

16903 Espola Rd

Poway, CA 92064

Email: powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org

Office: 858-674-1931