

## **Herman of Alaska**

Herman of Alaska, known in the Russian Orthodox Church as “St. Herman: Wonderworker of All America,” was the first saint to be canonized by the Orthodox Church in America.

Herman was born in Russia, near Moscow, in 1756. His baptismal and family names are unknown. He is known by his monastic name. Naturally pious from an early age, Herman entered the monastery at 17. He was never ordained. For many years he secured permission to live as a hermit, attending the liturgies of the monastery only on holy days.

In 1793, with a small group of colleagues, Herman set out to do missionary work in Alaska. They settled on Spruce Island, near Kodiak, and named their community “New Valaam” in honor of their home monastery. Herman lived and worked in the area for the remainder of his life.

He advocated for and defended the Aleuts against sometimes oppressive authorities, particular Russian and European colonists with commercial interests. He cared lovingly and sacrificially for all who came to him, counseling and teaching

them, and tirelessly nursing the sick. He especially loved children, for whom he often baked biscuits and cookies.

Even though Herman had minimal education outside of the monastic life, he was regarded among the native Alaskans as a great and compelling teacher. Over time he also developed a reputation as a teacher and possessor of wisdom among the more educated Russian and European settlers in the area. He so captivated his listeners that many would listen to him through the long hours of the night and not leave his company until morning. The people he served often referred to Herman as their North Star.

Herman died at Spruce Island on December 25, 1837, on the Gregorian calendar.

In the spring of 1969, the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America proclaimed Herman a saint and he was glorified in a solemn liturgy on August 9, 1970, at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral on Kodiak Island, Alaska, with simultaneous rites taking place at other Orthodox centers.

*Leader:* Peace on each one who comes in need,  
*All:* ***Peace on each one who comes in joy.***

*Leader:* Peace on each one who offers prayers,  
*All:* ***Peace on each one who offers song.***

*Leader:* Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,  
*All:* ***Peace of the Spirit, the triune one.***

#### **Psalm 148: 7 – 14**

*O praise the name of the Lord.*

7 Praise the Lord from the earth, •  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

8 Fire and hail, snow and mist, •  
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;

9 Mountains and all hills, •  
fruit trees and all cedars;

10 Wild beasts and all cattle, •  
creeping things and birds on the wing;

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, •  
princes and all rulers of the world;

12 Young men and women,  
old and young together; •  
let them praise the name of the Lord.

13 For his name only is exalted, •  
his splendor above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up the horn of his people  
and praise for all his faithful servants, •  
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.  
Alleluia.

*O praise the name of the Lord.*

## ***Prayer***

*Leader:* O God, for your love for us, warm and brooding, which has brought us to birth and opened our eyes to the wonder and beauty of creation,

*All:* ***We give you thanks.***

*Leader:* For your love for us, wild and freeing, which has awakened us to the energy of creation: to the sap that flows, the blood that pulses, the heart that sings,

*All:* ***We give you thanks.***

*Leader:* For your love for us, compassionate and patient, which has carried us through our pain, wept beside us in our sin, and waited with us in our confusion,

*All:* ***We give you thanks.***

*Leader:* For your love for us, strong and challenging, which has called us to risk for you, asked for the best in us, and shown us how to serve,

*All:* ***We give you thanks.***

*Leader:* O God we come to celebrate that your Holy Spirit is present deep within us, and at the heart of all life. Forgive us when we forget your gift of love made known to us in Jesus, and draw us into your presence.

## Reading

### Sirach 1:1–10

All wisdom is from the Lord,  
and with him it remains for ever.  
The sand of the sea, the drops of rain,  
and the days of eternity—who can count them?  
The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth,  
the abyss, and wisdom—who can search them out?  
Wisdom was created before all other things,  
and prudent understanding from eternity.

The root of wisdom—to whom has it been revealed?  
Her subtleties—who knows them?  
There is but one who is wise, greatly to be feared,  
seated upon his throne—the Lord.  
It is he who created her;  
he saw her and took her measure;  
he poured her out upon all his works,  
upon all the living according to his gift;  
he lavished her upon those who love him.

## *Sharing of the day*

### *Prayer*

*Leader:* We bring to God someone whom we have met or remembered today and for whom we want to pray \_\_\_\_\_ Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

*Leader:* We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer \_\_\_\_\_ Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

*Leader:* We bring to God a troubled situation in our world tonight \_\_\_\_\_  
Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

*Leader:* We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to like or forgive or trust  
Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

*Leader:* We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit,  
clarity of mind, and warmth of affection.  
Holy One, ***We ask your blessing.***

Hymn 410 Praise my Soul vv 1,4

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet your tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
evermore his praises sing.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise the everlasting King!

4 Angels, help us to adore him;  
you behold him face to face.  
Sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

## *Closing responses*

*Leader:* O Trinity of Love, You have been with us at the world's beginning,

*All:* ***Be with us till the world's end.***

*Leader:* You have been with us at our life's shaping,

*All:* ***Be with us at our life's end.***

*Leader:* You have been with us at the sun's rising

*All:* ***Be with us till the day's end. Amen.***

*All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master.  
grant that we may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
it is in dying that we are born again  
to everlasting life. Amen.*





*Leader:* And now may the God of hope bring you such joy and peace in believing that you overflow with hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*All:* ***Amen.***

