05/12/2018

Alaskan faithful rocked by back-to-back earthquakes



Faithful in parishes from Kenai to Fairbanks were rocked by back-to-back earthquakes measuring 7.0 and 5.7 in magnitude, the first of which struck several miles north of downtown Anchorage, home of Saint Innocent Cathedral and several other parishes of the Orthodox Church in America, at 8:29 a.m. Friday, November 30, 2018.

The quakes were among the worst in the state's history since a 9.2 earthquake, centered some 75 miles east of Anchorage, generated widespread damage on March 27, 1964.

"We had quite a shaker, and we are still experiencing aftershocks," said His Grace, Bishop David of Sitka and Alaska on Friday afternoon. "So far, none of our churches has reported any damage or injuries, and the worst prospect of tsunamis after such

a large quake loomed as a distinct possibility.”

While the worst did not occur—and as of Friday evening no deaths had been reported—precautions had been taken to evacuate the relics of Saint Herman of Alaska from Kodiak’s Holy Resurrection Cathedral to higher ground.

“Saint Herman’s relics were returned safely to the cathedral after the ‘all clear’ had sounded later on Friday,” Bishop David was happy to report. “Saint Herman’s Seminary also had been evacuated during the warning, but the students and faculty also have returned to the campus.”

With much of the region’s communications infrastructure down, including all of Anchorage’s television stations, detailed information on conditions in more remote areas has been sparse.

“While this quake was a shallow one, it was felt in many communities throughout the state,” Bishop David continued. “Power was off for a while, and reports of widespread damage to roads and bridges, in addition to sinkholes, have been circulating.”

Bishop David requests prayers for the faithful of his diocese as more information is received and the inevitable aftershocks occur.

“I am grateful that we have been spared from what could have been much worse,” he added. “We will have to wait until a more detailed assessment of the damage. In the meantime, we pray that our heavenly intercessor, Saint Herman, will continue to watch over us in the days ahead as reconstruction begins.”