

**Sifton's 4th Annual Pilgrimage and
Canadian Orthodox Pioneer Museum Opening
June 23, 2007**

This year's pilgrimage brought over sixty people together from many places: Dauphin, Ethelbert, Yorkton, Grayson, Winnipeg, Flin Flon and Saskatoon. Quite a few children were in attendance, too, which was great to see.

There were several specific joys this year. First, we were so glad that Vladyka Seraphim was able to be with us, a blessing to all. Second, we continued the tradition of a Procession from the Community Center to the Church. A Cross and two icons led the Procession (St. Arseny, written by the hand of Matushka Jennie Hainsworth and The Joy of Canada) followed by a choir, several priests, a priest-monk and our Bishop. Behind them came several persons on cars who wanted to be in the Procession but their health did not allow them to walk. The way to the Church is about half a kilometer. Many local persons received Holy Communion this year, a great blessing.

A final joy was that the Canadian Orthodox Pioneer Museum was opened on Saturday afternoon, with prayers led by Vladyka Seraphim. The exhibit was shown for the first time to a "live audience" with the CD narrative providing the story. Then Reader Michael Luciuk took up his post as Museum guide which he will keep for the rest of the summer.

Good hospitality abounded at the home of Dot Connelly, who has done so much to bring the Church restoration forward in the last four years. The meal after the Pilgrimage was, as usual, fantastic! Free door prizes of all sorts brought the Pilgrimage to a close on a light and happy note. To quote one old-timer, "this is just how it used to be!" She was referring to the days of Vladyka Arseny and the annual pilgrimages.

Please keep the Canadian Orthodox Pioneer Museum in your prayers, as we tell the story of the Wedding of Han'ka and Petro, 1927, a look at pioneer life in the area, both the spiritual side of marriage and the festivities surrounding it. The CD narrative about Han'ka and Petro is based on real archival facts about early weddings; it greets the visitors and takes them back to 1927.

We hope the exhibit brings many visitors, who also get to hear about the church restoration, learn about the life of St. Arseny, see religious artifacts, learn about priest's vestments, listen to chants and take home books, CDs and more.

A brief flashback: it was a blessing that on June 16th, as we were unpacking the Museum and store, our first tourists arrived eager to see the Church: Susan and Robert Senger of St. George's Romanian Church, Regina. They were in the area because Robert's roots go back to Sclater parish nearby. They stayed and visited, bought store items and left a memorial donation for family members. Now we hear Dauphin seniors are arranging a tour bus to come, and pamphlets are in the Dauphin Tourism booth to attract tourists coming to the Dauphin Ukrainian Festival, etc.

When Michael Luciuk is not busy with tours, he is working on new displays (on icon-writing, etc.) and in his spare time, works to develop the Quiet Garden in the south-east corner of the churchyard. He offers Reader's Services and a "Learn to Chant" program. The icon of St. Arseny has been placed centrally before the Royal Doors with his Life beside it. Around the icon is an embroidered rushnyk from St. Arseny's home village of Derhachi.

How green and quiet the church surroundings are, and every now and again the wind stirs the old rafters and domes, carrying the promise of renewed life in the Holy Spirit in this lovely old vineyard the Lord has planted.

May it truly be so!

Katya Szalasznyj