



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – June, 2011

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Recently, we were at Our Lady of Kazan Skete, to see our good friend Tsige Roman Gobezie and to hear about her humanitarian work in her native town of Adwa, Ethiopia (more about Tsige on the next page). Her pastor, Fr. Lawrence Russell, celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Out of his excellent sermon, one thing greatly struck us. Speaking of the various blessings God has given us, Fr. Lawrence said that He gives us these things to that we may turn them into love.

That evening, we happened to celebrate an Akathist for St. John the Theologian. One of the verses spoke of how he changed hay into gold to help a poor man out of financial distress.

In a way, that is the opportunity that God gives us every minute of our lives. So many things are precious to us – our time, our possessions, our knowledge ... They are all gifts from God, but compared to the opportunity to love, they are just like hay compared to gold.

If we insist on holding onto them, we just end up with moldy hay (or perhaps a blazing fire!). If, on the other hand, we give them freely to the people in our lives, they become heavenly gold that can never be taken away.

That's a seriously good deal! Let's give it a try!

with love in Christ,
*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

Divine Liturgies Scheduled in June

May 31/June 1 (**Leavetaking of Pascha**): **Tues May 31** – 5:00 PM Vespers (**Monastery**); **Wed June 1** – 8:00 AM Paschal Matins/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

June 1/2 (**Ascension**): **Wed June 1** – 5:00 PM Vigil (**Monastery**); **Thurs June 2** – 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (St Simeon)

June 4/5 (**Sunday – Fathers of 1st Ecumenical Council**): **Sat June 4** – 5:00 PM Vigil (St Simeon); **Sun June 5** – 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (St Simeon)

June 10/11 (**Soul Saturday**): **Fri June 10** – 5:00 PM Vespers/Matins (**Monastery**); **Sat June 11** – 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (St Simeon)

June 11/12 (**Sunday – Pentecost**): **Sat June 11** – **3:00 PM** (**PLEASE NOTE THE TIME**) Vigil (St Simeon); **Sun June 12** – 9:10 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

June 18/19 (**Sunday – All Saints**): **Sat June 18** – 5:00 PM Vigil (St Simeon); **Sun June 19** – 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (St Simeon)

June 23/24 (**Nativity of St. John the Baptist**): **Thurs June 23** – 5:00 PM Vigil (**Monastery**); **Fri June 24** – 8:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

June 25/26 (**Sunday – All Saints of America & Russia**): **Sat June 25** – 5:00 PM Vigil (**Monastery**); **Sun June 26** – 9:10 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

June 28/29 (**Ss. Peter and Paul**): **Tues June 28** – 5:00 PM Vigil (**Monastery**); **Wed June 29** – 8:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

St Simeon Church will also be holding 9:40 AM/10:00 AM Hours/Divine Liturgies in Slavonic on June 7 (OC 3rd Finding of the Head of St. Baptist) and June 27 (OC Prophet Elisha)

For **updates** and the rest of our schedule, please call the monastery at 707-942-6244 or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Calistoga-CA/Holy-Assumption-Monastery/106974442681502>.



Fr. Andrew Cuneo

C.S. Lewis & Fairy Tales

Many thanks to Fr. Andrew Cuneo and our intrepid Friends who gamely came the Sunday after Pascha (May 1) to hear him speak on "Why We Hope Narnia Is Real: C.S. Lewis on Longing." He explained that fairy tales are vitally important because they give voice to our deep longings for the lost past, the missing present, and the hoped-for future. We may long for times barely gone or for some distant golden age, but ultimately, we long for what we lost in Eden. As we go through the seemingly mundane present, we are dimly aware that we are missing things as they really are – tinged with mystery and wonder. Last, we put our hope in some future event.

The fairy tale, then, reminds us of what we are missing. We try to fill up that void in various ways (by trying to get back the past, by trying to acquire this or that in the present, or by looking for happiness in some future event), but in the end, the longing is for God and His Kingdom.

Right – an attentive crowd



Gobezie-Goshu Home for the Elderly

As mentioned in this month's letter, we recently had the privilege of seeing our friend Tsige Roman Gobezie and hearing the latest about her work. The labor of love that started out as a home for a maximum of 60 elderly people has blossomed into an outreach to the whole community. Among the many who have been touched by Tsige and her helpers are the infirm, the crippled, and young children.

Finding young children locked out of their house while their parents went to work, Tsige offered to put them in a small private school for young children. (Public school starts at age 7 and is notoriously poor. The children who go to these private schools have a great advantage in learning.)

From such a start a few years ago, Tsige is now supporting over a thousand students. Amazingly, it costs only \$50 to fund one year of schooling for a student. Tsige doesn't have all the money necessary to pay tuition for all these children. Her philosophy, though, is to keep accepting anybody who asks until the money stops coming.

If you would like to know more about Tsige's work, please see www.gghe.org. You can also contact Sunday Ballas (the treasurer of the Gobezie Foundation) by email at sunbfly@comcast.net or by phone at (805) 451-8462. Checks can be sent to Gobezie Goshu Home for the Elderly, PO Box 7533, Santa Maria, CA 93456. Please consider contributing to this very worthy cause!



Residents of the Home – making coffee



Tsige Roman Gobezie & Fr. Lawrence Russell



Gobezie Goshu Home for the Elderly – during the rainy season



Some of the school children whom Tsige supports

UPCOMING FRIENDS' MEETINGS

On Sunday **June 5**, Fr. John Finley (Department of Missions and Evangelism, Antiochian Archdiocese of America) will be speaking on *Them Bones, Them Bones, Them Dry Bones: Modern American Burial Practices in Light of Orthodox Theology of the Body*. The talk will be at 4 PM, vespers at 5 PM, and potluck at 6 PM.

At our **July 3, September 4, and November 6** Meetings, Vincent Rossi (St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa) will give a three-part series of talks on contemplative prayer. Vincent is a theologian, educator, and independent scholar, who wrote his doctoral thesis on St. Maximos the Confessor at Oxford University under the supervision of (then) Bishop Kallistos Ware.

On Monday **August 15**, Bishop BENJAMIN will celebrate **Dormition** with us. There will be no regular Friends' Meeting in August because of our Patronal Feast.

The **October 2** presentation, on an as yet undetermined topic, will be given by Father Deacon Gregory Roeber (Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies, Penn State University).