



## *Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – February, 2011*

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### *New Venture – Icon Mounting*

The sisters have started a new icon mounting studio. Our ever-expanding collection includes many ancient icons and also a number of icons by several modern iconographers, including Fr. Andrew Tregubov, Dn. Paul Drozdowski, Dmitry Shkolnik, Nicolai Tsai, Peter Dzyuba, and our own Mother Seraphima. We are hoping to have our new website up and running soon. When we do, you will be able to check out our selection. In the meantime, please call or email if you are interested in buying an icon.



Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

About a week ago (January 23), we celebrated the Feast of St. Clement of Ancyra. Astonishingly, St. Clement endured 28 years of torture for Christ. His liturgical service talks of how he arrayed himself “in vesture of glory ... instead of grievous despondency of spirit.” For most of us living in an age where depression runs rampant, St. Clement is both a beacon of light and a total puzzle. How could anyone endure what he did and not be severely depressed?

The key to this is in his kontakion, which tells us, “O much-suffering and most lauded Clement, thou didst cry out with those who suffered, 'Thou art the radiant joy of the martyrs, O Christ!'” There are at least two crucial things to notice here.

First, the verse doesn't just say “thou didst cry out” but “thou didst cry out with those who suffered.” Many services to martyrs speak of how the martyrs urge one another on to death for Christ. Without that encouragement, many would not have been able to finish the course.

Second and most important is what the martyrs cried out - “Thou art the radiant joy of the martyrs, O Christ!” If we are baffled by this courage, it is because we do not fully know Christ as our radiant joy. We are not likely to rival St. Clement. Yet if we consistently take small steps in the right direction, we can become true witnesses (which, of course, is what 'martyrs' means) of Christ in our daily lives.

An important first step is to support one another. In our fast-paced society, we have to make a very conscious effort to take time for even our closest relatives and friends. But if we take that time, we will find that it is time well spent. After all, God is not going to ask us what kind of car we drove, where we went to college, etc.; but He will ask us if we loved the people around us.

Another important step is to live in thankfulness. If we thank God constantly for the innumerable kindnesses He does for us, little by little depression will lose its grip on us, and we will cry out with St. Clement, “Thou art our radiant joy, O Christ!”

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

### *Calistoga Orthodox Wines – a Co-venture with St. Symeon Church*

St. Symeon Church and our monastery are starting a new co-venture called *Calistoga Orthodox Wines*. With the gracious help of local vintners, we are hoping to produce a chalice wine of the highest quality. For more information, please see the Facebook page for *Calistoga Orthodox Wines* at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Calistoga-Orthodox-Wines/160783593966540>



## Theophany 2011



*Blessing the Napa River*

We had a blessed Theophany celebration. Fr. John Ramos celebrated Liturgy, and a good number of our friends attended the service. The celebration continued on the following Sunday, when Fr. John came again and we all went at the end of the Divine Liturgy to bless the Napa River. It is wonderful to realize that this blessed water that flows past our monastery will flow into the Pacific Ocean, which receives the blessing, too. It reminds us that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" and that "Christ came to sanctify the waters" and to renew Creation. The marvel is that He lets us both participate in and partake of this renewal!



### *For the Birds*

If you find yourself at Holy Assumption Monastery as the sun rises, you may hear the dulcet sounds of a telephone ring, hammering, a truck's back-up beep, and cheery whistling. But it won't be the sisters making these sounds; they come from the birds! Petie, our African Gray, and Oscar the green conure greet the day with their favorite sounds, odd as their aural preferences may seem to us.



*Petie*



*Oscar*

Some of you may also remember Morris, our little cockatiel, to whom we had to say goodbye last spring when we learned he had long been suffering from cancer. We miss his adorable peeping and bright orange cheeks, but Petie and Oscar are doing very well. Oscar has grown much more gentle with sisters feeding him by hand, and Petie now begs for "scratches" on his head and neck from his primary caretaker. Both birds love attention from visitors as much as ever. They continually surprise us with their uncanny ability to imitate the sounds of machinery, animals, and people, so be careful what you say around them, and be prepared to hear anything!

### *Service Schedule for February*

We will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM on February 6. All other Sundays of February are still tentative. Saturday evening vigils will be at the Monastery at 5:00 PM on February 5, 19 and 26 and at St. Symeon Church on February 12. We will also be celebrating the following feasts:

Vigil - 5:00 PM, Tues, Feb 1 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Wed, Feb 2 for **the Meeting of the Lord**

Vigil - 5:00 PM, Mon, Feb 7 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Tues, Feb 8 for **Great Martyr Theodore the General**

Vigil - 5:00 PM, Wed, Feb 16 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Thurs, Feb 17 for **Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit**

Vigil - 5:00 PM, Wed, Feb 23 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Thurs, Feb 24 for **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Findings of the Head of St. John the Baptist**

Vigil - 5:00 PM, Fri, Feb 25 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Sat, Feb 26 for **Soul Saturday**

For updates, please call 707-942-6244 or go to our Facebook site - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Calistoga-CA/Holy-Assumption-Monastery/106974442681502>

**St. Symeon Church**, in addition to their regular Sunday schedule, will be celebrating the following services:

9:45 AM Hours/10:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Tues, Feb 15 for **the Meeting of the Lord** (Old Style)

### *Reminder: Friends Meeting - Sunday, February 6*

Don't forget to come to our first ever Meeting of the Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery! Abbot Meletios Webber of St. John of San Francisco Monastery in Manton, CA will speak at 4 PM on *Answering the Call to Repentance*. Vespers will be at 5 PM, followed by a Potluck at 6 PM.