



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – January 2011

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

What a glorious season we are in! Just yesterday, it seems, we celebrated the birth of Christ. Now, we are turning our gaze to Theophany – the baptism of Christ in the Jordan. One of our favorite Theophany hymns tells us “Christ came to sanctify the waters.” It's an amazing thing, really. Everybody else goes into water to be washed. Christ entered the Jordan to wash the waters so that they would be able to wash us! With the coming of Christ, all creation tingles with His Life, and through the humble things of creation God meets and renews us. In the baptismal waters, God regenerates us. With the oil of chrismation, the Holy Spirit seals us. In the bread and wine, we receive Christ Himself. True, all too often we fail to live in this newness, but Christ holds out His hands to us every day through the simple things of creation and through our fellow man – the pinnacle of creation. And every day, it is possible to answer, “Yes, Lord,” and return to Him.

It seems very fitting and encouraging, somehow, that Theophany follows so closely after the civil New Year. For so many of us, the handful of days between the two is enough to dash our New Year's resolutions to pieces. Theophany reminds us, though, that despite all the wreckage we see around and inside us, creation IS new in Christ and so are we.

May your New Year be filled with Christ and His love.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## Service Schedule for January

We will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM here at the Monastery on all Sundays of January except Jan 2. Saturday evening vigil will be at St. Simeon Church at 5:00 PM on Jan 1, 15 & 29 and at the Monastery on Jan 8 & 22.

We will also be celebrating the following feasts:

Vigil – 5:00 PM, Fri Dec 31 & 8:40 Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Sat Jan 1 for **The Circumcision of the Lord** and **St. Basil the Great**

Vigil – 5:00 PM, Wed Jan 5 & 8:40 Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Thurs Jan 6 for **Theophany**

Vigil – 5:00 PM, Tues Jan 11 & 8:40 Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Wed Jan 12 for **Martyr Tatiana of Rome**

Vigil – 5:00 PM, Sun Jan 16 & 8:40 Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Mon Jan 17 for **St. Anthony the Great**

Vigil – 5:00 PM, Mon Jan 24 & 8:40 Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Tues Jan 25 for **St. Gregory the Theologian**

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

Vigil – 3:00 PM, Thurs Jan 6 & 9:45 AM Hours/10:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Fri Jan 7 for **the Nativity of Christ (Old Style)**

9:45 AM Hours/10:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Fri Jan. 14 for **The Circumcision of the Lord (Old Style)**

Vigil – 3:00 PM, Tues Jan 18 & 9:45 AM Hours/10:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Wed Jan 19 for **Theophany (Old Style)**

## Calistoga Community Christmas Bazaar



*Ready for action!*

On Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, we participated for the second year in a row in the Calistoga Community Christmas Bazaar. In addition to selling an assortment of our goods, we were able to do storytellings. Special thanks to Sandy Wilson, who kindly placed our table next to a room in which we were able to conduct the storytellings. We had a fair handful of children at most of the storytellings. Even more fun, though, was the audience comprised of young-at-heart adults!

We thank our friends who came to support us and our new friends that we met while at the bazaar.



### Advent Retreat

On Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Andrew Cuneo spoke on “Ancient Book, Modern Mind: Reading the Bible in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” He talked of the ancient categories of wisdom, knowledge, and information. Information, though important, only serves as a basis for knowledge and wisdom, which are relation-based and far less dependent on words. We who live in “The Information Age” do well to remember the limitations of information – it can tell us about God, but humble love and obedience are necessary to bring knowledge and wisdom.

We were very delighted not just with the talk, but with the large crowd who attended. We hope this is the first of a long line of well attended retreats. Many thanks to Fr. Andrew for his talk and to all who helped prepare and who attended the retreat.



*Fr. Andrew speaks to a rapt audience*

### Christmas in Calistoga



*At the Holy Meal*

We had an unexpectedly magnificent Christmas! We had been unable to find a priest and were resigned to going elsewhere for both Liturgies when, through the good offices of Fr. Andrey Kovalev (of St. Nicholas Cathedral in San Francisco), Fr. George Gulin of Holy Myrrhbearers Church in West Sacramento graciously volunteered to serve for us. Fr. George served Royal Hours, the Vespers Liturgy, Vigil, and the main Liturgy for us in the space of roughly 18 hours.

In between the Vespers Liturgy and Vigil, we celebrated the Holy Meal, which is traditional in many Slavic communities. This 12-course lenten meal starts after the first star is sighted in the sky and after the animals are fed (in memory of Christ's lying in a manger). This year the singing was enhanced by the voices of Fr. George and his children.

In addition to Fr. George and family, we were blessed to have a good number of other friends celebrating the Nativity with us. May God grant us all such a joyous Christmas next year!

### First Friends' Meeting – Sunday, February 6

Join us on February 6 for our first ever meeting of the Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery. **Abbot Meletios Webber** will be speaking at 4 PM on *Answering the Call to Repentance*. The talk will be followed by Vespers at 5 PM and a potluck at 6 PM.

There will be no March meeting, due to the beginning of Lent. At the April 3 meeting, Fr. Lawrence and Matushka Ann Margitich will speak about their recent tour of the Holy Land. Subsequent meetings will feature other priests and laypeople from the area. Please join us for these wonderful opportunities for fellowship with our brothers and sisters from nearby (and further away, too!).