



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – March, 2011

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New Website

We have finally launched our new website. We do intend to put our bookstore on-line and hope to complete that in the not-too-distant future. In the meantime, please visit us at www.holyassumptionmonastery.com, and keep watching for updates!



Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

The other day, one of our sisters had an errand downtown. A lady came up to her and said that she passed the monastery every day and often saw us in the refectory eating. Seeing us at the dinner table together made her a little jealous when she thought of how her own family scattered early in the day and seldom ate together. Her comment made us appreciate our meal times more than we have in a while.

It is so easy for our common meal to seem just that – common, unremarkable. In fact, meals are important on every level: physical, emotional, social, and, above all, spiritual. After all, the Eucharist is a meal, or rather, it is THE meal. If our regular meals are not images of THE meal, they are not all that they were meant to be.

With Lent at our door, this may seem a strange time to be talking about the importance of eating together. But we are reminded of the abbot who always told his monks, “Eat whatever you want, but be sure to eat Christ.” As we go through our daily lives, we seldom remember to eat Christ. Lent – with its increased fasting, almsgiving, and prayer – is a God-given opportunity to return to the One Who gave us His own Flesh and Blood to eat.

May God grant us all a blessed Lent in which we eat together, pray together, and work together to bring the light of Christ to those around us. And may we all see His Light and eat His Body and Blood on the glorious day of His Resurrection.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

Update on Calistoga Orthodox Wines

As we mentioned in last month's newsletter, St. Symeon Church and our monastery are starting a new co-venture called *Calistoga Orthodox Wines*. Our goal is to produce a chalice wine of the highest quality.



If all goes as planned, our first batch of wine will be ready by the end of the summer. For updates, please see the Facebook page for *Calistoga Orthodox Wines* at www.facebook.com/pages/Calistoga-Orthodox-Wines/160783593966540

Our First Friends' Meeting



Jenny & Nathan Blancas – No, this isn't against Child Labor Laws!

Our first ever Friends meeting went marvelously well. Speaking on "Answering the Call to Repentance," Abbot Meletios Webber reminded us that repentance is not about feeling guilty, but about a change or 'adjustment' in our *nous* or heart – the place where we meet God. True repentance doesn't look backward, but looks forward in hope. It also involves getting out of our heads (when we're in our heads, we constantly listen to our *logismoi* – the thoughts of fear and desire that rule our lives in our brokenness) and finding that silent place in us where God dwells.

There were over one hundred people, which was a wonderful crowd, even had it not been Super Bowl Sunday! It was a great mix of ages (children, young adults, middle-aged, and older people) and distance traveled (local residents, people from Sacramento and the Bay Area, and even southern Californians).

We are grateful to everybody who made our first Friends' meeting such an overwhelming success. Now, we look forward to many more Friends' meetings with even more Friends!



Bridget Cuneo enjoying her meal – Mm, mm good!



Fr. Joakim blessing the monastery's bells



Blessing of the Monastery

We had the blessing of the monastery rather late this year (due largely to the great difficulty of getting eleven people to have their rooms clean all at the same time!), but it was, as always, wonderful to sing the Troparion of Theophany and receive God's blessing through the holy water sprinkled liberally throughout the monastery. It was our first experience of blessing the koi (as we did not have them back yet when we blessed the monastery last year). They, the rabbits, the birds, and even the cats seemed to know on some level that they were being blessed. Let all creation bless the Lord!!

Lenten Schedule

We will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM on Sunday March 6. All other Sundays are still tentative. Saturday evening vigils will be at St. Symeon at 5:00 PM on March 5 and 19 and at the monastery on March 12 and 26.

Saturday Divine Liturgies are tentatively scheduled for all Saturdays of Lent except March 26.

Our regular Lenten weekday schedule will be

7:00 AM Matins, Monday through Friday

12:15 PM 6th Hour, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

1:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy – Wednesday (**at St. Symeon Church**) and Friday (at the monastery)

4:00 PM Vespers – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

5:00 PM Small Compline, followed tentatively by Matins – Friday

6:00 PM Great Compline – Monday through Thursday

We will celebrate the **the Annunciation** with Vigil – 5:00 PM, Thurs, Mar 24 & 8:40 AM Hours/9:00 AM Divine Liturgy, Fri, Mar 25

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