



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – May 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Christ is risen!

Thanks be to God for having granted us yet another Holy Week, Pascha and Bright Week. Such an amazing time! In all the solemnity of Holy Week, the Church never loses sight of the fact that Christ is always Victor, even in the midst of His Passion. Then, there is the triumphant joy of Pascha and Bright Week and the open doors of the altar, testifying that Christ has opened wide the gates of heaven to us.

When, however, the priest close the altar doors at the end of Bright Week, it is a sad but salutary reminder that through our own sins we – so to speak – close the doors of heaven on ourselves. It's a painful realization, but it is also a great opportunity to look at the things that keep us from entering into the heavenly life of love and obedience to God.

The good news is that every Sunday is the Resurrection. Every Sunday, the altar doors are opened and remind us of the One Who is Himself the Door (cf. John 10:9), the One Who bent down the heavens and came down so that He might take us back up with Him.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## ZOO UPDATE

Our new conure Pixley has made herself quite at home in our aviary. Despite her inability to fly well – or more likely because of it – she has proven herself to be a magnificent long-jumper. Unfortunately, it's probably too late to enter her in the 2012 Summer Olympics! She and Oscar haven't exactly decided to be friends yet, but they tolerate each other quite well, and we're still hoping! As for Petie, he is still ensconced in the office, where he has recently demonstrated his ability to count to five!

If you stop by our koi pond, you'll see some “baby” koi along with the “teenagers” and the “grownups.” Till now, the babies had been residents of “the fish shed” (the utility shed directly behind St. Nicholas House) because they were not large enough to avoid getting caught in the filtration system. Now, though, the fish shed is scheduled to be converted into a temporary office until St. Nicholas House is renovated. The sisters modified the filters so that most of the babies are safe, but four are still too small. So, we are making them a floating cage, which will allow them to live safely in the big pond until they can join their fellows. We hope all the babies will enjoy the great outdoors!

Last but certainly not least, our cat Ashley is sporting a lion cut these days. It keeps her cool – and at the height of feline fashion!



*Why is the tropical rainforest outside, but WE are inside?!*



*Wow, look at those GIANTS!*



*OF COURSE, the lion cut was my idea!*



*Just WHAT did I do to deserve THIS?!*

## APRIL FRIENDS MEETING

On Sunday April 1, Fr. Alexander Krassovsky spoke on the nature of passions and of true repentance. He reminded us of how passions grow from small things, that are not themselves necessarily sins. They creep up on us bit by bit and we don't know what's happening till the passion has become full grown and all encompassing. So, an occasional drink can, bit by bit, become a full-blown problem with alcohol. Some passions are more socially acceptable, but even worse. We may refuse to forgive a trivial offense, forgetting that in doing so we are essentially praying that Christ condemn us since we pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Or we can be attached in an unhealthy way to certain religious opinions or observances and fall into delusion. In either case, we lose rational perspective and also lose control.



*Fr. Alexander Krassovsky*

As for true repentance, many people say that it takes an entire lifetime to repent, but it can take place in a split second when one encounters true holiness, realizes the depth of one's sins and stops blaming others for them. St. Mary of Egypt is an excellent example. She was untroubled by her sinful life until she was stopped by an invisible force from entering the Church to venerate the Cross. Seeing an icon of the Theotokos, she saw her sinfulness in the light of the Theotokos' purity. Seeing the depth of her sin, she underwent a dramatic conversion and vowed to follow Christ. That didn't mean that she wasn't tempted later. Rather, she went through 17 years of great temptations with her besetting passions - the same number of years that she lived a licentious life. The difference between her and us, though, was that she kept her vow firmly before her, and begged for (and received) heavenly help to keep that vow. For us, the main take-home point in this regard is a call to be serious in our repentance and make every effort not to continue in the sins that we have confessed.



## VISIT FROM THE LADIES OF ST. GABRIEL MISSION

On Saturday, March 31, a few of the ladies from St. Gabriel Mission in Angels Camp, CA visited the monastery for a mini-retreat. After joining us for Liturgy and the Agape Meal, they listened to Mother Melania speak on St. Mary of Egypt. This was followed by a tour and another talk by Mother Melania, this time on the Beatitudes - comparing what the world thinks will make us happy with what Christ assures us will cause us to be blessed.

We enjoyed their visit and hope to see them again soon with more of their community members.



*No, you're not on candid camera, but go ahead and smile anyway*



## PASCHA 2012

We are grateful to God for another Pascha. Unfortunately, we have no pictures of the Paschal service itself. Below, though, are pictures of events leading up to and stemming from the Feast of Feasts!



*Preparing pussy willows and palms for Palm Sunday*



*Cleaning brass*



*At the Paschal Meal*



*Singing "Christ is risen" at the cemetery on Radonitsa (the Day of Rejoicing)*

**May 2012 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery (blue) & St. Simeon Parish (red)**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 5:00pm Vespers/Matins (at Monastery)	<b>2</b> 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <a href="#">St. Athanasius</a>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
<b>6</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 5:00pm Vespers/Matins (at Monastery)	<b>9</b> 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <a href="#">Midfeast</a>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
<b>13</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  4:00 PM FRIENDS MEETING (at Monastery)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 5:00pm Reader's Vigil (at Monastery)
<b>20</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	<b>21</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  <i>Slavonic Liturgy</i>  <a href="#">St John the Theologian</a>	<b>22</b> 5:00pm Paschal Vespers (at Monastery)	<b>23</b> 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <a href="#">Leavetaking of Pascha</a>  5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)	<b>24</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  <a href="#">Ascension</a>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
<b>27</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	<b>28</b> 9:00am Hours/Divine Liturgy  at Fort Ross (annual ROCOR pilgrimage)	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

Announcing  
**THE MAY 2012 MEETING**  
of the  
**FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY**

**Sunday May 13, 2012**

***The Role of the Samaritan  
Woman in Hymnography***

Presented by

***His Eminence Metropolitan NIKITAS (Lulias)***

*Director, Patriarch Orthodox Athenagoras Institute*



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**June 10** Meeting – Robin Joy Wellman, State Park Interpreter, will speak about Fort Ross, sharing many stories about the people and diverse cultural groups that created this colony. She will also update us on the most recent research findings and current programs and events that keep Fort Ross thriving.

**July 8** Meeting – “Hundreds Turn to Christ in Turkana: Kenyan Catechism,” given by OCMC Team Member Roberta Sardell.

**August 15 (Wednesday) - Dormition** – please join us for our altar feast!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL (707) 942-6244

or EMAIL [sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com](mailto:sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com)

# Renovation Update

On the reverse side of this page you will see the semi-final version of the remodel plans for St. Nicholas House. Major changes include:

- Relocating the main entrance to the corner of the building, to accommodate wheelchair access
- Enclosing the two porches, one to house our bookstore and the other our office
- Expanding the central bathroom for handicap access
- Adding a shower and toilet to existing laundry/utility room
- Repartitioning hallway and cell walls to make areas more navigable and efficient
- Creating four new storage spaces

Soon we hope to make decisions on building materials, which will help us generate an estimate of the overall project cost. Stay tuned for more info, and watch for changes at the monastery as early as this summer!

St. Nicholas House  
Renovation  
Proposal

