



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – December 2013

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

The expression “O Thou Who alone knowest the hearts of men” (cf. II Chron. 6:30) crops up often in our services. It's a beautiful phrase, but what has gotten us thinking about it lately is just how often we insist that WE know what is in people's hearts. How many relationships are broken when one person misconstrues another's words to mean something that was never intended! And, if we're in the place of the first person, why is it so excruciatingly painful to consider the possibility that we are mistaken? No doubt, there are many answers to the latter question, but one way or another they probably come down to pride and fear – the pride of thinking that we know what is going on and the fear of trying to survive in a world where we don't know very much and have little or no control. Indeed, it is terrifying to live in such a world unless there is someone who knows all things, does have control and is absolutely trustworthy.

This brings us back to where we started – to God Who alone knows the hearts of men. He knows us better than we know ourselves, but that knowledge did not make Him turn in disgust from us. Rather, it caused Him to send His Son to share in our human frailty to raise us up to share in His Divine Life.

As Christmas approaches, may we prepare our hearts as thrones for the humble King of Heaven. He alone knows our hearts, but the more we become like Him, the more we will understand the hearts of those around us. And the sign that we are progressing in this knowledge is that we will become like Christ – ready to lay down our lives for our neighbors.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

CASKETS - Update

We have been very heartened by the interest in our casket-making venture. The editor of *The Weekly Calistogan* wrote a great article on our caskets. From that article, a local mortician became aware of our venture and expressed interest in carrying them.

At the time of this writing, our first group of caskets is finished except for the crosses, which we hope will arrive within the week. Thanks again to all of you who have expressed support for us in this – and in all other endeavors!



FRIENDS' MEETINGS – a Change for the Coming Year

For some time now, our Friends' meetings have generally been sparsely attended. When we asked a few friends about it, they replied that Sunday evenings are difficult for them, and they would prefer a few Saturday retreats per year to monthly Friends' meetings. However, we do have our “diehards,” who come regularly to Friends meetings, and who would like to continue the meetings. So, we have decided to try to have three Saturday retreats per year and – starting in January – to make the monthly meetings a time of informal fellowship, with a short talk or question-and-answer session by Mother Melania during the meal. The new schedule will be 4 PM Vespers followed by the meal and talk at roughly 5 PM.

As before, all are welcome to the meetings. Please come when you can!

NOVEMBER FRIENDS MEETING

At our November 17 Friends' meeting, Fr. Stephan Meholick spoke on *Orthodox Worship: Ritualism vs. Logikē Latreía*. He purposely left the latter phrase untranslated to underline the fact that we can never completely understand what a given writing meant to its original hearers in its original context – this is true even when we speak that language, but much more so when we must translate into another language.



Fr. Stephan Meholick

The phrase *Logikē Latreía*, which appears in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at least three times, is taken from Romans 12:1 and is variously translated “reasonable service,” “reasonable worship,” “spiritual worship,” etc. *Latreía* is not the usual word for worship – that is *proskunesis*, which basically means to bow down. This was the act required by the pagan Romans of the Christians – to bow down before their idols and offer incense. They didn't care what you thought of the idol, as long as you were willing to perform the outward signs. *Latreía* on the other hand was the worship offered by a member of a particular cult and involved the rites of that deity. So, it involved the person's whole being, including the physical.

Logikē can be translated a variety of ways – fair, equitable, understandable, moderate, reasonable, logical, etc. Fr. Stephan chose not to consider its relationship to *Logos* because the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the word are very complex. So, he mostly focused on the utter necessity in worship “to mean what we say and say what we mean.” This requires a state of inner attention – a state to which we can never say that we've fully “arrived” because we can always be more attentive. This attitude towards our liturgical worship must spill out into our whole lives. We can not truly help others or be true worshipers of God unless we have developed this attentiveness.



If we promise to be attentive, may we sit down?

The talk was followed by a lively discussion, which would have continued for hours if we had had the time. So, we are trying to convince Fr. Stephan to give a retreat on the general topic of Liturgy. Stay tuned!



HERE, THERE, AND ABOUT

We were thankful to be asked again to bring our bookstore to SS. Peter and Paul's annual Christmas Bazaar.



All ready for customers – Wait!, we forgot to bring a sister!

It's always a joy to see good friends!



Some people will do anything to get an audience.



Fr. Mark and Kh. Barbara Sahady



Laura Cosovanu with beautiful baby Maria



A foot to the right. No, an inch to the left ...



Uh, I think this cactus has forgotten to shave!



ZOO UPDATE



Zorro - No, no, Caesar! You're supposed to look AT the camera!

A few months back, we featured Caesar the goldfish and his companion Zorro the fancy goldfish. Zorro was still a youngster when he came to us – which, in his case at least, meant a barrel-shaped body and pop-eyes. He has grown a lot and shows every sign of turning into a very handsome fish – in fact, he seems to be the ugly duckling of the fish world! Perhaps Caesar knows this and is a trifle jealous because he has been known to chase Zorro around the aquarium. Fortunately, either Caesar's jealousy is not very strong or he's not in the best athletic shape because he usually only chases Zorro for thirty seconds or so. In the meantime, if anybody has a book on training goldfish in good manners, please let us know!!!

December 2013 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

Monastery contact info – (707) 942-6244; email – sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com;

website – <http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	2	3	4 <u>Entry of the Theotokos (Old Style)</u> No service	5	6 9:30am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (at St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo) <u>St. Nicholas</u>	7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
8 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (Visiting Clergy) 4:00pm FRIENDS' MEETING (both at Monastery)	9	10	11	12	13	14 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
15 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) (Visiting Clergy)	16 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	17 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths</u> (Visiting Clergy)	18	19	20	21 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
22 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	23	24 1:00pm Vesperal Liturgy 5:00pm Christmas Eve meal 8:00pm Vigil (all at Holy Assumption Monastery) (Visiting Clergy)	25 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery) <u>Nativity of our Lord</u> (Visiting Clergy)	26	27	28 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
29 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	30	31	Notes:			

Announcing
THE DECEMBER 2013 MEETING
of the
FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

Sunday December 8, 2013

WHEREFORE MAN AND WOMAN:

*Exploring the Purpose of Sexual Duality in
Mankind and Its Implications for the Ordination
of Women to the Priesthood*

Presented by

Sr. Margarete



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

CHANGE IN FORMAT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

Starting in January, the Friends' Meetings will no longer feature a formal talk. Instead, Vespers will be at 4 PM followed at roughly 5 PM by a potluck meal, at which Mother Melania will deliver a short talk or engage in a question and answer session. All are welcome!

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