



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – October 2013

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

During the meal after Roger Moss' presentation on restorative justice, somebody mentioned that many organizations have policies instructing employees never to admit their mistakes. At the root of such policies is a fear of lawsuits. Now, though, a good bit of research indicates that lawsuits may actually decrease when those at fault admit their mistakes and apologize.

So often, all that people really want is an apology. If they don't receive it, they'll file a lawsuit and settle for a million dollars in damages! But of course, the million dollars never touches the REAL damage, and so people and relationships stay broken. Most of us will never end up on either side of a million-dollar lawsuit. However, we all have hurt others, and few of us readily admit our faults and ask forgiveness. What is it we fear? Maybe our loved ones' anger, maybe the effort involved in putting things right, maybe having to admit to ourselves our own imperfection. Who knows? What we DO know, whether we admit it to ourselves or not, is that things will never really be right until we humble ourselves and ask forgiveness. It is not easy, but in the end we may win something far more important than a lawsuit – we may win our brother!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## MEMORY ETERNAL!



*Kaliopi and friends*

In September, two very special members of our broader community reposed in the Lord. Kaliopi Vechos, who reposed on September 11, was well described in Fr. Joakim's eulogy as possessing a childlike holiness, the like of which he (and we) had never seen before. Her delighted smile in greeting visitors, her joy whenever she saw a baby, her tender love for all God's creatures – especially the young or frail – are remembrances we will carry forever.

Our other dear friend, Costandi Zacharia, departed this life on September 23. Costandi had a quiet, but quick wit and a keen intelligence. He loved to sing during the Liturgy, and no doubt is singing joyfully with the angels now. What we will remember most about him, though, is his love for everyone – especially his wife Suheila and their family.



*Costandi  
Zacharia*

It is hard to say goodbye to our beloved friends, but the veil between heaven and earth is a thin one, and no doubt they are praying for us as we pray for them. Memory eternal!



## ANOTHER GOODBYE



*Alana repairing the koi  
pond – she has plenty of  
great fish stories!*

Most of you know Alana Abriam, who has lived with our community the whole time we've been in Calistoga (and for a year previous to that in Santa Paula). At the end of September, she moved to Moscow, where she is enrolled in graduate studies in iconography. She will be missed terribly, but we wish her the best and look forward to hearing how her studies progress.

## SEPTEMBER FRIENDS MEETING



Roger Moss

At our September 8 Friends' meeting, Roger Moss (an attorney-mediator) spoke on *Restorative Justice and Healing*. Asked by Roger to give a few introductory comments, Mother Melania recounted Elder Paisius' illustration of human and divine justice. If there are ten peaches, human justice would be to give one's friend five and keep five for oneself. Divine justice is to give one's friend nine and keep one. Most of us can see that giving our friend nine peaches is the generous and loving thing to do, but find it puzzling to consider this a JUST act. That is because our concept of justice is largely about fairness. The Christian understanding, though, is illustrated by Evagrius, who talks about the different virtues of the soul and then says that when virtue has come into the WHOLE soul, that is justice. So, justice is about wholeness – and that implies right relationship with God and each other.

Roger then spoke of how the American justice system is an adversarial model, which focuses on punishing the offender for breaking the law. So, our law is largely impersonal and does little to nothing to help the victim, even when it's functioning well. In recent times, however, our justice system has clearly broken down. The courts and jails are full to overflowing, the under-privileged (minorities, mentally disabled, etc.) often get caught in the system for little or no reason and get sucked into a system they can never get quite free of.

The restorative model (now the norm in Australia and New Zealand and also used to good effect in certain American communities), on the other hand, focuses on repairing harms, holding the offender accountable, and restoring health to the community injured by the crime. Roger gave an example of a friend of his who lived in a very safe area and never locked his house. Somebody broke into the friend's vehicle when it was parked outside his home and stole his wallet and sunglasses. The material loss was negligible, but the man's sense of security has been shattered. Within the context of our adversarial system, justice is done if the thief is caught and sent to jail. However, this does nothing to heal the real hurt to Roger's friend and to his community, which is also hurt by the knowledge that a theft has occurred in the neighborhood. In the restorative model, the focus is on meeting the needs of all with a stake in this crime (the offender, the victim, and the community). Everyone needs to be able to tell his side of the story and to know that he is being heard and to be empowered to heal. The victim needs restitution (in some cases, such as murder, full restitution is impossible, but what restitution can be made needs to be made). The offender needs to be held accountable. Without this accountability, the offender can not be transformed. However, he needs the encouragement and support of the community to make possible his shouldering his responsibility and changing for the better. This often includes helping him deal with the harms that have been done to him (e.g. abusers have often been abused themselves). At times, the offender needs to be restrained, to avoid hurting others. The community needs to foster conditions that promote healthy relationships and take responsibility for its previous failures to do so. The end result is not perfect, but this model is far more effective in repairing harms and transforming lives than our current system is.

After a lively question and answer period, the discussion came full circle to Evagrius' definition of justice as wholeness of soul. We should do what we can to foster a better judicial system in our country. In the end, though, what is most important is to become just ourselves, and that means becoming whole of soul, which in turn means doing all those things necessary to be in right relationship with God and each other.



Caesar and Zorro

### ZOO UPDATE – Two for the Zoo!

Our zoo has increased by two. Caesar the goldfish looked a bit lonely. So, we got him a friend named Zorro. Zorro, whose name was suggested by the black “mask” around his eyes, is a fancy goldfish, the shape of which one sister compared to that of a pot-belly pig. But, then, pot-belly pigs have character and so does Zorro!

Our other new zoo member is Simba, a blue-eyed orange tabby. The local Farmers' Market has an adopt-a-pet booth, which our sisters are intrinsically incapable of passing by. So, a few weeks ago, several of the sisters met Simba and convinced Mother Melania that the monastery needed a feline presence in Ashley's old quarters. Simba graciously agreed to fill that need. Of course, Ashley is irreplaceable, but Simba is quite the sweetheart and has quickly won a place in the sisters' hearts.



Simba – aka “Old Blue Eyes”

## October 2013 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

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

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

| Sun   | Mon                                     | Tue   | Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat   |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|
|   |   | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)  | <b>3</b><br>5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)<br><br><u>St. Dionysius the Areopagite</u> | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)   |
| <b>6</b><br>9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  | <b>7</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | <b>8</b><br>5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)<br><br><u>Ven. Pelagia and Thais</u> | <b>9</b>   | <b>10</b>   | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b><br>5:00pm Reader's Vigil (at Monastery)   |
| <b>13</b><br>9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)<br><br>4:00pm FRIENDS MEETING (at Monastery) | <b>14</b>                               | <b>15</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)  | <b>16</b><br>5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)<br><br><u>St. Longinus the Centurion</u> | <b>17</b>   | <b>18</b>  | <b>19</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)  |
| <b>20</b><br>9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)   | <b>21</b>                               | <b>22</b>   | <b>23</b>  | <b>24</b><br>5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)  | <b>25</b><br>5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy<br><br><u>Righteous Tabitha</u><br><br>5:00pm Reader's Vigil<br><br>(both at Monastery) | <b>26</b><br>11:00am Divine Liturgy (at Macedonian Park)<br><br><b>Great Martyr Demetrios</b><br><br>5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| <b>27</b><br>9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  | <b>28</b>                               | <b>29</b>   | <b>30</b>  | <b>31</b>   |  |   |

Announcing  
**THE OCTOBER 2013 MEETING**  
of the  
**FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY**

**Sunday October 13, 2013**

**THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE SEVENTH  
ECUMENICAL COUNCIL:**

*Its spiritual and practical  
implications for our lives*

Presented by

**V. Rev. James Jorgenson**

Associate Professor of Church History and Biblical Languages (Retired),  
Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**November 17** – *still a mystery!*

**NOTE** – the November Friends meeting will be on November 17, NOT November 10

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL (707) 942-6244  
or EMAIL [sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com](mailto:sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com)