



## *Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – April 2014*

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A video appears in our in-boxes every so often, showing several people bent over with the exertion of carrying their crosses. One person continually asks God to shorten his cross, cuts down the cross himself, thanks God, and walks off whistling with his short cross. Finally, they all reach a gulf, which all the others pass over by laying their crosses over the gap and using them as bridges. Tragically, the one with the shortened cross can not pass over. The video ends with a quote from GK Chesterton, “Christianity has not so much been tried and found wanting as it has been found difficult and left untried.”

Too often, we forget the obvious and unwelcome truth that we can't rise from the dead if we haven't died first! There are at least two aspects of this. First, we need to recognize that when we do something outside of God (even if it wins us a Nobel Peace Prize!) we are “the walking dead” because we have cut ourselves off from Life Himself. So, we all NEED to rise from the dead because we're all dead in one way or another. Second, and ironically, we have to put to death the “dead” part of ourselves, precisely by accepting our crosses and walking not wherever our own desires lead us, but to Golgotha to be crucified with Christ. If we do this, we will have truly tried Christianity and found in this very dying our Resurrected Lord!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

### ***ZOO UPDATE – cats, cats, and more cats***

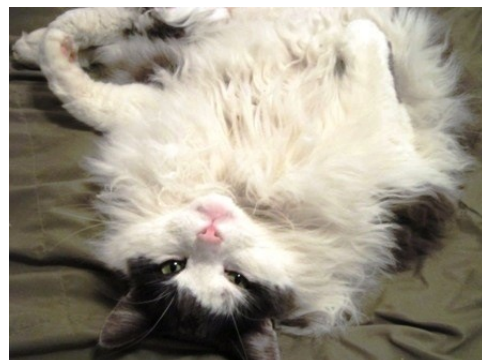
The feline population of the monastery has watched with astonishment and disdain as we have devoted so much ink in this space to FISH of all things! On the other hand, the cats have made it clear that our literary skills are unequal to the daunting task of properly extolling their virtues. So, they decided the best thing to do under the circumstances was to include a small photo gallery. Enjoy!



*Simba – you woke me up to tell me THAT?!*



*Balou – it's exhausting trying to run this place!*



*Philly – No, I am NOT upside down.  
It's the rest of the world!!!*



*Floyd Frantz*

## ***RETREAT – Addiction and Recovery from an Orthodox Perspective***

On March 15, Floyd Frantz (an OCMC missionary in Romania who works largely with educating priests on how to help the alcoholics in their parishes) gave a retreat on *Addiction and Recovery from an Orthodox Perspective*. Alcoholics Anonymous has its roots in Christian groups that were trying to find early Christianity. So, the fundamental principles of AA and other 12-step groups are basic Christian principles put in a systematized way to deal with addictions. Addictions are biological-sociological-psychological-spiritual illnesses. So, attempts to address addictions that do not involve the spiritual aspect (such as purely psychological or physical treatments) can not truly heal the whole person because they overlook the most vital aspect. For addicts, living by the twelve steps is truly a matter of life and death – if they fail to live by these principles, they will sink back into their disease.

However, predicated as the twelve steps are on basic Christian principles, we should all be living by them. For example, the first three steps (summarized in some 12 step programs as “I can’t, God can, I’ll let God”) are, within the Christian context, a recognition that we are all powerless over our sinfulness and that God is able and willing to help us, but we must turn our lives over to Him for that to happen. The remainder of the steps involve basic things necessary for continuing to live our Christian lives – to look fearlessly at our moral lapses and sins, to admit these to another person (in our context, primarily in confession to the priest), make amends where possible, develop our relationship with God through prayer, and carry the good news to others.



*A rapt audience!*

Thus, each step has a more generally applicable “Orthodox version.” For instance, instead of AA's Step 3 “We made a decision to turn our wills and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him,” the Orthodox Step 3 is “We made a decision to turn our wills and lives over to the care of God as He reveals Himself in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Thus, in AA, God Himself remains anonymous, but in the Church, He clearly reveals Himself. AA itself does not claim to be a stopping point, but encourages people to grow ever closer to God. For the Orthodox, the temptation is to say “Well, we know Who God is – He has already revealed Himself to us.” But we may forget that we have to “work the steps” – to live the life that the Holy Spirit calls us to live. So whether we are addicts or not, we are all sinners who have messed up our lives in one way or the other, and the 12 Steps are good ways for letting go of the illusion that we can heal ourselves and for giving our lives and wills over to God for His healing – and interestingly, salvation and healing are basically the same word. So, our healing from our passions/addictions is integral to our true salvation.



## ***UNCTION SERVICE***

On Friday, March 21, Archbishop Kyrill celebrated an Unction service at St. Simeon Church. Joining him, along with Fr. Joakim, were Archpriest Alexander Krassovsky (Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa), Archpriest Lawrence Margitich and Archpriest John Shettig (St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa), Priest Dimitri Jakimowicz (St. Herman of Alaska Church, Sunnysvale) and Subdeacon Peter Karakozoff. The choir was led by Nicolas Custer. Afterwards, the sisters were blessed to host a meal at the monastery.



*Prayer before the meal*



*First course and second and third ...*



*Dessert, anybody?*



*Petie sharing some thoughts with His Eminence*

**April 2014 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church**  
 Monastery contact info – (707) 942-6244; email – [sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com](mailto:sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com);  
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 6 pm Matins with <a href="#">the Great Canon</a> (at Monastery)	3	4 6 pm Matins with <a href="#">the Akathist to the Theotokos</a> (at Monastery)	5 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  5 pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  5 pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)	7 <b>9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)</b>  <b>Annunciation (Old Calendar)</b>	8	9 6 pm Presanctified Liturgy (at Monastery)	10	11 6 pm Vigil (at Monastery)	12 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy  5 pm Vigil  (both at Monastery)  <a href="#">Lazarus Saturday</a>
13 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy  4 pm Vespers followed by <b>FRIENDS potluck</b>  7 pm <b>Bridegroom Matins</b>  (all at Monastery)  <b><a href="#">Palm Sunday</a></b>	14 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy  8 pm Bridegroom Matins (both at Monastery)  <a href="#">Great and Holy Monday</a>	15 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  8 pm Bridegroom Matins (at Monastery)  <a href="#">Great and Holy Tuesday</a>	16 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy  8 pm Institutional Matins of Holy Thursday (both at Monastery)  <a href="#">Great and Holy Wednesday</a>	17 9:40am Vesperal Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  5pm Matins w/ 12 Passion Gospels (at Monastery)  <a href="#">Great and Holy Thursday</a>	18 7am Royal Hours  1 pm Vespers  5 pm Lamentations Matins (all at Monastery)  <a href="#">Great and Holy Friday</a>	19 9:40am Vesperal Liturgy (at Monastery)  11:30pm <b>Midnight Office (at St Simeon Parish)</b>  <a href="#">Great and Holy Saturday</a>
20 <b>12:00am Paschal Matins/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)</b>  <b>Pascha</b>  11:30am Paschal Vespers (at Macedonian Park)	21 8:00am Matins/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <a href="#">Bright Monday</a>	22	23	24	25	26 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery)
27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	28	29	30			