



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – July 2014

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

We all have people in our lives whom we find difficult to be around, and most of us would say of these people “I don't like so-and-so.” There's nothing remarkable about that. So, why bother commenting?

For one thing, by categorizing them as people we don't like, we are reducing persons made in the image of God to their negative qualities. Christ calls us to love our neighbors, but how can we do that when we have relegated others to our “do not like” piles?

What would happen, though, if every time we caught ourselves saying “I don't like so-and-so,” we tried to find at least three good things about them? What if we added to that “God bless so-and-so”? At first, probably not much. But if we stick with it, we will probably eventually go from “I don't like so-and-so” to “I wish so-and-so wouldn't do such-and-such, but there is a lot of good in them.” And if we stick with it long enough, we may just find we're too busy loving our neighbors to remember why we disliked them so much in the first place!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE

The aviary received some much-needed care this past month and now boasts new ropes, new toys, and new lighting! Many thanks to our friends John and Chloe (who rehabilitated Pixley before re-homing her here at the monastery) for their donation of full-spectrum lighting fixtures and bulbs so that all the birds can enjoy "sunlight" even on cloudy days.

Just as exciting was the addition of heated perches to both aviary rooms; these perches plug into an outlet and maintain a constant 102-degree temperature. Many birds love heated perches as a way to keep their feet warm and comfortable. Petie soon claimed his heated perch and now eats his breakfast there every morning. But Oscar and Pixley have not yet "warmed up" to their perch, in spite of the treat box the sisters attached to it. The conures hop onto the perch to grab a treat, and then usually go somewhere else to enjoy their booty. Perhaps when fall arrives, the heated perch will start to look more inviting!



Oscar – I got my treat, and I'm outta here!!!



Petie – unlike SOME birds that I can name, I know a good thing when I see it!



PREMIUM CHALICE WINE NOW AVAILABLE!

We are pleased to announce that our 2012 Vintage Kagor Premium Chalice Wine has been bottled and is now available for purchase. To order or to obtain more information on the Kagor and our traditional chalice wine, please see <http://calistogaorthodoxwine.com/>



From start –



to finish!

JUNE FRIENDS' MEETING

Since our June 8 Friends meeting fell on Pentecost, the discussion started with the Festal Kontakion:

Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

The reference, of course, is to the Tower of Babel. When a unified humanity proudly attempted to ascend to the heavens, God divided the tongues and mankind dispersed. As the division was due to rebellion against God, the return to unity had to be in humility and love of God, which is the basis for true and lasting unity.

These reflections brought to mind St. John Chrysostom's opening words in his Homilies on Matthew:

It were indeed meet for us not at all to require the aid of the written Word, but to exhibit a life so pure, that the grace of the Spirit should be instead of books to our souls ... Reflect then how great an evil it is for us, who ought to live so purely as not even to need written words ... now that we ... are come to have need of these, to fail again in duly employing even this second remedy.

So, even though we have received the great gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we not only fail to live the pure lives that should result from that gift – we do not even accept the Scriptures, the cure for our condition.

Chrysostom goes on to say that the theme of all the Gospels is the πολιτεία (politeia) [which can mean polity, commonwealth, citizenship, way of life, discipline, etc.] of heaven, whose foundational laws are the Beatitudes, particularly the first – *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven*. Unlike Plato's Republic (which is actually πολιτεία) or any other pagan πολιτεία, the πολιτεία of heaven produces great virtue, is simple to understand, is summed up in love of God and neighbor, and is easily accessible to all who seriously pursue it. However, it must be approached with fear and trembling because its King is God.

Chrysostom's last homily on Matthew essentially ends with an exhortation to emulate the apostles in “their life and conversation (πολιτεία),” particularly “the casting away of one's goods, for this was the apostles' achievement.” Considering all the things Chrysostom might have brought forth as the apostles' crowning achievement (evangelizing the known world, performing great miracles, undergoing martyrdom – to name a few!), that he chose this one is, at first glance, quite surprising. On the other hand, without casting away our “goods” (which includes our prejudices, self will, etc.) we cannot be true members of the πολιτεία of heaven, which is summed up in love of God and neighbor. To do it as perfectly as the apostles did is an achievement indeed! Most of us are far from their level, but we can all take a step on the same road they traveled, by asking ourselves (and our confessor), “What things am I holding onto that are interfering with my ability to love God and those around me?” If we do this honestly and consistently, then bit by bit, we will experience in our own lives the unity in the Holy Spirit that is already granted to us through Pentecost.



A not-so-intense discussion



HERE AND THERE



The Disneys (and yes they ARE related to Walt!) prove that the fish net that stops herons is no obstacle to giving the koi a snack



Our good friend Lahana Tamara Singer gives tender loving care to our plants



The ladies from Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Ben Lomond, came by on May 31 for a retreat and work party. Here are just a few of the hard-working ladies who worked wonders in a short time



Some of our cookies at the Farmers' Market. If you haven't been by, come soon to say hi!

July 2014 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 | 2 | 3 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 4 10 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (at Fort Ross) | 5 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 8 5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Great Martyr Procopius | 9 | 10 | 11 6:00pm Vigil (at Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa) | 12 9:30 AM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (at Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa) Saints Peter and Paul (Old Style) 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 13 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) 4:00pm Vespers, followed by FRIENDS POTLUCK (at Monastery) | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) 6:15pm Vigil (at St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa) | 19 9:30 AM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (at St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa) Saint Seraphim 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 20 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | Notes: August 1 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Procession of the Cross and the Righteous Macabees | |

REMEMBER TO SAVE THE DATE –

Saturday, November 15 – V. Rev. Stephan Meholick, pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, San Anselmo, CA, will speak on Orthodox Worship.