



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – March 2015

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A few weeks back, one of the sisters was driving down a road that for months (if not years) had been under construction. Because of the ongoing repairs, there were narrow lanes and sometimes one-lane roads with long wait times. Not having been down that way for a while, the sister was surprised – and very pleased – to discover that the work had been finished. Driving the road this time around was a different experience all together!

Jesus told us “Enter in at the narrow gate ... Because narrow is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life ...” (Matt. 7:13, 14)

Life in this world – and in particular during Great Lent – is the time of journeying along the narrow way. For those of us who are still unpracticed in this journey, it can seem very constricting and frustrating, especially if all our attention is on the narrowness, the wait times, the angry driver in front of us, etc. The remedy for this frustration is to remember the purpose of all this “road construction” - Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight! (Mark 1:3). The astonishing truth is that our God wants to walk in the pathways of our hearts. Every little bit of “road construction” makes the paths more fit for the Lord of heaven and earth to tread. Even here in this life, that is a cause for boundless joy. In the next, we will see that these narrow roads open up not into 4- or even 6-lane highways, but into the broad expanses of eternity and the joy of our Lord!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

SPRING HAS SPRUNG - or at least, it's trying to spring!



The unseasonably warm weather has confused some of our plants into thinking it's spring already. We're enjoying their 'confusion,' but hope they won't have to pay for it later on!



ZOO UPDATE – Kitty Cast

A few weeks back, our orange tabby, Simba, broke a toe on one of his back paws. (He has not volunteered any information on how he broke his toe, but if we find out we'll let you know!) Once again, our wonderful vet, Dr. Franquelin, and his staff came to the rescue and put the toe back in place and gave Simba a snazzy cast. Simba, however, is not particularly appreciative of the cast and even less so of Dr. Franquelin's instructions that he stay inside for a month! Consequently, Simba has been diligently honing his talents as an escape artist. So far, we have been winning the duel of wits to keep him inside (or at least to bring him back speedily when he gets out), but the duel is far from over. So, stay tuned!



As long as I have to wear a cast, can I at least get the other cats to sign it?

FEBRUARY 2015 FRIENDS' MEETING

Our February Friends meeting was held on Sunday evening, February 8. That morning we had celebrated the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. Among these are Tsar Nicholas and his family, who were noted for their humility and forgiving attitudes during the imprisonment preceding their execution.



Making sure nobody goes hungry!

The saints for February 9 include the Martyr Nicephorus. St. Nicephorus had been close friends with the priest Sapricius, but they had a falling out. Although St. Nicephorus tried his utmost for a reconciliation, Sapricius kept refusing. Thereafter, Sapricius was condemned to death for being a Christian, and St. Nicephorus made yet another attempt for reconciliation while Sapricius was being led to execution. Refusing to forgive, Sapricius lost grace and recanted his faith. St. Nicephorus took Sapricius' place and died a martyr.

It was interesting to have these two stories in such close proximity – the royals who humbly and patiently forgave their tormentors juxtaposed with the priest who allowed his bitterness with his erstwhile friend to deprive him of his crown of martyrdom. It seems that it OUGHT to be easier to forgive a friend a slight than to forgive one's tormentors. On the other hand, it is precisely because a friend is a friend that makes forgiveness seem so impossible sometimes. We have greater expectations and a deeper sense of betrayal and thus shattered trust. Also, many of us are plagued with the thought that if we forgive “seventy times seven” we are just giving the other person permission to walk on us and treat us like dirt.

The conversation moved to overcoming our unwillingness to forgive. When we feel “treated like dirt,” it's good to remember that the word humble comes from 'humus,' the Latin word for ground, soil, earth, land, country, etc. Interestingly, 'humus' in English means the 'organic matter' portion of the soil. Things have to die to become humus, but in their death they provide a matrix for life to spring forth. So, we can transform our attitude towards the little slights we suffer daily, thanking God for opportunities to become life-bearing humus! To do that, we need to give up our desire to “win.” Interestingly, St. Nicephorus' name means “victory bearer.” He was humble enough to admit that he was wrong. In doing so, he WON salvation. Sapricius on the other hand, would not back down and LOST everything. The longer he refused to forgive, the harder his heart became until he was willing to lose eternal life in order to hold onto his grudge. This underlines how important it is not to let bitterness take root and, if it HAS taken root, to uproot it immediately.

Several other points were mentioned. It is important to pray for the person and to remember that our own prayers are seriously hampered by our failure to forgive. Also helpful is to look at all the things in our own lives that are in disarray – especially the things that we've been trying and trying to correct, yet with no discernible effect. This helps us give others the benefit of the doubt. They're probably trying just as hard as we are – maybe harder! And like us, they may not even know what they've done to cause offense.

The discussion finished with the beautiful lines from the Paschal stichera, “*Let us call 'brother' even those that hate us. Let us forgive all by the Resurrection. And so let us cry, 'Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death. And upon those in the tombs bestowing life!'*” Christ's Resurrection is the ultimate act of restoration to life and wholeness. HE is the One Who gives life, healing, reconciliation, etc. Because He is risen, we do not need to stay in the death of our unforgiveness, but may – by dying to ourselves through humility and love for others – rise to unending life!



I just LOVE Friends' meetings!!!



HERE & THERE



We'll be right back! Our bookstore was invited yet again to St. Seraphim Church – this time for Dr. Jeannie Constantinou's retreat on the Theotokos



A not-so-narrow-gate: Kathy Young puts the finishing touches on the gate to replace the one that fell in the December rains



Several of us went to hear a talk by Sr. Vassa (Larin). As Sr. Margarete consistently is mistaken for her, we thought a side-by-side shot would be helpful. Can you tell who is who?



Pete Flemetis tries out Mother Anna's “pocket speaker” - a great technical advance on the ear trumpet!

March 2015 Schedule for **Holy Assumption Monastery** & **St. Simeon Church**

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

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	2	3	4 6:00pm Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	5	6 10:00am Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery) <i>Visiting Clergy</i>	7 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
8 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>NO FRIENDS POTLUCK</u>	9	10	11 6:00pm Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery)	12	13 10:00am Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery) <i>Visiting Clergy</i>	14 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
15 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	16	17	18 6:00pm Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	19	20 10:00am Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery) <i>Visiting Clergy</i>	21 9:00am-3:30pm <u>RETREAT</u> (at Monastery) (see flyer) 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
22 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	23 6:00pm Great Canon (at Monastery)	24	25 6:00 am Matins 6:00pm Vesperal Liturgy <u>Annunciation</u> (both at Monastery)	26	27 10:00am Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery) <i>Visiting Clergy</i>	28 6:00pm Matins with the Akathist 5:00pm Vigil (both at Monastery)
29 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	30	31				

SAVE THE DATE –

Saturday, March 21, Hieromonk Innocent, Superior of St. John of San Francisco Monastery, Manton, CA, will present a Lenten Retreat entitled “Applying Monastic Principles to Everyday Life.” (See *Enclosed Flyer*)

Saturday, June 27, Dr. John Klentos of Patriarch Athenagoras Institute, Berkeley, CA, will present a retreat on a yet undecided topic



SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST LENTEN RETREAT

“Applying Monastic
Principles to Everyday Life”

With Hieromonk Innocent,
Superior of St. John of San Francisco
Monastery, Manton, CA

**Saturday,
March 21st, 2015**

9am Session 1

10:30am Session 2

12:15pm Akathist

1pm Lunch

2pm Session 3

3:30pm Closing

**HOLY ASSUMPTION
MONASTERY**

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No fee – Freewill offering
RSVP now – space limited!