



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – May 2015

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A British religious page editor would go to different churches every Sunday. In that week's column he would report his impressions of the church he had attended. His first time at an Orthodox Church was the midnight Paschal service. He wrote a very enthusiastic column, which ended with something like this, "I didn't stay after the service, but they must have had some kind of a coffee hour."

Anybody who has ever attended an Orthodox Paschal feast - replete with food, drink, and unbounded joy - can appreciate the unintended humor of this statement. Beyond the humor, though, there is the whole question of why we fast and why we feast. Fasting is, in a way, easier to understand than feasting. We fast because we get too concentrated on earthly things, our lives go further and further awry, and we realize our desperate need to re-focus on Christ. Sadly, however, when Pascha comes, we often return to the status quo, and our feasting becomes simple indulgence in everything we gave up during Lent.

How, then, SHOULD we feast? Archimandrite Aemilianos of Simonos Petras Monastery on Mount Athos gives a great answer to that question – "Eat whatever you want, but be sure to eat Christ." The point is that we are to eat, drink, live, and breathe Christ. If we do this, then all food and drink and everything else in our lives is a means of communing with and, indeed, "eating" Christ. If we fail to do this, then all our feasting is on dead things (whether literal dead flesh of animals or dead plants or just spiritually dead pleasures) and thus can bring only death.

We fast before Pascha in order to remember this truth – that feasting outside of Christ brings no true joy or life. Then, on Pascha, we partake of the one true Feast – the Paschal Lamb slain for us from the foundation of the world. From there, we go to the Paschal meal. If we forget Christ, then that meal is just our return to communing with death until next year. Yet, if we choose to feast first and foremost on Christ, this meal is the next course in an eternal banquet, in which all that we eat, drink, see, etc. is the means of communion with the One Who came to give Himself as Food for the faithful. God grant us to partake eternally of this banquet!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – Cats & Dog (& Moth)



Simba – "I'm SO camera shy!"



*Philly – "Balou said I was fat!"
Balou – "Who, me? Never!"*



Willie the Bernese Mountain Dog, whom the sisters 'borrow' from his family to take on walks – "Can we start walking, please?"



Tiger Moth – "How did I get here?!"

THE THREE-DAY PASCHA

Great and Holy Friday, Great and Holy Saturday, and the Day of Resurrection are celebrated together in the Orthodox Church as the Three-Day Pascha, the Passover of Christ from death to Life, and our being raised with Him. Below are some pictures to capture a little of the glory and joy of the Feast of Feasts!



The bier procession on Great and Holy Friday



Sisters toll the perezvon – the striking of each bell from largest to smallest. This represents the kenosis (self-emptying) of Christ in His death and burial.



Entering the Church beneath the bier of Christ



Venerating the buried Christ on Great and Holy Saturday



Vestments changed from dark to white – the brightness before the Dawn!



Christ came for the blind, the deaf, and the lame!!!



Preparing the Paschal Meal - "Say cheese!"



The Light shines in darkness!



The faithful gather to celebrate the Resurrection.



The Paschal banquet



The butter lamb – Please do not distress the sculptor by saying "What a cute dog!"



HERE & THERE – Bright Week Excursions

On Bright Tuesday, some of the sisters, accompanied by good friends Dale and Yvonne Liid, went to Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Glen Ellen. Then on Thursday, we and another dear friend, Mounir Soueidan, took up the offer of our neighbor Tony McBeardsley for a tour of the historic Bale Grist Mill, just down the highway from us.



I think it must be a mutant mushroom.



Taking in all this botanical information requires regular breaks.



Tony, miller and tour guide extraordinaire – Right this way!



Supply your own caption – We already used "Say cheese!"



All geared up

May 2015 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 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 3 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 4 | 5 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) (Tentative – Visiting Clergy) | 6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>MIDFEAST</u> (Tentative – Visiting Clergy) | 7 | 8 | 9 5 pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 10 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) 4pm FRIENDS MEETING (at Monastery) | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 17 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 18 | 19 | 20 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>ASCENSION</u> | 22 | 23 5 pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 24 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) (Tentative) | 30 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>SOUL SATURDAY</u> (Tentative – Visiting Clergy) 5 pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 31 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>PENTECOST</u> 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 1 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>HOLY SPIRIT DAY</u> (Visiting Clergy) | REMINDER: Retreat on June 27 (See Flyer for Details) | | | | |

Sat, June 27th



PRACTICAL
LESSONS FROM
THE LIVES OF SS.
PETER & PAUL

With Mother Melania, Superior

Holy Assumption Monastery

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9am Session 1

10:15 Session 2

**12:15 pm
Akathist**

1 pm Lunch

2 pm Session 3

No fee

Limited

Capacity!

Please RSVP