



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – April 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A woman we know relates a story from when she was a young girl. In her home town was a park that backed onto a hill. She was sure that the top of the hill had some exotic view, and every time she went, she thought "This time I'll make it the whole way up!" In retrospect, she knows that it wasn't a very big hill, but to a little girl, it was huge. Finally, the great day arrived. She managed to climb the whole hill and found – a housing development!

Many of us live our lives a lot like this. We pick a hill to climb (an Ivy League college, an impressive job, the perfect home, the perfect marriage ...) – sure that when we get to the top, we'll find something spectacular. At the top, though, there is only this same world that we're trying to get away from. This is why so many of us live our lives in quiet (or not-so-quiet) despair.

The Church invites us – always, but preeminently in Lent – to turn our gaze away from our earthly pursuits and ascend the mountain to meet Christ. The mountain, though, is Golgotha and we must bear our crosses to the top to be crucified there with Christ. But if we do this, we will also share in the garden tomb and the Resurrection. And the view from there will not disappoint – it opens into eternity and the Uncreated Light of the Godhead!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

MEET PIXLEY!

On Saturday, March 10, we welcomed a cherry-head conure named "Pixley" to Holy Assumption Monastery. Pixley comes from the flock of wild conures in San Francisco, and was rescued with a broken wing and bone infection. Thanks to the dedication of volunteers at the bird-rescue organization Mickaboo, she is fully recovered, but cannot be returned to the wild because she has no tail and cannot survive on her own. Meanwhile, the sisters felt that our blue-crown conure Oscar would do well with a companion bird of his own size. When we contacted Mickaboo about adopting a rescued bird, they felt Pixley and Oscar would be a perfect match! Right now, the birds are in quarantine, but we hope to introduce them to one another soon. Already, they are talking up a storm between the aviary wall that separates them.



Chloe, John, and a cage that really does contain Pixley



If I'm really good, will you let me out of jail?



That's much better, thank you!



Hey! Who's that?

POINTS TO 'POND'-ER

Our koi pond was in need of some maintenance that required a major drain. So, a few of our intrepid sisters braved the cold, took care of the problem, and made the koi very happy!



Yes, of course, this is our favorite job!



A novel way to practice one's golf swing!

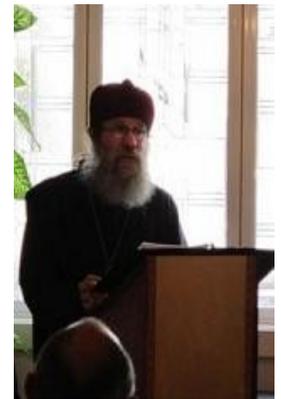


Happy koi!



FEBRUARY FRIENDS MEETING

On Sunday, March 11, Fr. Stephan Meholick spoke to an enthusiastic group on "For What the Bell Tolls - and Why." In the Russian tradition, the bells were first used to signal the beginning, significant parts, and the end of services. Bells also served as "mass media." The bells informed the people of a funeral, a wedding, a particular type of church service, an invasion, a visit from an important personage, etc. Over time, bell ringing became a true art form, and specific directions in the Typicon were written about the bells and their peals. Liturgical bells are considered God's call to prayer. So, the bells themselves must be clear, rhythmic, melodious, sonorous, and resonant. And the sound they make is called a "voice," not a note or a chord. This is partly because of the complexity of their overtones, but more importantly, it is because they represent the voice of God to us. They are "aural and spatial" icons - theology for the ear.



Fr. Stephan Meholick

On the eve of the Russian revolution, there were roughly 1 million church bells in Russia, but the Bolsheviks destroyed over 95% of them. Lenin particularly hated the bells because they were so much a part of the Orthodoxy of Russia. And during Great Feasts, when the bells were ringing, nobody wanted to work!



*Thanks, Fr. Stephan.
That was as clear as a bell!*

Father also discussed (and played recordings of) certain types of peals. For feasts of the Cross and Good Friday, all the bells are rung one by one from the biggest to the smallest and then end with a trezvon [a certain type of peal that involves all three classes of bells - the large (which provide the tempo), the medium (provide melody and pattern), and the small (which provide the trills)]. This represents Christ emptying Himself (the Infinite God becoming small by taking on our humanity), and it is very solemn, but it ends with the trezvon, which is more joyous because the Cross is not the last word - the Resurrection is. Funerals are the opposite - they start with the smallest bells and go to the biggest (because in Christ we ascend from our littleness to share in His greatness) and end with all the bells clashing together to remind us of death. During Bright Week, the bells were rung

continuously at least the first few days and, in theory (and sometimes in practice) all week except for during the church services in recognition that that week is set apart from all other time.

A particularly beautiful thought - bells are unique because they are suspended between earth and heaven and join the two together.

April 2012 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery (blue) & St. Simeon Parish (red)

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

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 – 9:40 am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Symeon Parish) 4 pm FRIENDS MEETING (at Monastery) <u>St Mary of Egypt</u>	2	3	4 – 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy (at St Symeon Parish)	5	6 – 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy (at Monastery) 5pm Vigil (at St Symeon Parish)	7 – 9:40 am Hours /Divine Liturgy (Slavonic) (at St Symeon Parish) <u>Annunciation (OC) / Lazarus Saturday</u> 5pm Vigil (at Monastery)
8 – 9:40 am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Palm Sunday</u> 5 pm Matins (at Monastery)	9 – 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy 5 pm Matins (at Monastery)	10 – 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy 5 pm Matins (at Monastery)	11 – 1 pm Presanctified Liturgy (at St Symeon Parish)	12 – 9:40am Vesperal Liturgy (at St Symeon Parish) 5 pm Matins w/ 12 Passion Gospels (at Monastery)	13 – 7 am 1 st & 3 rd Royal Hours 10 am – 6 th & 9 th Royal Hours & Typica 1 pm Vespers (Bringing out the Holy Shroud) 5 pm Lamentations Matins (at monastery)	14 – 9:40 am Vesperal Liturgy (at Monastery) 11:30 pm <u>Midnight Office</u> 12:00am <u>Paschal Matins/Liturgy</u> (at St Symeon Parish)
15 – 11:30 am <u>Agape Vespers</u> (at Macedonian Park)	16 – 8:40 am Paschal Hours/Liturgy (at Monastery)	17 – 9:40 am Paschal Hours/Liturgy (Slav.)	18	19	20	21 – 5 pm Vigil (at Monastery)
22 – 9:40 am Hours/Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Thomas Sunday</u>	23 – 5 pm Vespers/ Matins (at Monastery)	24 – 8:40 am Hours/Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Radonitsa</u>	25	26	27	28 – 5 pm Vigil (at St Symeon Parish)
29 – 9:40am Hours/Liturgy (at St Symeon Parish) <u>Myrrh-bearing Women</u>	30	PLEASE NOTE – On <u>Thursday March 29</u> at 5 pm, Archbishop Kyrill will celebrate the Unction Service at <u>St. Simeon Church.</u>				

Announcing
THE APRIL 2012 MEETING
of the
FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

Sunday April 1, 2012

***The Nature of Passions
and True Repentance***

Presented by

Archpriest Alexander Krassovsky

Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa, CA



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 13 Meeting – His Eminence Metropolitan NIKITAS (Lulias) will speak on *The Role of the Samaritan Woman in Hymnology*

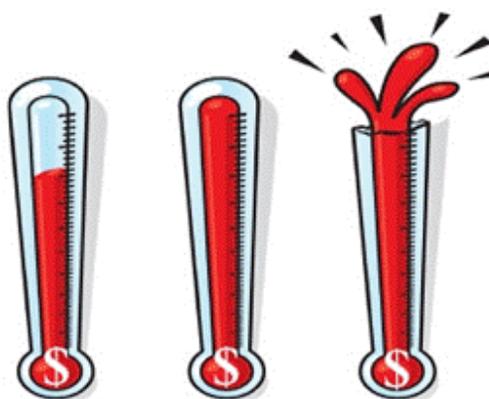
June 10 Meeting – Robin Joy Wellman, State Park Interpreter, will speak about Fort Ross, sharing many stories about the people and diverse cultural groups that created this colony. She will also update us on the most recent research findings and current programs and events that keep Fort Ross thriving.

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

**St. Nicholas House
& Outbuilding Renovation**

Thank You!

**Thanks to many
generous
contributions, we
have met our \$5000
fundraising goal.**



Matched by another \$5000 from an anonymous donor, these initial funds have enabled us to hire architect and contractor Michael Wysocki. Educated at Carnegie-Mellon University, Oxford University (England) and University of Texas, Michael is an internationally known architect and has a great deal of experience in renovation projects. He and his family live in Calistoga and attend St. Seraphim Orthodox Church in Santa Rosa. Michael's



Michael & wife Irina

expertise and enthusiasm for serving God make him an excellent partner for the renovation.

The St. Nicholas House Building Committee

The sisters decided early on that we wanted input and assistance from members of our extended Orthodox community. We are thankful to have the following individuals offering their time and expertise in making decisions about the renovations:

V. Rev. John Schettig
Mr. Eugene Borissenko
Mr. Paul Knoblich
Mr. Sergei Moroz