



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – July, 2011

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

As this is being written, Pentecost and Sunday of All Saints are past, and we are coming up on the Feast of All Saints of North America. Our liturgical cycle is now basically “back to normal.” The hope, though, is that our journey through Great Lent, Pascha, and Pentecost has reminded us that “normal” is anything but. Rather, we live in a world that the God-Man has transformed through His Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension and through the coming of the Holy Spirit. We worship in the presence of God and His angels and saints. The Holy Spirit descends upon the bread and wine, and they become the Body and Blood of Christ.

We are reminded of a story Mother Victoria sometimes tells us. A friend of hers was not raised Orthodox, but had an Orthodox grandmother. The grandchild always liked going to church and explained to the grandmother “I like seeing the angels around the priest.”

If we have lost the eyes of a child (and who amongst us hasn't?), we do not have to stay that way. We can practice remembering what we know. Little by little, the grace of the Spirit will transform our eyes and our hearts!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

Divine Liturgies Scheduled in July

Sunday July 3 [**Hierarchical Liturgy with Bishop GEORGE of Mayfield (Abbot of Holy Cross Hermitage, WV)**] – 9:30 AM Meeting of the Bishop/Divine Liturgy ([St Simeon](#))

Sundays July 17 and 24 – 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy ([St Simeon](#))

Sundays July 10 and 31 – 9:10 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

Saturday vigils will be at 5:00 PM at [St Simeon](#) on **July 2, 16, and 23** and at **the Monastery** on **July 9 and 30**.

Other services at the monastery include

July 7/8 (**Great Martyr Procopius**): **Thurs July 7** – 5:00 PM Vigil; **Fri July 8** – 8:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

July 24/25 (**Dormition of St. Anna**): **Sun July 24** – 5:00 PM Vigil; **Mon July 25** – 8:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy (**Monastery**)

[St Simeon Church](#) will hold 9:40 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy in Slavonic on July 13 (OC Synaxis of the Holy Apostles)

SERVICES ELSEWHERE INCLUDE

July 2 (St. John of San Francisco) – 9:00 AM Hours/Divine liturgy at Geary St. Cathedral, San Francisco

July 4 (Annual Liturgy at Fort Ross) – 10:00 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy

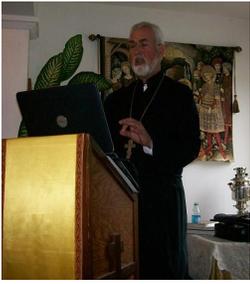
July 12 (Parish's Feast Day) – 9:30 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy at Ss. Peter & Paul Church, Santa Rosa

July 19 (Relics of St. Seraphim) – 9:30 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy at St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa

July 21 (Monastery's Feast Day) – 10:00 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Kazan Skete, Santa Rosa

July 23 (Parish's Feast Day) – 9:30 AM Hours/Divine Liturgy at Kazan Mother of God Church, Guerneville

For [updates](#) and the rest of our schedule, please call the monastery at 707-942-6244 or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Calistoga-CA/Holy-Assumption-Monastery/106974442681502>.



Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem Dry Bones

We had another wonderful Friends' meeting! On Sunday, June 5, Fr. John Finley spoke to us on modern American burial practices in light of the Orthodox theology of the body. The majority of his talk was a fascinating and detailed Bible study on bones – starting with the Old Testament story of the dead man raised to life after being dropped into the grave containing the bones of the Prophet Elisha. Eve's oneness with Adam was seen in her being flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. The risen Christ reveals that He has true flesh and bones, and we are members of Christ's flesh and bones.

Suffering and death are described in terms of separation of flesh and bones. Death is not the separation of the person and his body, but of soul and body. The priest prays “In the grave bodily; in Hades with Thy soul, though Thou wast God; in Paradise with the thief; and on the Throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou who fillest all things, O Christ the Uncircumscribable.” So, Christ's Person is present in the grave, even in death.



Such a view of personhood helps us see why there are blessings for those who care for the bones of the departed and why it is considered a serious sin to dishonor their bones by scattering or crushing them. This in turn sheds light on the Orthodox opposition to cremation [which involves burning the flesh from the bones and crushing the bones (which remain relatively intact and therefore must be crushed)] and to scattering the person's ashes.

Fr. John then switched gears to give some practical comments on why more people are choosing cremation, how to make burials less prohibitively expensive, and how to be more involved ourselves in burying our loved ones. etc. Burying the dead is one of the traditional “corporal works of mercy.” The implication is that we should not just pay for funerals, but actually be personally involved. Some of those present have had the blessing of helping to bury their loved ones, and they attested to what a blessing it was.

CDs of Fr. John's talk are available. A donation of \$5 is suggested to cover the cost of the CD and postage. If you are interested, please email us at sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com or phone us at 707-942-6244.

'ZOO' UPDATE

The newest member of our family is “Philly,” who had to leave a loving home where, of course, he loved to be with the person who was allergic to him. We are currently convincing Philly that he really IS going to like Balou once they get to know each other better!



Petie and Oscar continue to wow all the children who come visit with their various exploits. Oscar remains wary of hands, but fairly often consents to climb on one of the sisters' shoulders. Petie loves to take a dip in his bowl before drinking. And as always, he keeps us all guessing just what he might decide to say.

The bunnies are happy in their new hutch. Oscar and Petie are a little put out, though. They want to know why the bunnies get a new house when the birds still have a leaky roof! (Petie and Oscar will be happy to know that plans for remodeling St. Nicholas House are in the works – stay tuned!)



UPCOMING FRIENDS' MEETINGS

At our **July 3, September 4, and November 6** Meetings, Vincent Rossi (St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa) will give a three-part series of talks on contemplative prayer. Vincent is a theologian, educator, and independent scholar, who wrote his doctoral thesis on St. Maximos the Confessor at Oxford University under the supervision of (then) Bishop Kallistos Ware.

On Monday **August 15**, Bishop BENJAMIN will celebrate **Dormition** with us. There will be no regular Friends' Meeting in August because of our Patronal Feast.

On **October 2** Father Deacon Gregory Roeber (Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies, Penn State University) will speak to us on "Prayer, Fasting, and . . . : Reflections on Charity and Righteousness in the Orthodox Tradition."