



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter - December 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Recently, one of the sisters spoke with an old school friend who had been a member of their high school's basketball team. The conversation brought up memories of other friends from the team - the second-stringer who played his heart out but was never all that good, the solid first-stringer who succeeded by dint of hard work, the ball hogger, the natural born athlete who ran afoul of the coach and never got the chance he deserved ... It's interesting that such a physical activity also has such a strong intangible component. Sports are never just about the physical game, but about the effort put in, the relationships strengthened or damaged, the goals of the players and coach, and so on.

This train of thought set us thinking about the interaction of soul and body. In our culture, we often separate the two into distinct spheres, but each constantly affects the other for good (as walking alleviates depression or concentrating on an interesting task makes minor aches and pains recede) or for ill (as a headache makes us grumpy or anger elevates our blood pressure). In this fallen world, the bad effects just seem to happen, but most of the good ones require work - and the more we need to do that work, the less we want to! (For example, the greater our need for exercise, the harder it is to push ourselves out of bed.) Many of us never do manage to change negative behaviors without the encouragement of another person and without a supportive structure. The Church, in her wisdom, provides us this help in the lenten periods with their accompanying disciplines of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. These three disciplines address the entire person. As an athlete watches what he eats in order to compete well, we fast to strip off the spiritual poundage that keeps us from running unflaggingly towards God. But our race is a team event, not a solo effort. So, with the time and money saved by fasting, we contribute to our teammates whatever they need in order to run their leg of the race well. By prayer, we reorient ourselves to the One Who is Himself the Goal of our race and Who grants us the very breath of our lungs and strength of our legs as we run towards Him.

So, as we continue the Nativity Fast, may God grant us to set aside the things that weigh us down and run our race together well, that we may arrive at our goal - Christ Himself.

with love in Christ,

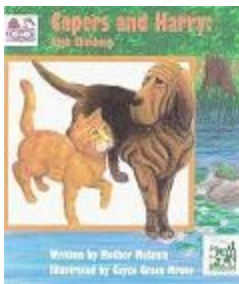
Mother Melania

and the community

of Holy Assumption Monastery

LOOKING FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS?

Wondering what you might give your loved ones for Christmas? Please consider buying something from our bookstore. We have children's books, oil, balsamic vinegar, honey, lavender sachets, and more. Check out our bookstore online (go to <http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com> and click on the bookstore tab) or stop by the monastery (best hours for the bookstore are 10 AM to 4 PM Monday through Saturday). Thanks!



Children's books



Honey



Lavender sachets



Olive oil

NOVEMBER FRIENDS MEETING

At our Friends meeting on Sunday, November 11, Elena Gutteridge gave a talk entitled *Monastery and Church Life in Russia: Recollections of an American Pilgrim*. Captivated by the beauty of a Liturgy in St. Nicholas (Moscow Patriarchate) Orthodox Church in San Francisco, Elena began her journey into the Faith and into the welcoming hearts of Russian Orthodox people when she was just 15 years old. After years of learning Russian and teaching English to Russian emigres, as well as showing visiting priests and pilgrims around San Francisco, Elena herself began to travel to Russia, having made over fifteen trips to date. On each trip, she has received overwhelming hospitality from friends, acquaintances, and even strangers who are eager to share the richness of Russia's Orthodox heritage. Elena has traveled many times to Moscow, to monasteries such as Optina and Solovki, as well as small village churches. Even in places where churches have crumbled to ruins, there are still pious people who love and treasure the Orthodox heritage of Russia, and many are working hard to restore monasteries and churches, and revive the spiritual life of the people. Elena's presentation of her experiences provided a wonderful opportunity for those of us who have never seen Russia to strengthen our bond with our brothers and sisters in Christ who live a world away, but are nevertheless close to us in the Spirit.



Elena Gutteridge



ZOO UPDATE



Pearl likes to get her beak into her work!

Pearl the African Grey Parrot visited us again over Thanksgiving weekend. She divided her time between the aviary and the office, where – like Petie – she is always cheerfully ready to help when we need her services as a shredder.

Speaking of helpful, Balou the Russian Blue cat has been helping Sr. Margarete with her crocheting. He does quality control – making sure that the resulting product is comfortable to the touch.



This is MY blanket!



ST. NICHOLAS HOUSE UPDATE



Coming along!

We have a roof! Well, mostly. Because of Michael and his helpers' diligent work (which included working by floodlight the night before the rains were going to start in earnest), the new roof has been framed and papered with the waterproof layer that goes beneath the shingles. In the next newsletter, we are hoping to be able to show you the picture of our finished roof!



Ready for shingles



TRAVELING BOOKSTORE

On the weekend of November 10/11, the sisters were invited to bring our bookstore to Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa, for their annual bazaar. We are grateful to our friends there for their graciousness.



Making sure everything is set up properly



Mimi the Mynah and Capers the Cat pay a visit!



A satisfied customer!

December 2012 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 5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)
2 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	3 3:30pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)	4 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church) <u>Entrance of the Theotokos (Old Style)</u>	5 5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	6 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery) <u>St Nicholas (New Style)</u>	7	8 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
9 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church) 4:00pm FRIENDS MEETING (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	10	11	12 5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	13 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery) <u>St Herman (New Style)</u>	14	15 5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)
16 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	17	18 3:30pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)	19 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church) <u>St Nicholas (Old Style)</u>	20	21	22 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
23 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church)	24 1:00pm Vesperal Liturgy 5:00pm Christmas Eve meal 8:00pm Vigil (all at Holy Assumption Monastery) <i>visiting clergy</i>	25 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery) <u>Nativity of our Lord (New Style)</u> <i>visiting clergy</i>	26	27	28	29 5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)
30 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	31	Notes:				

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

Sunday December 9, 2012

**TWO HESYCHAST REFLECTIONS
ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST:**

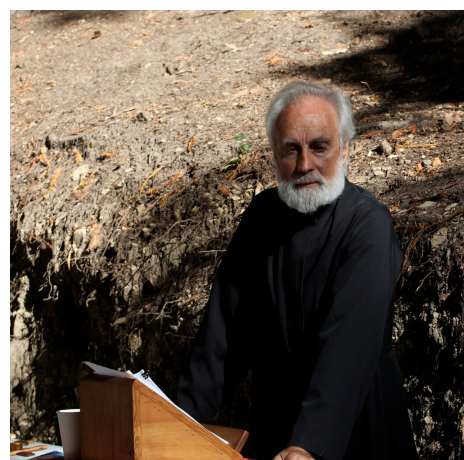
*Ss. Theoleptus of Philadelphia and Gregory
Palamas*

Presented by

Vincent Rossi

Theologian, Educator, and Independent Scholar

St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

January 13 – Still a mystery. Stay tuned!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL (707) 942-6244

or EMAIL sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com