



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – February 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

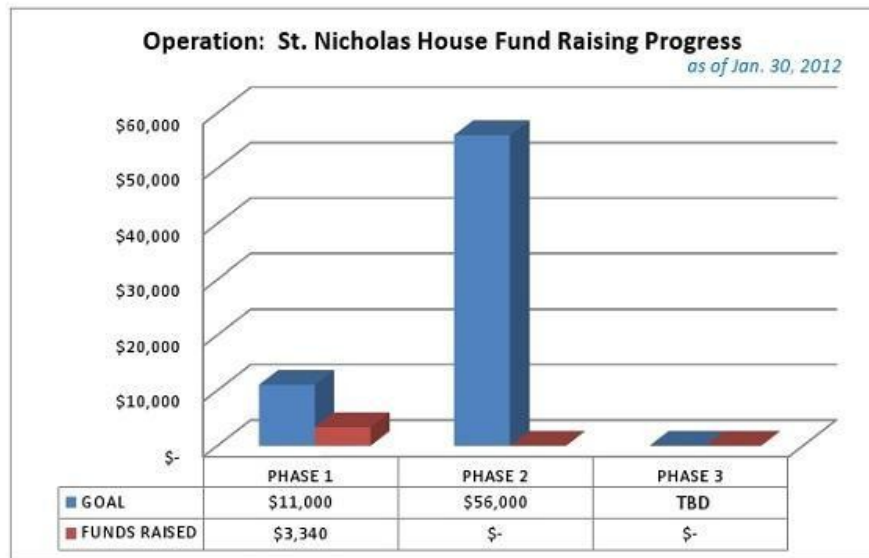
For some time now, we have been trying to improve our singing (quite an uphill battle!). As part of this effort, we have been using a computer program that graphs what we are actually singing. The problem with computers, though, is that it's a whole lot harder to discount them when THEY say that we are singing flat than when other people do! So, we have to come to grips with the fact that maybe we really DON'T sing as well as we think we do.

This got us thinking that we do the same thing in much of the rest of our lives. It's so hard to believe that people's criticisms of what we say and do might be valid. Surely, I don't complain! I NEVER gossip!! I'm NEVER negative!!! It is only when we have a standard that we can not deny that most of us are willing to admit that people's criticisms have some basis. For us as Orthodox Christians, it is preeminently in the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers that we must find our standard. But sometimes even there we don't recognize ourselves, and it is only in the judgment of a person we love and trust that we can face our sinfulness and folly.

The good news, though, is that recognizing our flatness is the beginning of singing in tune. And recognizing our sins is the beginning of holiness. May God grant us the courage to humbly admit our sins and thankfully take the opportunity to move towards holiness – and thus, move towards Him.

with love in Christ,
Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery

ST. NICHOLAS HOUSE – Update



Thanks again to all of you who have helped with this project. We realize that these are rough times, but each donation is important in reaching our goal and is deeply appreciated. Thank you all for your support.

Phase 1 – Aviary & Demolition
Phase 2 – Footprint extension, new roof & waterproofing
Phase 3 – Interior Remodel (no estimate yet)



AT ST. SERAPHIM CHURCH



Ready for Action!

On January 1 and 2, we were invited to bring our bookstore to St. Seraphim Church for the celebration of their Feast Day. We are grateful for their kind reception and the opportunity to be at a hierarchical Liturgy with Bishop BENJAMIN.



Action!

THEOPHANY



Blessing the Waters

We are thankful to God for a beautiful Theophany season. These glorious services are always new, with their astonishing imagery of the flame of Christ's divinity sanctifying the waters and renewing creation – not to mention the sheer joy of blessing the Napa River! It was a special gift to have Fr. John Ramos celebrating both Liturgies. Fr. John Ramos served here very often in our first 18 months, and it is always a joy to have him back.



JANUARY FRIENDS MEETING

On Sunday, January 8, Vincent Rossi spoke on "Inner Prayer and Neptic Fasting: Breaking down the middle wall of partition." The "middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:14) refers to the separation of Jew and Gentile, which was overcome in Christ, but the deeper meaning is the wall between God and man, the Uncreated and the created, which is overcome through the Incarnation. This wall is whatever keeps us from knowing God truly. Since interior prayer is communion with God, it pierces and destroys this wall.



Vincent then gave a definition of interior prayer - the progression of the prayer of repentance from verbal to mental prayer, coupled and conjoined with the purification of our interior being, leading to the intermittent experience of and gradual permanent acquisition of prayer in the heart through commitment to continual invocation of the Jesus prayer with the spiritual hope and aim of attaining the grace of pure and unceasing prayer. This definition gives us a clear idea of the goal, but it also shows that this is a long-term process. If we don't know that, we tend to expect immediate results and lose heart easily.

Repentance is at the core of inner prayer. Deep repentance or lack of it is an infallible sign of whether we have entered our hearts - if we had the tiniest realization of God's presence, we would repent profoundly.

Prayer must be coupled with neptic (meaning "vigilant" or "watchful") fasting. Too often we think of fasting in terms of denying ourselves for a time - and invariably the focus moves to when we're done fasting so that we can indulge ourselves again. But true fasting begins with voluntarily abstaining from rich foods and ends at the eradication of passions and failings. And it has one purpose only - so that we can stand before God with our minds in our hearts.

So, what happens when we try to actually put this in practice and attempt to pray? We are hit with distractions, temptations, memories (not necessarily bad ones), bodily aches, and above all mechanical prayer (we say the words, but we are elsewhere) and boredom (easily spotted by the thought "Just 5 more minutes of this!"). Instead of being sideswiped by these, we just need to recognize them and go back to prayer. Prayer moves from words to thoughts to meaning to reality. If we realize we're only at the words, we can stop right there, recognize it, and repent. And by God's grace, we can reach the reality.



ZOO UPDATE



The New Aviary

Oscar has been ensconced in the new aviary for quite some time now, but we just recently have convinced Petie to get into a carrier and explore his section of the aviary. Currently, he is dividing his time between aviary and office. The jury is still out as to which he prefers.



Oscar – Branching out



Petie's Idea of Swingtime

Somewhere along the way, it occurred to us that the outdoor enclosure of the aviary would make a lovely home for our bunnies. So, Thumper and Pulgita are now stretching their limbs happily in their new digs.

The koi are fine and always happy to see you (especially if you can convince their caretakers to give you a few extra cheerios to feed them). And the cats? Well, they are still above it all!



Left – Pulgita has come up in the world!

Center – Thumper devises a new way to get a shower



Right – Balou & Philly the watch cats.

Good job, Balou. I'll take the next shift in another twelve hours or so



February 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>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	2 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Meeting of the Lord</u>	3	4 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
5 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>Publican and Pharisee</u>	6	7	8	9 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	10 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>St. Charalambos</u>	11 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
12 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Prodigal Son</u> 4:00pm FRIENDS' MEETING	13	14	15 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <i>Slavonic Liturgy</i> <u>Meeting of the Lord (Old Style)</u>	16	17 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	18 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Soul Saturday</u> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
19 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <i>Meatfare Sunday</i>	20	21	22 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	23 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>St. Polycarp</u>	24	25 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
26 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Followed by <u>Forgiveness Vespers</u> <i>Cheesefare Sunday</i>	27 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew (at Monastery)	28 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew (at Monastery)	29 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew (at Monastery)	Notes: Text in blue represents services at the Monastery Text in red represents services at the Parish		

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

Sunday February 12, 2012

Finishing the Race:

Maintaining the love of God in the midst of the world

Presented by

Archimandrite Irenei (Steenberg)

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Church, San Francisco, CA

Dean: Patristics and Church History

*Ss. Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria Institute for Orthodox Studies,
San Francisco, CA*



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 11 Meeting – V. Rev. Fr. Stephan Meholick will speak on *For What the Bells Toll ... and When*

April 1 Meeting (moved from April 8, which is Palm Sunday) – still a mystery!

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

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