



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – March 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Most of us are very aware of the Obama administration's decision to force religious institutions to provide insurance for contraceptives, sterilization, and abortifacients. This decision provoked a firestorm of protest from Christians (including an official statement from the Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America), Jews, and others who are deeply concerned about the trampling of first amendment rights to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. This is a very real concern, and it is encouraging to see how many people are defending these rights that are utterly foundational to our nation.

Of course, if this is to have permanent fruit, the public stance has to be coupled with our own personal transformation. In this context, we are reminded of a statement Fr. Irenei made at our February Friends Meeting. Commenting that he only knew of one Orthodox saint who was an activist (and he had just been canonized!), Fr. Irenei said that the Orthodox model for activism is that of St. Seraphim – Acquire the Spirit of Peace, and thousands around you will be saved.

If we fail to acquire the Spirit of Peace, whatever political victories we gain can do little or nothing to heal the wounds of our nation. Most likely, such victories will simply aggravate the wound. If, however, through humility and repentance, we do acquire this Spirit, we can be instruments of His healing in a broken world.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

This is our third spring here in Calistoga, and we still look around in awe at this beautiful monastery. We are thankful to all who helped to make this the place that it is.



APPLES & ORANGES – no just an Apple

The monastery's icon-mounting studio is in need of an Apple computer (either a 21.5" iMac or a 2010 or later Mac Mini). If you have one that you would consider donating to us, please email us at sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com or phone us at 707-942-6244.

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS (sort of)

On Saturday, February 4, we had a delightful visit from the Church School children of St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, along with their parents and Fr. Stephan and Matushka Elaine Meholick. After a tour of the grounds (and much attention to the bunnies, birds, koi, and kitties), they joined us for 6th Hour and lunch. Afterward, the children listened to a couple of stories while several of the parents put in some much needed work in our garden. We hope this becomes a regular event (and no, we're not referring exclusively to the garden help!)



Petting the bunny



An attentive group (well, mostly)



Storytime is easier on a full stomach!



Love those koi!



FEBRUARY FRIENDS MEETING

On Sunday, February 12, Archimandrite Irenei (Steenberg) spoke on *Finishing the Race: Maintaining the love of God in the midst of the world*. Stating that the Christian life is a heart responding to the love of God (which has its deepest expression in the Cross of Christ), he went on to list four things necessary for keeping that love burning.

1. Instead of running from the sufferings and distractions of life, embrace them as opportunities to love God. For example, instead of bemoaning how hard it is to keep the Lenten fast in a world that has no interest in fasting, be thankful for the challenge of fasting in an environment where it is difficult. And also be thankful that that takes away the temptation to boast about one's fasting and be obvious about it.
2. Cultivate obedience, especially to the Church's teachings because the Church is the Body of Christ, Who is Love Himself. So, departing from the teaching of the Church (by being disobedient) is to depart from the source of our love. We wonder why our love for God is so cold, but it is only to be expected if we make no attempts to obey Him!
3. Continually exercise forgiveness, which will cultivate peace in our hearts. Without forgiveness, our prayer is of absolutely no value, and we become full of bitterness, which becomes our god because it is what our hearts focus on and desire. But when we forgive, bitterness is swept away, and God fills our hearts with Himself, and thus with love. So, instead of thinking "I guess I HAVE to forgive," we must realize that only in forgiveness can we find life and love.
4. To preserve zeal in our heart, we must give it away. We want to hoard peace, joy, and contentment in our hearts, but our hearts aren't ours. They are the place where God's Love is, and that Love reaches out to everyone. So, to retain His Love, we must give it away to all. When we reach out to others with that love, we attract not only those who need it, but we attract God Himself.



Fr. Irenei



Breaking bread



Fr. Irenei and Fr. Silas

March 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 6:00pm Great Compline w/ Canon of St. Andrew (Monastery)	2 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (Monastery)	3 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Theodore Tyro</u> 5:00pm Vigil (St Simeon Parish)
4 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Triumph of Orthodoxy</u> (St Simeon Parish)	5	6	7 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (St Simeon Parish)	8	9 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (Monastery)	10 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Soul Saturday</u> 5:00pm Vigil (Monastery)
11 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Gregory Palamas</u> 4:00pm FRIENDS' MEETING (Monastery)	12	13	14 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (St Simeon Parish)	15	16 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (Monastery)	17 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (Slavonic) <u>Soul Saturday</u> 5:00pm Vigil (St Simeon Parish)
18 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Veneration of the Cross</u> (St Simeon Parish)	19	20	21 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (St Simeon Parish)	22	23 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (Monastery)	24 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Soul Saturday</u> 5:00pm Vigil (Monastery)
25 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Annunciation</u> (Monastery)	26	27	28 6:00pm Matins w/ Great Canon (St Simeon Parish)	29 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy (St Simeon Parish)	30 1:00pm Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm Matins w/ Akathist (Monastery)	31 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Akathist Saturday</u> (Monastery) 5:00pm Vigil (St Simeon Parish)

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

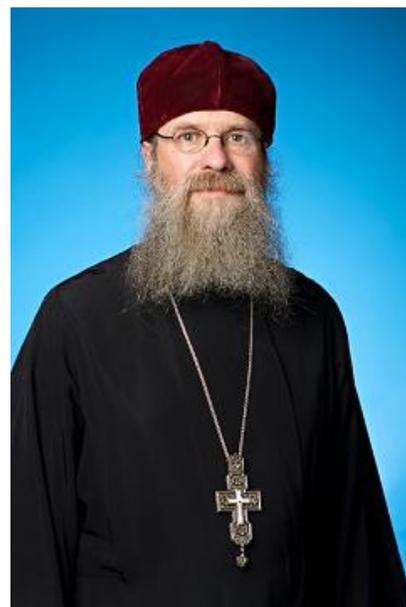
Sunday March 11, 2012

For What the Bell Tolls
... and When

Presented by

V. Rev. Stephan Meholick

St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, CA



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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*

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

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