



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – September 2012

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

One of the many wonderful things about our festal celebrations is having all four parts in the choir. It is always so much easier to stay in tune with the basses there to anchor the chord. This is true for most singers, but even more so for those of us with an uncertain sense of pitch!

On Dormition, we celebrated the falling asleep and entry into Life of the Theotokos. She never lost her anchor amongst all the uncertainties of this life and she never got out of tune with her Son.

Sadly, we can not say this of ourselves. In our sinfulness, we have lost much of the spiritual “sense of pitch” that keeps us tuned to the things of God. So, God in His mercy provides other anchors to help us – the teachings of the Church, her services and sacraments, and the support of our brothers and sisters in Christ ... And, of course, He also gives us the Theotokos. Firmly anchored on her Son, she is an excellent and sure anchor for those of us who still suffer from various degrees of spiritual tone-deafness.

May we, with her, enter into the fullness of the Life of her Son!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## VISIT FROM THE NOVATO PHILOPTOCHOS



On August 4, Fr. Luke Palumbis and the Philoptochos Society of Holy Nativity Church, Novato, visited the monastery. After a tour of the monastery, they joined us for 6<sup>th</sup> Hour and for lunch. Then, Mother Melania spoke on *One Christian Life, Two Ways to Live It: Marriage and Monasticism*. Some of the people present had been visiting the monastery long before we arrived. For others it was their first visit. It was a joy for us to get to know these neighbors of ours, and we hope to see them often.



## ZOO UPDATE

All the 'critters' are doing well. The baby and toddler koi are continuing to grow by leaps and bounds. Oscar and Pixley are still great friends, despite the occasional squabble over food. Petie and Baby the Parakeet (who lives in one of the sister's cells, next to the office) have taken to early morning duets. Baby sings soprano, but Petie seems more comfortable as an alto! Petie also continues to amuse all and sundry. Some days ago, one of the sisters came into the office to make a request of one of the office staff. Petie, in a very bored voice, said “Whatever!” We're all hoping we're not the ones he's imitating!



*Petie proves that he is of a calculating turn of mind!*

## *DORMITION 2012*

Every year, our Feast Day gets more and more wonderful. Fr. Joakim served vigil on the 14<sup>th</sup> and Fr. Alexander Leong of Ss. Constantine and Helen Church, Vallejo was present. Not many people attended, and most of these were our faithful local parishioners. The meal afterward was a great opportunity to get to know some of these dear people better.

Liturgy on the 15<sup>th</sup> was attended by a sizable crowd. Fr. Joakim served again, with Fr. Stephan Meholick of St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, lending his strong bass voice. We were also blessed to have several of his parishioners and other friends join us in the choir.



*Preparing the flowers*



*Last minute preparations!*



*The litia at vigil*



*Fr. Stephan preaching*

Fr. Stephan, in a very beautiful sermon, spoke of this feast's being a celebration of the Theotokos' birth into the fullness of the Kingdom of her Son, where she shares in His radiant Light. We see this in the icon of the Dormition – Christ holds His mother as a baby girl and enfolds her in His radiance. So, it's a reversal of Christ's Nativity. She gave birth to Him in the flesh, and He gives her Life Eternal. For her to accept that life, she had to become like an infant. That meant trusting fully in her Son in the face of death – once and for all relinquishing every good thing of this world and the conscious control of her mind and body. Though this must have been daunting even for her, she did it, and so she was reborn into the fullness of the life of her Son.

From her life and death, we learn

- 1) we must approach God as little children
- 2) sooner or later, we must all face the unknown and the radical giving up of control that we will encounter in our death
- 3) we must be prepared to offer ourselves up to God in humility and thanksgiving.

Father then mentioned that the image of the mother giving life to her child through the milk of her body is the nearest example we have of how Christ feeds us with His own Flesh and Blood. The Theotokos is more like her Son in character than anyone else. Nobody but her Son can love more fully. We all need love, compassion, motherly care and nurturing, and we can receive this in a special way through the Theotokos and her Divine Son.



*The choir*



*In the chapel*



*The procession*



*Ringling the bells*

After the Liturgy and procession we had a lovely potluck meal. Many thanks to all the good cooks who provided the various dishes!

May next year be even more wonderful!

## September 2012 Schedule for **Holy Assumption Monastery** & **St. Simeon Church**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
<b>2</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)						<b>8</b> 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <a href="#">Birth of the                      Theotokos</a> 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
<b>9</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) 4:00pm FRIENDS MEETING (at Monastery)						<b>15</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
<b>16</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church)						<b>22</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
<b>23</b> 9:30am Meeting of the Arch- Bishop/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church) <a href="#">St Simeon Church                      Feast Day</a>						<b>29</b> 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
<b>30</b> 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)						

Announcing  
**THE SEPTEMBER 2012 MEETING**  
of the  
**FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY**

**Sunday September 9, 2012**

**REFLECTIONS ON 46 YEARS OF  
PASTORAL MINISTRY**

Presented by

**Archpriest Constantine Efstathiou**

*Pastor Emeritus, Holy Nativity Church, Novato, CA*



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY**

October 14 – Fr. Deacon John Dibs will speak on “Three Orthodox Christian Priests from Latvia: An Oral History with Archpriests Nikolajs Vieglaiss and George Benigsen, along with excerpts from Archpriest Alexei Yonov's *Reflections of a Missionary*.”

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