



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – November 2013

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A recent event brought to mind a happily married couple who, being congratulated on their fourteenth anniversary, said, “Thanks. It’s been twelve of the best years of our lives!” They said it jokingly, but there was truth behind it. They had gone through a very trying couple of years early on in their marriage. What a pity it would have been if they had allowed the two difficult years to rob them of the twelve beautiful ones (not to mention all the years that followed).

No matter what life we choose, we can expect difficulties in general, and especially in our closest relationships. There is the famous story of the monk who left his monastery because one brother disliked him, left his second monastery because half of the brothers disliked him, then arrived at a third monastery where all the brothers except for one disliked him. Finally, he came to his senses, wrote himself a note that said “I will endure all things for Christ,” and stayed where he was. Eventually, all the brothers came to love him.

God gives us no guarantee that, if we stay in our monastery or marriage, our fellow monastics or family members will love us and we will live happily ever after. In fact, we can be pretty sure that if we stay in our marriages or monasteries to endure all things for Christ we will have conflicts with the very people with whom we are closest. It is tempting to flee, but these very conflicts are what allow us to humble ourselves and love the other and, in doing so, grow closer to God. May we not allow the difficult years to rob us of eternity together with each other and our Lord.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

A NEW VENTURE – Redwood and Pine Caskets

When we tell various friends and neighbors that we intend to start selling caskets, the usual response seems to be “What!?” or “You’re joking, right?”. Notwithstanding, we are quite excited about this new venture. The entire time we’ve been here, we have been trying different avenues for supporting ourselves. While several things have proved helpful (among them, the Farmers’ Market, the icon-mounting, and the bookstore), we still often come up short at the end of the month. While discussing this situation, Mother Victoria mentioned that it would be great if we could come up with a venture such as their casket-making, which provides a needed item at a very reasonable price. On hearing this, a friend said, “Well, why don’t you do the same thing?”

So, with Mother Victoria’s blessing and encouragement, we will soon be offering two styles of caskets – a redwood casket with a raised, angled lid and a pine casket with a flat lid. We hope to have the first caskets ready to sell within a few weeks and to be fully operational by the beginning of 2014. For more information, please check out our website - <http://holyassumptionmonastery.com/caskets.html#.UnwYkXBJNAI>.

Many thanks to all who have provided funds and expertise to get us started in this venture. We are extremely grateful!



Arrival of caskets



Putting in the lining



Pine casket



Redwood casket

OCTOBER FRIENDS MEETING



Fr. James Jorgenson

At our October 13 Friends' meeting, Fr. James Jorgenson spoke about the theology of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. This council affirmed the ancient practice of the veneration of icons against the iconoclasts, who held that veneration of icons was improper because the Old Testament forbid graven images. In fact, the Old Testament actually contains God-ordained instructions for making images of cherubim. So, it was never images *per se* that were forbidden, but images of God, Who of course is incorporeal and cannot be depicted. But because Christ became incarnate, not only is it possible to depict Him, but to refuse to do so is a denial of His Incarnation. Thus, this last of the ecumenical councils was just as concerned as the others with the basic question "Who is Jesus Christ?" An icon of Christ answers that question: He is at once the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin. He is the Incarnate God.

Fr. James also spoke of how an icon is more than just a religious picture and how the honor given to icons is given to the prototype (i.e. the person depicted in the icon) and not to the wood and paint. The council states concerning icons of Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints "through their representations we may be able to be led back in memory and recollection to the prototype, and have a share in the holiness of some one of them" and "For by so much more frequently as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and to a longing after them." Thus, by venerating icons of Christ, His Mother and the saints, we grow closer to them and become more like them in holiness.

So, as with everything else in the life of the Church, the veneration of icons has major theological and practical implications. In venerating icons, we affirm that Christ is indeed the Incarnate God; and as we recollect Him and His saints, we become holier.



FARMERS' MARKET – Finished with Our First Season

We finished our first season at the Calistoga Farmers' Market at the end of October. The kindness and friendship of the staff, vendors, and customers has been very humbling and greatly appreciated. We will not be regular participants in the winter market, but we have signed up to be "on-call." We anticipate having our booth there sometime before Christmas and possibly a few other times. In the meantime, Cal-Mart has been selling our Sisters' Choice Granola and Raisin Nut Crunch, and other goodies are available for special order at the monastery itself. Thanks to all who have made our first foray into the Farmers' Market such a wonderful experience!



Wait! You forgot to try the chocolate chip cookies!



ZOO UPDATE – Predator Alert!!!

Although we have had our share of mishaps with the koi, until now we have never lost one to a predator. This enviable record is largely thanks to the design of the pond, which has a lip that prevents four-footed predators from easily scooping up koi and a cover of trees that hinders the flight of diving birds. Unfortunately, a heron figured out that it could glide in, sit on the side of the pond, and go spear-fishing! Well, herons are beautiful birds, but handsome is as handsome does, and our local herons are now on notice that they will be chased away whenever they try to visit!



Our heron visitor:
Undeniably handsome but
not very nice to koi!



Petie – It's hard work trying to run this place!!!

Thankfully, life for the rest of the zoo goes on pretty much the same. Lately, Petie's caregiver has been trying to train Petie, who is extremely fond of banana chips, to say "banana chip" before giving him one as a treat. However, for reasons known only to himself, Petie has decided that the proper action for obtaining a banana chip is to flap his wings. The last we've heard, Petie has been the only successful trainer of the two. He generally gets a banana chip for flapping his wings. If you ever need help training your domestics, Petie is available for hire!

November 2013 Schedule for **Holy Assumption Monastery** & **St. Simeon Church**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
3 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	4	5	6	7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	8 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Synaxis of Ss. Michael and Gabriel and All the Archangels</u>	9 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
10 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church)	11	12 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	13 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) TENTATIVE <u>St. John Chrysostom</u>	14	15	16 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
17 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy 4:00 PM Friends Meeting (both at Monastery)	18	19	20 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	21 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Presentation of the Theotokos.</u>	22	23 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Church)
24 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Church)	25	26 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	27 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Great Martyr James the Persian</u>	28 10:00am Moleben (Thanksgiving Prayer Service) (at Monastery)	29	30 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)

Announcing
THE NOVEMBER 2013 MEETING
of the
FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

Sunday November 17, 2013

ORTHODOX WORSHIP:

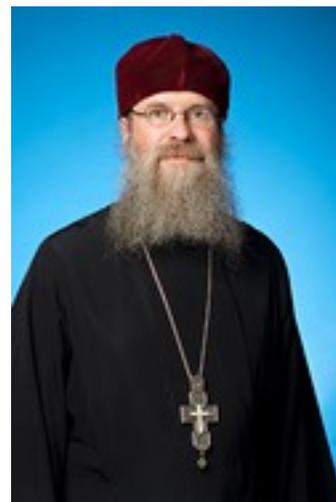
Ritualism vs Logikē Latreía

(Come and find out what *Logikē Latreía* means!!)

Presented by

V. Rev. Stephan Meholick.

Pastor, St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, CA



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December 8 – Sr. Margarete will speak on *Wherefore Man and Woman: Exploring the Purpose of Sexual Duality in Mankind and its Implications for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*

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