



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter - September 2013

1519 Washington St., Calistoga, CA 94515

Phone: 707-942-6244; Email: sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com/>



Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

The other day, one of the sisters mentioned how a priest friend of ours often encourages his flock to hunt out the virtues of the people around them and imitate them. Often we are eager to emulate others – to make our grandmother's luscious pastries, to shoot hoops like our athletic older brother, to play an instrument like our musically inclined friend ... How often, though, do we set out to acquire the virtues of our friends? Perhaps we don't do this because we don't know how, but it's not really much different from picking up any other skill. It helps to be around people who are good at the things we want to learn. For example, did you ever have the experience of singing better when you are in a choir full of good musicians? Similarly, being around thankful people makes it much easier to be thankful ourselves. Of course, that's not the whole story, just as singing in a choir of good musicians is not enough to make us professional musicians. For that, we have to take lessons with master musicians and actually PRACTICE. The master teachers of the virtuous life are the saints, particularly the Fathers, who have much to say about every virtue and vice and how to acquire the first and eradicate the second. As for practice, let us take note of the patience a mother shows her child, or the willingness of a family member to do the least-liked chores, and then follow their example. The Fathers will give us the "theory", and our neighbors can show us its practical application. If we emulate the virtues of our near and dear ones and follow the teachings of the Fathers, we can become masters in the only two things that really matter – loving God and loving our neighbor.

with love in Christ,

Mother Melania

and the community

of Holy Assumption Monastery



Petie: bird of many voices!

ZOO UPDATE

Shortly after we sent out last month's newsletter, with a "Zoo update" about Baby the Parakeet, Baby suddenly died. Despite his name, he was quite old for a parakeet (around 12 years old, we think), and it was probably just his time to go. However, he is still with us in a sense because Petie reproduces his cheerful chirps so well that when Baby was still around, we couldn't always tell which bird we were listening to. So, Baby lives on – in our hearts and in Petie's repertoire!

On a happier note, we have a new "zoo" member – Caesar the goldfish. Our six-year-old friend April won Caesar at the county fair but had no place for him. So, she asked us if he could live here. It's not as simple as throwing him into the pond with the koi! So, one of the sisters set off to Santa Rosa to find suitable quarters for Caesar. She ended up going to three pet stores because there was a run on small fish tanks due to parents looking for housing for other goldfish who had been won in the fair! At the last stop, the sister explained our situation, and the extremely kind staff rounded up enough equipment (including a 5-gallon tank in the trunk of one of their cars!) to provide living quarters for Caesar. It's not quite Caesar's Palace, but he's happy!



Feeding time:
Rendering unto Caesar
that which is Caesar's!

DORMITION 2013

We thank God for yet another lovely Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. Wednesday vigil was attended by a handful of our hometown folk and stalwart friends. The small numbers made the meal afterward quite a cozy affair. His Eminence Archbishop BENJAMIN was scheduled to attend both vigil and Liturgy. However, travel difficulties left him stranded in Alaska until Wednesday afternoon and therefore not arriving home to San Francisco till late that night. He gallantly came up the next morning for the Liturgy. Serving with him were Father Joakim Provatakis, Deacon George Golitsin, and Subdeacon Seraphim Salonga. Also present were Father James Jorgenson and Father Alexander El-Far. We also were blessed to have Fr. Stephan Meholic and several of his parishioners join us in the choir. It's always a joy to have our talented friends help us out in the choir – not to mention providing all four parts!



Set up



During Vigil



The Plashanitsa



Ringing the Bells

In his homily, Archbishop BENJAMIN pointed out that the western Church ties the Dormition of the Theotokos closely to the Ascension of Christ, whereas in the eastern Church, this feast is much more closely related to Pascha. Christ took on Adam's death and destroyed Sheol and death because He is Life. The present feast is the fulfillment of Christ's victory over death for the sake of the human race. Fully human, the Theotokos was born into a line of people seeking God. She died just as we must, but her death shows what ours can be if, like her, we seek out God. The icon of the Feast shows Christ holding her "infant" soul as she held Him in His infancy. It is our hope that at our deaths, He will hold us, too. The Theotokos herself points the way for us in the Gospel passage of the wedding of Cana, with her direction "Do what He tells you." If we follow her instructions, we will be like her – the Living Tabernacle of God, His dwelling place, the place that shines with His Glory. And we will follow her at death into Life as sons and daughters of God.



His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN



Fr. Stephan Conducting



During Liturgy



The Procession after Liturgy

A lovely meal and time of fellowship followed the Liturgy, due to the efforts not only of the sisters, but also of many of the more than 100 friends in attendance. We also celebrated the third day of Dormition with vigil on August 16 and Liturgy on August 17. These are particularly beautiful services and are always a blessing to celebrate.

Many thanks to all who were present for our feast and contributed your work and prayers. God bless you!



Sharing a Meal



The Younger Set



The Koi Pond doubles as extra seating.



Starting the Procession for the 3rd Day Liturgy

Announcing

THE SEPTEMBER 2013 MEETING

of the

FRIENDS OF HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

Sunday September 8, 2013

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

and HEALING

Co-presented by

Roger Moss

Attorney-Mediator, Pacific Bridge Mediation, Napa, CA

and Mother Melania



4:00 PM – Presentation

5:00 PM – Vespers

6:00 PM – Potluck

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 13 – Fr. James Jorgenson will speak on *The Christology of the Seventh Ecumenical Council: its spiritual and practical implications for our lives.*

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

or EMAIL sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com

September 2013 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 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 2 | 3 | 4 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 5 5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Righteous Zacharias and Elizabeth</u> | 6 | 7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 8 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Nativity of the Theotokos</u> 4:00pm FRIENDS MEETING (both at Monastery) | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 14 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Exaltation of the Cross</u> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 15 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) | 16 | 17 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) <u>Martyrs Sophia and her daughters</u> | 18 | 19 | 20 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) | 21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Nativity of the Theotokos, Old Style</u> 5:00pm Vigil (both at St Simeon Parish) |
| 22 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) | 23 | 24 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) | 25 9:30am Meeting of the Archbishop Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) Parish Feast Day | 26 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) | 27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>Exaltation of the Cross, Old Style</u> | 28 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 29 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 30 | Notes: | | | | |