



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – January 2014

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Once I was sitting in an airplane behind a man and his young son. The plane had just taken off when the boy turned to his father and said reproachfully, “You said we were going to be above the clouds!” His father smiled and said, “Give it a little time!”

A major pitfall of living in our phrenetic, high-speed world is the loss of the ability to endure patiently. We want what we want – be it good, bad, or indifferent – now, and we get disheartened when that doesn't happen. Sometimes, it seems the most disheartening when what we want is good. For example, how often have we made good New Year's Resolutions, gotten a bit off track, and quit in despair?

In the little boy's case, he was going to get above the clouds whether he waited patiently or kept badgering his father about it. For us, though, if we wish to rise above the clouds of our circumstances, shortcomings, and sins, it will take perseverance, hard work, lots of patience, and above all, the grace of God. As we enter this New Year, God grant us to endure patiently as we toil to rise above the clouds that separate us from the Light of Christ!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

CASKETS - Update

We continue to make progress with our fledgling casket endeavor. We have sold our first caskets and are contacting the priests we know to make sure that their parishes are aware that caskets are available. For more information on this venture, please go to holyassumptionmonastery.com and click the “caskets” tab.



ZOO UPDATE

Ever since our days at St. Barbara Monastery, we have followed the Slav tradition of a 12-course Christmas Eve Holy Supper. Part of that tradition is to feed special treats to the animals before we eat our own meal – in memory of Christ's being born in a manger. The “zoo” heartily approve of this custom, but they think we should do it EVERY day!



Feed ME!!!



If I must, I must! But I don't have to LIKE it!

Speaking of treats for the animals, we recently bought a dehydrator to help preserve the various fruits that we get from our garden and generous friends. So, banana chips being a favorite treat of our parrots, we had the bright idea of making our own. Oscar and Pixley accepted them graciously, but Petie in no uncertain terms let us know that to his discerning palate, they simply can't compare with the “real” banana chips from the store. So far, though, he has deigned to eat them – however unenthusiastically – and we are not without hopes that we may actually WIN this battle!

REMINDER: CHANGE IN FORMAT OF MONTHLY FRIENDS MEETINGS

Starting this month, our Friends' meetings will not feature a formal talk. Instead, we will have vespers at 4:00 PM, followed by a potluck meal at approximately 5:00 PM at which Mother Melania will offer a few short comments followed (hopefully!) by questions and answers. These meetings will continue to occur on the 2nd Sunday of the month unless announced otherwise. All are welcome!

DECEMBER FRIENDS MEETING



Sr. Margarete – What do you mean, I talk with my hands?

At our December 8 Friends' meeting, Sr. Margarete spoke on *Wherefore Man and Woman: Exploring the Purpose of Sexual Duality in Mankind and Its Implications for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*. The talk examined what our maleness or femaleness has to do with our humanity, and how that impinges on the question of women in the priesthood. Sr. Margarete gave an overview of the Orthodox literature on the question, with special reference to five well known authors who have been major participants in the debate – Mme Elizabeth Behr-Sigal, Dr. Valerie Karras, Sister Nonna (Verna) Harrison, Fr. Thomas Hopko, and Fr. John Behr.

Everyone agrees that there is a Patristic consensus that men and women are equally made according to the image of God, but there is sharp disagreement on whether the Fathers understood sex (in the sense of maleness or femaleness) to be 1) an intrinsic part of our humanity that will continue to be of importance in eternity or 2) simply for procreation in this fallen world and therefore destined to disappear or become thoroughly irrelevant in eternity. Those who hold the first view (Fr. Thomas and Fr. John) believe that maleness is intrinsically important to being a priest. Of those who hold the second view (Mme Behr-Sigal, Dr. Karras, and Sister Nonna), Mme Behr-Sigal and Dr. Karras think there is no intrinsic reason that only men should be priests because they believe there are no essential differences between them; Sister Nonna holds an intermediate view in which male priesthood has a metaphorical importance liturgically, but no true importance otherwise.

Sr. Margarete then looked at the strong and weak points of both sides, which space does not permit us to recap. What did become apparent, though, was the importance of looking at the entire Tradition of the Church – Scripture, the Fathers, the Liturgy, etc. – and finding a key to understanding them as a unified whole instead of solving apparent discrepancies by discounting certain teachings as due to cultural limitations. For example, Elizabeth Behr-Sigal thought that St. Paul got it “right” when he said that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28), but when he or the various Church Fathers talked of women submitting to their husbands, they were caving in to their societal standards. Of course, we can say that, but it puts us in the situation of thinking WE are able to discern what the great saints of the Church could not! So, again, the talk underlined the necessity of much more research in this area if we are truly to understand the Mind of the Church on this topic.



CHRISTMAS 2013

Once again, we had a lovely celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. We were particularly blessed to have Fr. John Ramos celebrate the Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil on the Eve of the Nativity and Fr. John Schettig celebrate the St. John Chrysostom Liturgy on Christmas Day. They both helped us out greatly during our first year here. So, we were delighted to have them back with us at this important time of year. It was also wonderful to have many old and new friends share our meals and services. Thanks one and all for adding to the rich blessings of this beautiful feast!



O Christmas Tree!



Christmas Eve Holy Supper



Fr John Ramos celebrates the Vespertal Liturgy.



Fr John Schettig celebrates Christmas Day Liturgy.



Singing Christmas carols – fa la la la!!!

WISH LIST

We are in need the following:

- a 2000v Honda generator for emergencies
- a PC computer – Windows XP or later

If you can help, please call 707-942-6244 or email sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com

GOING GREEN

Our newsletter mailing list gets larger every month. While this is delightful, we are hoping to decrease our carbon trail and expenses by switching as much as possible to e-mail. So, if you receive this newsletter by “snail mail” but do have email, please give us your email address so that we can send you the electronic version. Many thanks for your help!

January 2014 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	2	3 9:00am Royal Hours (at Monastery)	4 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
5 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Great Vigil (both at Monastery)	6 8:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy & Outdoor Blessing of the Waters (at Monastery) <u>Theophany</u> 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)	7 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>Nativity (Old Calendar)</u>	8	9	10	11 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
12 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) 4:00pm Vespers, followed by Friends Potluck (at Monastery)	13	14	15	16 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	17 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>St. Anthony the Great</u>	18 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
19 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) <u>Theophany (Old Calendar)</u>	20	21	22 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	23 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Hieromartyr Clement of Ancyra</u>	24	25 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
26 9:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	27	28	29 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	30 5:40am Hours/Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Three Hierarchs</u>	31	Notes: