



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – October 2014

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

When celebrating the feast of St. Simeon Verkhotursky, we were particularly struck by the line in his troparion that reads “He was given the grace to heal the righteous and unrighteous alike,” and we thought “Oh, good – there is hope for us!” Truly, if we had to wait for healing till we were completely righteous, we would be in bad shape indeed! But that brought the further reflection, “What kind of healing are we looking for?” Physical healing is a great gift, but it is temporary – maybe twenty years, or forty, or even an hundred. After that, we must give up all the merely earthly. So, by far the most important healing we can seek is the healing of our souls. As Archbishop KYRILL pointed out in his sermon for the feast, St. Simeon's troparion shows the way for that, too – to flee the tumult of the world and cleave to Christ. If we do this, our healing will be eternal and, like St. Simeon, we can participate in the eternal healing of those around us.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## ST. SIMEON FEAST DAY



*Archbishop KYRILL and  
concelebrants*

On September 4, Archbishop KYRILL celebrated Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Simeon Verkhotursky Church on the occasion of their altar feast. Concelebrating with His Eminence and Fr. Joakim were V. Rev. Lawrence Margitich (St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, CA), and Rev. Protodeacon Brendan Doss (Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA).



*The festal procession*



*The festal meal*

Leading the choir was Nicolas Custer (Choir director, St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, CA). In the choir were Sergei Chidlowsky, his wife Joanna, several of our sisters, and other singers who came for the occasion. Following the service, the parishioners provided a beautiful meal. We were thankful for a beautiful day to celebrate the life of St. Simeon and to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.



## ZOO UPDATE



*Stickers – lap cat  
extraordinaire*

We are sad to report that Stickers, the newest member of our cat population, is no longer with us. She had a fatal heart condition, which caused paralysis of her hind legs and congestive heart failure. We will always remember her for being both a fearless attacker of hapless dogs and the quintessential lap cat.

Also no longer with us is Zorro the fancy goldfish. We miss him, as does Caesar, who just isn't the same without his swimming buddy.



*Zorro and Caesar*

On a more cheerful note, Petie our African Grey Parrot is on vacation at the house of Pearl the Parrot (which also happens to be the house of our friend Rachelle Benney). When Petie discovered that his caretaker would be away for a week or so, he decided to take a trip, too. However, so many people have been looking for him that a substitute became necessary. So, Digory – our office mascot – is hanging out in Petie's aviary until Petie gets back. Digory plans to return to his perch in the office before Petie comes home. Petie has never had much of a sense of humor about other birds (even of the stuffed toy variety) in his space!



*Digory – I hope Petie  
lets me keep his swing!*

## SEPTEMBER FRIENDS MEETING

The September Friends meeting fell on September 14 – the Elevation of the Cross. So, the discussion started with the second story associated with this feast. The Persians captured the True Cross as a prize of war when they sacked Jerusalem in 614 AD. Thirteen years later, the Emperor Heraclius recaptured the Cross and was carrying it in solemn procession into Jerusalem when he was stopped by an angel. The angel told the Emperor that he could not bear the Cross into Jerusalem unless he went barefoot and in rags. Only when the Emperor had done this was he able to proceed.



*During vespers*

This story illustrates a basic principle of Orthodox spirituality – “Orthodox spirituality is physical.” That is, the inner work of the spiritual life has its outer counterpart and *vice versa*. Going barefoot and in rags was a physical action that, hopefully, brought about a lasting internal counterpart of deep humility. Of course, there is always the danger of mistaking outward signs of a virtue for the virtue itself, which is why the saints strive so hard to hide their ascetic feats. For example, there was the Byzantine empress who, underneath her imperial finery, wore a hair shirt.

The question was put forward “What does it mean for us to go barefoot and in rags in order to bear the Cross?” Of the many thought-provoking answers given, most can be summarized by “Embrace suffering for the sake of love.” Foremost is the love of God, exemplified by Christ's voluntary endurance of the Cross. While we can never truly comprehend the mystery of His suffering love, we can respond by voluntarily suffering for the sake of others, whether it be by enduring harsh physical conditions with them, setting aside certain comforts in order to attend to their needs, giving them our time ... Then, there is accepting our involuntary sufferings in a spirit of humility and thanksgiving, realizing that God gives us nothing that He cannot turn to our good.



*The Friends potluck*

In short, if we accept our struggles – voluntary and involuntary – in a spirit of love, humility, and thankfulness, we will reach the heavenly Jerusalem and there worship the One who, for love of us, went in utmost humility to the Cross to clothe us with His heavenly glory.



## GLENDI 2014

During the weekend of September 20 and 21, we were blessed to participate once again in the annual Glendi celebration of St. Seraphim Church. For the past few years they have graciously allowed us to bring our bookstore. We have also had the privilege of helping in the children's area. We deeply appreciate the love and support shown by all our friends there, and we love working with the children. See you there next year!



*Bookstore – open for business!*



*Craft booth – it's amazing how many things you can make with beads!*



*Story telling – No, no. The book is over there!*



## LADIES' RETREAT - St. Nicholas Church, San Francisco



*A tour of the grounds*

On Saturday September 13, the ladies of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church, San Francisco, accompanied by Fr. George Baalbeki and Fr. Dcn. Nishan Sweis, visited our monastery. Following a tour by Sr. Margarete, we sang an akathist to St. Nicholas and then ate lunch. In the afternoon, Mother Melania gave a short talk on the monastic life and how the same principles apply to all of us, whether we are monastics or Christians striving to live holy lives in the world. We look forward to another visit soon!



*Smile!!!*

## October 2014 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

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website – <http://www.holyassumptionHoly Assumption Monastery.com>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4  5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
5  9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	6	7	8	9  5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	10  5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)  <u>Ven. Ambrose of Optina</u>	11  5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)
12  9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)  <b>Fundraiser at St Simeon Parish 3-6pm Calistoga Orthodox Wines</b>	13  5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	14  5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)  <u>Ven. Paraskeva</u>	15	16	17	18  5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
19  9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  4:00pm Vespers, followed by <b>FRIENDS POTLUCK</b> (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	20	21	22	23	24  5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	25  9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)  <i>Visiting Clergy</i>  <u>Righteous Tabitha</u>  5:00pm Readers Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)
26  9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	27	28	29	30  5:00pm Vigil (at Holy Assumption Monastery)	31  5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Holy Assumption Monastery)  <u>Hieromartyr John Kochurov</u>	<b>Notes:</b> On Sunday Oct 26, there will also be Divine Liturgy at Macedonian Park at 11 AM

**Saturday, November 15 – V. Rev. Stephan Meholick, pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, San Anselmo, CA, will speak on**

***The Divine Liturgy: Communing both vertically and horizontally. When we partake of the Holy Eucharist worthily and in faith, we are united to Christ and through Him to one another.***

(See poster for more information.)

# 2014 FALL RETREAT

The Divine Liturgy:

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Communing Both V



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WITH THE V. REV. FR.  
STEPHAN MEHOLICK

**Saturday, Nov. 15**

## Schedule

9 am Session 1

10:15 am Session 2

12:15 pm Akathist

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Session 3

3:30 pm Closing

Limited Capacity!

RSVP today!

(707) 942-6244

*No fee*

*Suggested donation*

*\$30*

*“When we partake of  
the Holy Eucharist  
worthily and in faith,  
we are united to  
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