



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – September 2014

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

In hot weather, we have to keep several fans running in the chapel, which makes it very difficult to hear the words of the hymns. The temptation for the choir is to “outshout” the fans, but that strains our voices and makes us lose pitch. If, however, we concentrate very hard on enunciating our words, we can be heard over the noise of the fans.

As our culture gets crazier and crazier, it is very tempting to try to outshout the craziness, but it doesn't work. We just anger people, lose our own peace, and fall out of harmony with God and those whom He loves. Instead, we must concentrate on THE WORD, Jesus Christ, through prayer, Scripture reading, and humbly living the life of the Church. If we do this, Christ will dwell ever more richly in our hearts, and – whether by our words, our silence, or our actions – He will be heard above the din.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – a pictorial essay!



Oscar & Pixley mug for the camera



Petie – Pick me up, now!



Caesar and Zorro – where shall we swim THIS time?



Fiver – there's nothing like a good hug!



Pulgita – when do I get a rabbit-sized chair?



Sticklers – shhh! I'm hiding!!!



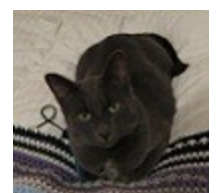
Simba – I saw that!



The koi – hey, what happened to the traffic cop?



Philly – I bet YOU can't get into this position!



Balou – I LOVE to crochet!



WORK PARTY

On Saturday, August 2, parishioners from St. Anna Church, Roseville, CA came to help spruce up the monastery before our Altar Feast of Dormition. Their enthusiasm and skill was so great that we kept having to find MORE things for them to do! After lunch, Mother Melania spoke with them on “One Christian Life, Two Ways to Live It: Marriage and Monasticism.” Also present was our friend Sergei Moroz, who came to finish the low wall in our lower garden. What a joy to have old friends and new to share the day with!



Cleaning up the area behind St Nicholas House



Stamping envelopes



Sometimes you DO have to build walls!



Peeling apples



Going swimming?

DORMITION 2014

As the afternoon shadows lengthened on Thursday, August 14th, the bells of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, CA, rang out joyously, announcing the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN served the Vigil that evening, which was attended by 40-50 guests. Both Father Joakim Provatakis (St. Symeon, Calistoga, CA - ROCOR) and Father Lawrence Margitich (St. Seraphim, Santa Rosa, CA - OCA) assisted in the altar, while Father Nebojsa Pantic (Ss. Constantine and Helen, Vallejo, CA - GOA) brought many of his parishioners. The lampadas in our tiny church shone brightly and garlands of flowers adorned the epitaphion of the Theotokos as we sang the special hymns of the feast: "The angels, as they looked upon the dormition of the Virgin, were struck with wonder, seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to heaven."



Flower girls? - Nina, Mother Tabitha and Svetlana prepare flowers



Icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos



The chapel during vigil



Archbishop BENJAMIN, Fr. Lawrence Margitich, and the faithful



Is this ALL there is to eat!?

The next morning, nearly 200 pilgrims flocked to the monastery for the hierarchical Liturgy. Serving with Archbishop BENJAMIN were Father Joakim Provatakis, Father Lawrence Margitich, Father John Schettig (St. Seraphim, Santa Rosa, CA – OCA), and Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov (Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA - OCA). Also present were Father James Jorgenson (retired – OCA), Father John Christiansen (St. Timothy, Fairfield, CA – Antiochian), and Fr. Philip Halliwell (Christ the Saviour, San Francisco, CA - OCA). Continuing a joyous tradition, Fr. Stephan Meholick (St. Nicholas, San Anselmo, CA - OCA) and several of his parishioners joined us in the choir.

Archbishop BENJAMIN gave a beautiful homily, featuring a story about poor farmers working their fields, who see a royal procession. Having no gift to give the king, one farmer takes water in his hand and offers it to the king, saying "We have nothing to give you and there is nothing that you need, but it is our duty to give you gifts and it is good for us, too. So, please accept this water." The king, amazed and touched, accepted the gift and gave the man great gifts in return. We are the poor farmers – anything we can offer God is His already. But it is our duty and privilege to offer Him a gift, and while He needs nothing, the gift we can give Him and which He does want, is our gratitude. The other gift that we as humankind together offer Him is the Theotokos, the pure one who bore Him. On her Dormition, He receives her into His Kingdom, and with the gift of her offered to Him, He gives us the gift of salvation.



Awaiting the Archbishop



During the Divine Liturgy



Hierarchical blessing



The plaschanitsa (burial shroud) of the Theotokos



The festal procession



Eis polla eti Dhespota!

Lovely meals and times of fellowship followed both the Vigil and the Liturgy. The sisters are deeply grateful to the many friends who helped in the preparation and serving of food, the care of the grounds, and not least of all, the clean-up after the feast! Following the Liturgy and the meal afterwards, one of the sisters gathered the children and made bunnies out of socks. The children enjoyed their bunnies - particularly because the REAL monastery bunnies, Pulgita and Fiver, came to oversee the process! Many thanks to all who were present for our feast and all who contributed their work and prayers. God bless you!



Bell Ringers



EXPERT Bell Ringers!



Outdoor dining



Bunny assembly



The real bunnies make an appearance

September 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 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)	4 Greeting the Archbishop 9:30am Hours/ Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 10:00am (at St Simeon Parish) Parish Feast Day	5	6 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
7 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	8 5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Nativity of the Theotokos	9	10	11	12	13 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
14 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Exaltation of the Cross 4:00 pm Vespers followed by FRIENDS POTLUCK (at Monastery)	15	16 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	17 5:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) Martyr Sophia and daughters	18	19	20 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) Nativity of the Theotokos (Old Calendar)	22	23	24	25	26 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)	27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) Exaltation of the Cross (Old Calendar) 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
28 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	29	30	NOTE: The October FRIENDS meeting will be Oct. 19 instead of Oct. 12.			

REMEMBER TO SAVE THE DATE –

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