



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – September 2015

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Most of us have heard of the “Invisible Gorilla” experiment, in which people are told to count the number of times that a basketball is passed between players. Incredibly, around half the subjects miss a person in a gorilla suit walking up to the camera, banging his chest, and walking away. In one of her books, Temple Grandin uses this and similar experiments (including airline pilots who fail to see the image of a 737 on a simulated landing field!) to explain the difference between a “normal” human brain and the brain of an animal or an autistic person. The “normal” human brain excels at generalizing, whereas the brain of an autistic person or of an animal excels at specifics. The generalizing capacity of the human brain makes possible all our great accomplishments, but it comes at a price – we unconsciously filter out things we are not expecting. That is why so many people don't see the gorilla (not to mention the 737!)

This has profound implications for our interactions with people. How often we complain “So-and-so ALWAYS does ... and he NEVER does ...!” When we say such things, we are almost never being purposely untruthful. Rather, we have unconsciously trained ourselves to see the bad in certain people and to overlook the good. The solution is to look – in fact, to SEARCH – for good in others. This is very simple – and amazingly difficult. It's simple because the concept is easy to grasp. It's difficult because of our pride and selfishness, which cry out “You've got to be kidding!” To fail to look for good in others may temporarily soothe our pride, but it will cause us to commit the deadliest of oversights – to fail to see Christ in our brother.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – Two Is Company?



Sunrise -
a newsworthy bird!

We had been contemplating finding a companion for Petie, when we heard of another African Grey, named Sunrise, in need of a new home. So, since early August, Sunrise has been ensconced in his own cage just outside of Petie's aviary, and he's an absolute joy. He is amusingly talkative, handsome and gentle. Of course, we have all fallen in love with him. Perhaps, though, it is more accurate to say ALL BUT PETIE, who is a tad jealous. However, we have been giving Petie plenty of attention, and he is slowly beginning to think perhaps it's okay to have another bird around. It will be a few weeks before we try the grand experiment and put them together. Stay tuned!



Petie – *Sunrise is okay but I'm MUCH better looking!*



RAMPING UP



A little more railing perhaps?

Many thanks are in order to our dear friend Paul Coates, who very graciously donated the materials and labor for a beautiful new ramp for our chapel. It was a special blessing to have the ramp finished in time for our Dormition celebration!

We are very grateful to Paul and everyone who worked on the ramp – Glenn Pope, who carved the beautiful posts and pickets; Dan Bazzoli, who expertly helped with the finishing of the concrete; and last but not least, Joe Pena, who along with Paul did the bulk of the installation of our lovely new ramp. Thanks once again to you all!



Couldn't be lovelier!

Dormition 2015

We are thankful to God for yet another joyous celebration of Dormition. His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN served the Vigil, assisted by Deacon Jeremiah Crawford (St. Seraphim, Santa Rosa, CA – OCA). Vigil was attended by an intimate group of our faithful friends. The next morning around 150 pilgrims arrived for the hierarchical Liturgy. Serving with Archbishop BENJAMIN were Father Lawrence Margitich, Father John Schettig, Father Theodor Svane (all from St. Seraphim), Father John Christiansen (St. Timothy, Fairfield, CA – Antiochian), Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov (Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA – OCA), Deacon George Golitsin (St. Nicholas, San Anselmo, CA-OCA), Deacon John Dibs (St. Timothy, Fairfield), and Deacon Nicholas Carr (St. Seraphim). Also present were Father James Jorgenson (retired – OCA), Fr. Alexander El-Far (All Saints, Rohnert Park, CA – Antiochian), and Deacon Jeremiah Crawford. As always, Father Stephan Meholick (St. Nicholas), several of his parishioners, and a few other friends transformed our little group of singers into a glorious choir.

In yet another lovely homily, His Eminence spoke about the history of the Feast of Dormition. Coming relatively late into Church history, this feast has special connections with the 3rd Ecumenical Council in Ephesus, in 431 AD, which defended Mary's title Theotokos (Birth-giver of God). The concern was not primarily about dishonor done to her, but about the title's implications for how we understand Christ. Mary is not JUST Christotokos, or the bearer of Christ the Man – but Theotokos, the one who bore God in the flesh. When a dogma of the Church is attacked, the Church responds by an explosion of praise and worship. So, when Mary's title as Theotokos was called into question, the theology concerning her (and hence of her Son) flourished more than ever before. This was not something new, but something that had always been there but now came into prominence. In a sense, it can be compared to taking family pictures from the back rooms of the house and putting them in the front room for all to see.



Dcn Jeremiah and His Eminence at Vigil



Festal Procession after Liturgy



Shroud of the Theotokos



Lots of people!



OF COURSE, we're behaving ourselves!

The particular significance of the Dormition is this – as the Theotokos is the icon of the Church, what happened to her will happen also to every faithful believer. She is just like us – not immaculately conceived and thus separate and different from us – and needs to be saved by her Son just as we do. So, as a true daughter of Adam, she dies. But the Son Whom she bore raised her – both body and soul – to heaven. And He will do the same for all those who bear Him in their hearts.

We thank His Eminence for his care for us and for making our festivities brighter. We also thank all who contributed to make this yet another lovely feast. God bless you and bring you back to celebrate with us next year!!



HERE & THERE



Fr Nebojsa Pantich of Ss Constantine and Helen Church, Vallejo, brought some parishioners to learn about the services of “the hours.”

Can we go in now?



Butterfly on foliage –
Hmm, what shall I eat today?



Power-washing the fence –
Can we use this to clean the kitchen?”



John and Chloe (original foster parents of Pixley the conure) bid farewell to Sr Margarete, who will be attending St. Vladimir Seminary for two years.

*Seminary should be easy.
Taking care of birds is hard!*

September 2015 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 |
|---|---|--|--|---|-----|---|
| | 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 1 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Visiting Clergy</u> Indiction (Church New Year) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) | 7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 8 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Visiting Clergy</u> Nativity of the Theotokos | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 13 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) NO FRIENDS POTLUCK 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 14 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Visiting Clergy</u> Exaltation of the Cross | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) |
| 20 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) | 21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) Nativity of the Theotokos (OC) | 22 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | 23 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Visiting Clergy</u> Conception of St. John the Baptist | 24 | 25 | 26 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish) |
| 27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish) Exaltation of the Cross (OC) | 28 | 29 | 30 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery) | Notes: OCTOBER 1 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Visiting Clergy</u> Protection of the Theotokos | | |

REMEMBER TO SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, October 10, 2015

Fr. Theodor Svane of St. Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, will speak on

The Orthodox Church in Norway: Her saints, history, and current situation

See attached flyer for details

October 10 Retreat

with Fr. Theodor Svane



“The Orthodox Church in Norway”

*Her saints, history and
current situation*

October 10, 2015



Hours/Liturgy 8:40 AM

Followed by a snack



1st session— 11:00 AM
to 12:30 PM (with a
short break)



Lunch 12:30 PM to
1:30 PM



2nd session - 1:30 PM
to 3:00 PM



HOLY ASSUMPTION
MONASTERY

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No Fee—donations accepted

Call Soon—Space is limited