



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – July 2016

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A priest friend of ours uses the intriguing phrase “the discipline of joy.” In our culture, we tend to think of joy as something that just comes upon us. There is some truth to this. True joy is a fruit of the Spirit – and no matter what we do, we can not give ourselves joy. But we must tend that precious fruit – and that requires discipline. What kind of discipline? The list is endless. But what it boils down to is the discipline to reject the world’s tawdry imitations of joy so that we may stay by the side of the One Who IS our joy.

Now that we are past Pentecost and back to “normal” time, let us gladly continue in the discipline of joy in the expectation of the endless joy of the eternal Pascha!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – Birds of a Feather

It's been almost a year since Sunrise joined the flock of parrots at the monastery. So recently, Petie and Sunrise made a trip together to the vet's office for a check-up. Petie, at 17, and Sunrise, at 14, are both in excellent health (although Petie, as usual, needs to lose a little weight!). Petie played it cool during his exam, cooing while Dr. Campbell looked him over. Sunrise was a little more nervous, letting out the occasional squawk, but drew encomiums for his gorgeous plumage. The only concern Dr. Campbell expressed was over the dry skin of both birds. To combat this problem, the vet recommended the sisters mist the birds with a mixture of aloe vera and water. Since we have abundant aloe vera growing at the monastery, this is not a problem! Sunrise and Petie have already begun their new beauty regime, and Petie is once again on a diet. We're ready for summer!



*Petie and Sunrise -
time for a stroll!*



HAVE BOOKSTORE, WILL TRAVEL – Part Two

On Memorial Day weekend, the bookstore sisters attended TWO Greek Festivals – St Anna Greek Orthodox Church, Roseville, and Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church, Novato, for the second and third years, respectively. The first weekend of June saw the sisters for the first time at the Greek Festival of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, San Jose. We are thankful for old friends and new, and the gracious welcome of both! Now we have a break until the autumn Greek Festivals start up! See you then!!



Can I help you?



*No bookstore event can be
considered complete without the
appearance of the mynah hat!*



*Which honey do I want? I think
I'll just take one of each flavor!*



Almost sold out!

HERE AND THERE

On Wednesday June 23, Fr. Paul Volmensky and some of his parishioners from Holy Ascension Church (ROCOR), Sacramento joined us for 6th hour, lunch, and a short talk by Mother Melania. Looking forward to a return visit!



How many takes do we have to do?!?!



A step at a time!



We made it!



Heave, ho!



Perfectly level on the very first try!



JUNE RETREAT



Fr Innocent

On Saturday, June 25, Fr Innocent of the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco (Manton, CA) spoke on *Stillness and the Prayer of the Heart*. The first session focused on “the big picture” into which our life of prayer fits. Ever since the Fall, mankind is perishing for lack of knowledge of God. This “lack of knowledge” is not just that we don’t know ABOUT God, but that we don’t know HIM. So, we live our lives seeking pleasure and trying to avoid pain, desperately looking for fulfillment everywhere except in the God Whom we’ve forgotten. God’s answer to this basic problem is the all-encompassing Life of the Church. It’s not enough to go into the Church, but we must let the Church come into us. For that to happen, our homes must be little churches, setting a tone of holiness in our lives. Living lives focused on the Eucharist, we will genuinely love God and thus be able to see Him in others. Of course, that love implies repentance and mourning for when we fall short. With this all in place, prayer of the heart can begin.

Father began the second session with an illustration of a jar with soil and water. When he shook the jar, the water was so muddy that when he beamed a flashlight on one side, no light could be seen on the other side. Then he showed us a jar that had had five days to settle. The water wasn’t perfectly clear, but we COULD see the beam of light through it. Likewise, when our minds become still, God’s light can shine through and illumine our hearts. The less we are engaged with external things, the more our internal condition becomes apparent. So, it’s important to grab our first waking moment for prayer, thus setting the tone for the day. Also, we must end our day in prayer – taking stock, thanking God, and then letting the day go.

In the third session, Fr Innocent spoke about praying the Jesus prayer. As we pray, we need to force our mind to pay attention to the words of the prayer. When our minds stray, we shouldn’t be surprised or alarmed, but just calmly bring our minds back to the words of the prayer. A couple of common practices are matching the prayer with breathing and listening to and looking towards the physical heart while praying. These practices reflect the interconnectedness of our souls and bodies. As body and soul become still, the mind can descend into the heart, and then look up to God. It’s easy, though, to be deluded into thinking we’ve reached a depth of prayer that we haven’t. That’s why it’s very important to have a spiritual guide who knows all about our life of prayer. That’s also why, if we don’t have an experienced guide, it’s probably wise to limit ourselves to paying attention to the words and pulling back our minds every time our thoughts stray.



Teach them to pray young!

Father also reminded us that prayer doesn’t take place in a vacuum, but in the midst of real life, which often involves times of darkness. It is in these very times that we realize our absolute weakness and thus can allow Christ to be strong in us. In the end, if we wish to pray, we must have the resolute purpose to do our part and the humility to leave God’s part to Him.

July 2016 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

Monastery contact info – (707) 942-6244; email – sisters.holyassumptionmonastery@gmail.com;

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
3 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>All Saints of North America</u>	4	5	6	7	8	9 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
10 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	11	12	13	14 7:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	15 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>St. Vladimir & St. Augustine</u>	16 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
17 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	18	19 7:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	20 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Prophet Elijah</u>	21	22	23 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
24 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)	25	26 7:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	27 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery) <u>Unmercenary Physician Panteleimon</u>	28	29	30 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
31 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)	SCHEDULE CHANGE: For summer, vespers will start at 7 PM instead of 5 PM, and compline will follow immediately after vespers. Vigils before weekday and Saturday Liturgies will also start at 7 PM. Sunday (Saturday evening) vigils will remain at 5 PM.					