



## Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – March 2016

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Self-confidence is a much valued trait in our culture. Many (if not most) of the people I know wish they had more self-confidence. Some have taken courses designed to increase their self-confidence. Many consciously try to instill a bit more into their children or other people around them. In short, as a culture, we seem to think that if we just had more self-confidence, life would run much more smoothly.

What is a Christian to make of this? After all, we would be VERY hard pressed to find any saints of the Church who ever bemoaned their own lack of self-confidence or tried to increase it in their spiritual children! That's not to say that the saints were not confident people! Think for example of St. Ambrose boldly refusing the Emperor Theodosius admittance to the Church after he had unjustly caused the deaths of many innocent people. Or St. John Chrysostom dying in exile on a forced march because he decried the Empress Eudoxia's injustice. Or the Martyr Dorothea, while valiantly undergoing torments, promising a mocker that she would send him fruit from Paradise after her death (which she did, and which inspired him to become a martyr, too!)

The difference between THEIR confidence and our SELF-confidence has to do with at least two things – the purpose of this confidence and the person in whom it is placed. The saints had confidence in the goodness and power of God. With their entire beings, they longed to love Him and their neighbor, and they had complete confidence that He would give them the grace to do just that.

We, on the other hand, have a multitude of purposes for our self-confidence – an easier life, more money, increased status, ... even to do good for our fellows. But if the purpose is not to love God and neighbor, what's the point, really? And if the purpose IS to love God and neighbor, what possible sense does it make to place that confidence in myself? The point here is that there is a huge difference between having confidence in God that I can do what I need to do and confidence in MYSELF that I can do it without reference to God.

The root word in “confidence” is *fides*, which the Oxford Latin Dictionary defines as “faith, trust, confidence; belief, credence; loyalty; honesty; allegiance; promise; security; protection. Most of these words only make sense in a relationship. In the end, confidence/*fides* directed towards myself is an empty and lonely thing. On the other hand, to place our confidence/*fides* lovingly and humbly in the Lord of the Universe Who willingly died that we might share in His life is an unspeakable privilege, a great adventure, and unimaginable joy. Grant this, O Lord!

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

### ***A LITTLE BIT OF UNINTENDED EXCITEMENT***

We recently discovered that our sewage main was hopelessly infiltrated with tree roots, necessitating not a repair, but a complete replacement. Many thanks to our plumber Blake Moran and his fearless crew, who braved cold, heat, and rain to get everything working again!



*No, we're not going to keep digging till we strike oil!*



*How many more feet of this pipe did you say there were?*



*No, Elmer's Glue will NOT hold these two pieces together!*



*It's all in the wrist!*

## **ZOO UPDATE**

We are happy to report that the bunnies have yet to figure out how to escape from their recently fortified bunny run. We are even HAPPIER to report that their brief experiences in the big outdoors have not soured them on life in their lovely new home. They get along with each other quite well now except for Chiquito's insistence on snatching the best food. Fortunately, however, Ricochet is usually the model of mannerliness. Both also calmly accept the attention of the children (and adults!) who come by to pay their respects. Ricochet, in fact, will often come up to the fence for a little pet or a carrot. Now, if we can just convince Chiquito to let him keep the carrot, everything will be perfect!



*If we hide in this corner and close our eyes, nobody can see us*



*I am not coming out from under here until you promise me your next carrot!*

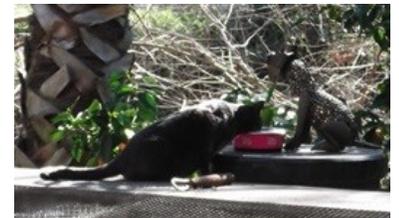


*A new twist on the time-honored concept of being in the doghouse*



*Philly: A guard cat is better than a guard dog any day!*

It's been awhile since we've updated you on Tin Tin and Philly. If you look REALLY closely at the picture on the left, you can see that Tin Tin Tin is still at his post. Philly insists that he was just offering to relieve Tin Tin Tin from guard duty for awhile, but we think he was actually trying to relieve him of his water dish! Somebody's gotta teach that cat some manners!



*Balou: Unlike certain cats that I can name, I am perfectly willing to share!*



## **SIGNS OF SPRING**

Those of us from colder climes love to see blooming flowers in what OUGHT to be winter. Below are a few pictures of the various flowers and veggies happily growing in the monastery at the moment.



## March 2016 Schedule for **Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 9am retreat at monastery  5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  <u>Meatfare</u>	7 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)	8 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <u>40 Martyrs of Sebaste</u>	9	10	11	12 5:00pm Vigil (at Monastery)
13 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy followed by <u>Forgiveness Vespers</u> (at Monastery)  <u>Cheesefare</u>	14 <b>BEGINNING OF THE GREAT FAST</b>	15	16	17	18 1:00pm Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  6:00pm Matins (at Monastery)	19 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy  <u>St. Theodore the Recruit</u>  5:00pm Vigil (both at Monastery)
20 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at Monastery)  <u>Triumph of Orthodoxy</u>	21	22	23 5:00pm Pre- sanctified Liturgy (at Monastery)	24	25 1:00pm Vesperal Liturgy for <u>Annunciation</u>  (at Monastery)	26 5:00pm Vigil (at St Simeon Parish)
27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy (at St Simeon Parish)  <u>St. Gregory Palamas</u>	28	29	30	31	<b>CHANGE IN SUNDAY EVENING SCHEDULE:</b>  Sunday evening vespers has returned to 5 PM followed by Bible study at 5:45 PM. For our full schedule (especially, the lenten changes) please see <a href="http://holyassumptionmonastery.com">holyassumptionmonastery.com</a>	