



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – May 2017

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

The topic of "safe spaces" on college campuses looms large these days. Those in favor insist that such spaces provide for a real need to be oneself in a supportive environment. Those opposed argue that safe spaces coddle students, stifle academic inquiry and threaten First Amendment rights.

Recently, a friend of ours commented that the Church is his safe space. He went on to explain that some of the most profound conversations he has ever had have been at the Agape meal after Liturgy. There, he has sat with people who, despite widely different life experiences and political views, are united in love of God and each other. In that environment of loving challenge, he is free to confront his own beliefs, attitudes and actions - and in the process become more fully himself.

Thus, the Church provides what both sides of the debate want - and on a much deeper level. She gives us a supportive environment within which we can be ourselves. Yet this support is the opposite of coddling. Christ's words come to mind - whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it (Luke 17:33). The Church decidedly DOES NOT support our attempts to stay within the comfortable boundaries of who we think we are. Rather, she calls us to die to ourselves so that we may truly live. The martyrs have drunk this drink to its dregs. They faced not just hostile opinion but torture. Yet ironically, in the midst of torture they were in a place of unassailable safety. They could shout triumphantly with St Paul, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life ... nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39) for they knew that their safety - indeed, their whole being - lay in the Crucified and Resurrected Christ.

As our world becomes increasingly unsafe, any "safe" spaces that it can offer are revealed as, at best, shaky shelters in a storm. Yet, if we are willing to die to ourselves, we can become beloved friends and children of the One Who died for us. Sooner or later, this will challenge us to our very cores and cost us everything we ever thought we had. But there is no other way to abundant and everlasting life.

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

with love in Christ,
Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery

ZOO UPDATE – Sunrise Gets the Boot!

Our African Grey Sunrise is generally very well-mannered. If you invite him onto your arm, you don't need to wonder whether he's tempted to air-condition your sleeves with a strategically placed tear or two! He does, however, have his Achilles heel – he can't resist nibbling on shoes, feet, etc. So, when his caregiver broke a bone in her foot and had to wear a walking boot, Sunrise thought she had done this just for him – and he was very grateful. It did make walking with a bad foot rather problematic, but never mind. Surely, it was worth it!

Then, the foot healed excellently and the boot received an honorable discharge. Alas, Sunrise now has nothing to nibble on but regular shoes, feet and sandals. Will the boot re-enlist for a further tour of duty? Will Sunrise learn monastic self-restraint? Stay tuned!



Sunrise – Wow! A boot to chew on and a paper to read. Life is good!!

PASCHA 2017

We are grateful to God for having granted us yet another Holy Week and Pascha. May we all shine with that holy Light throughout the rest of the year – and the rest of our lives!



Holy Saturday - Arise, O Lord, judge the Earth, for to Thee belong all the nations!



Paschal Rush Procession - Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels in Heaven sing.



Paschal Matins - Shine, shine, New Jerusalem. For the glory of the Lord has risen on thee!



St. John Chrysostom's Paschal Homily – Christ is risen! And the tomb is emptied of its dead!



Let us keep the feast!



*Christ is risen!
Truly He is risen!*



Paschal basket



Our zoo makes a cameo appearance as cookies!

A MEMORABLE DAY AT FORT ROSS



Bright Matins in Chapel

What a blessing it was to be at Fort Ross on Bright Saturday and the retirement party of our dear friend Robin Joy Wellman! For perhaps the first time in nearly 200 years, a readers' version of Bright Week matins was served in the chapel, followed by a procession down to the bluff and back. This was particularly wonderful for us sisters, since our chapel is a replica of the Fort Ross chapel and also contains a plank from the original, which was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake.



Procession to bluff and back



Singing of Paschal joy!

Afterwards, there were presentations by the Russian Cedar House – Kedry (a group of Russian families dedicated to sharing their history with their children and the wider population) and Kitka (a women's choral group that performs songs of Russian or Eastern European heritage). Members of these groups and many others of Robin's friends shared about the impact she had on their lives. Particularly touching were the presence and words of two elders of the Kushaya people – for whom Fort Ross is sacred ancestral land. The Fort is of course also sacred land to us.



Paul Chappell and Kushaya elders Violet Parrish Chappell and Lorin Smith

May we be granted many more years in which to praise God in this land that has been sanctified to Him by the people who lived there so piously. And may we order our lives so as to sanctify those places where we dwell.

NEW HOME FOR OUR BOOKSTORE

We have been wanting to make our bookstore more accessible to passersby and, at the same time, relieve the congestion in our refectory – the bookstore's current home. Now, thanks to Paul Coates (our stalwart helper and adviser) and several of his friends, we are renovating our garage and hope to have the bookstore up and running in its new home by early June.

This – we fervently hope – will be the PERMANENT home of the bookstore and LAST EVER use for our garage, which has housed collapsible koi tanks, an icon workshop, and most recently our casket workshop. The koi have for years all been happily back in the main pond, the icon workshop is long gone, and we have just completed moving our casket workshop to a large shed dubbed "The Barn" (The accompanying picture should make this name self-explanatory). We hope that next month's newsletter will feature pictures of a nearly finished bookstore and info on our grand opening!



I thought LOTS of people helped with barnraisings!

May 2017 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

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

website – <http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:00pm Vigil	2 9:30am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>(NOTICE THE TIME)</u> <u>St. Athanasius the Great</u>	3	4	5	6 5:00pm Vigil
7 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Sunday of the Paralytic</u>	8	9 6:00pm Vigil	10 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Mid-Pentecost</u>	11	12	13 5:00pm Vigil
14 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Sunday of the Samaritan Woman</u>	15	16 6:00pm Vigil	17 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Apostle Andronicus of the 70 & St. Junia</u>	18	19	20 5:00pm Vigil
21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Sunday of the Blind Man</u>	22	23 6:00pm Vigil	24 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy 6:00pm Vigil <u>Leavetaking of Pascha</u>	25 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Ascension</u>	26	27 5:00pm Vigil
28 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Sunday of the Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council</u>	29	30 6:00pm Vigil	31 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Apostle Herman of the 70</u>	Due to major repairs at St. Simeon Church, all services in May are at the Monastery		

SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, June 24. Gospel of Mark Workshop

John Burnett, former African missionary

(See the attached flyer)

June Retreat—Saturday June 24, 2017

Gospel of St. Mark Workshop

Led by John Burnett, former African missionary



WHAT WAS IT THAT SET THE WORLD ON FIRE 2000 YEARS AGO? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DISCIPLES WHEN THEY MET JESUS? CAN IT HAPPEN TO YOU? COME AND SEE!

John Burnett grew up non-Mormon in Mormon Utah, which made him think deeply throughout his entire life about communicating the good news of Christ to outsiders. He has a BA in Classical languages and Buddhist studies, and an MA in Old Testament, but rather than pursuing an academic career, he took years on pilgrimage to monasteries in America, Greece, and the Middle East. In 2003 he finally realized his life's dream of teaching in Africa, where he served as dean of an Orthodox seminary in Kampala, Uganda and later as director of studies at another in Johannesburg. Though he's looking forward to returning to Africa, he's currently the Catechist and senior Reader at St Nicholas Orthodox Church in San Anselmo, California, where he also directs the St Nicholas Africa Fund, a non-profit dedicated to helping very needy African high school students and young adults complete their education or get started in business.

Mr. Burnett developed his unique approach to St Mark's Gospel while working in Africa. "I was asking why the gospels spread so fast," he says. "The key was *what happened to the disciples* around Jesus— and that's the story St Mark shares especially well— he doesn't just tell you about the steak, he gives you the sizzle! To experience it, though, we really have to see how his book works as a whole, and as far as I know, not many people these days are teaching it on that level, because we usually read the episodes separately and pay little attention to how they're put together. As a result, we're missing out on a key dimension of the Story! That's the dimension I can help you with. St Mark's Gospel really is powerful— it goes straight to the heart of Orthodoxy in a way that's deeply surprising, and very challenging!"

9:00 AM—Session 1



10:30 AM—Session 2



12:15 PM Akathist



1 pm Lunch



2pm—Session 3

HOLY ASSUMPTION

MONASTERY



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No Fee, but your generosity will support the monastery and education in Africa