



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – April 2019

1519 Washington St., Calistoga, CA 94515

Phone: 707-942-6244; Email: sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com

Website: www.holyassumptionmonastery.com



Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Recently, we have become familiar with the term “impostor syndrome.” People with impostor syndrome, despite being highly accomplished, feel incompetent and fear being exposed as frauds. Psychologists help those afflicted with this syndrome to look at their situations more objectively so that they can see that they truly are highly competent and successful. Of course, it’s good for people with this syndrome to be able to see their situation more objectively. But then what? So, maybe they ARE highly competent and successful, but does that bring meaning to their life?

Perhaps this syndrome points to something far deeper. At some deep level, we all know that we have failed to be what we ought to be. The more impressive our résumés become, the louder something inside us protests “There’s GOT to be more to life than this.” At the judgment seat of Christ, we will not be asked about our IQs, salaries, résumés, etc. We will be asked if we loved God and our neighbor, as proven by our deeds. To the extent that we fail to love God and neighbor, we are impostors at the deepest level - impostors masquerading as human beings. If, however, we do love God and neighbor, then we are true human beings. And the only way to get there is through the Cross and humility and putting others before ourselves. As we continue our Lenten journey towards Holy Week and Pascha, may Christ our God help us to ascend the Cross with Him and share in the glory of his Resurrection.

with love in Christ,

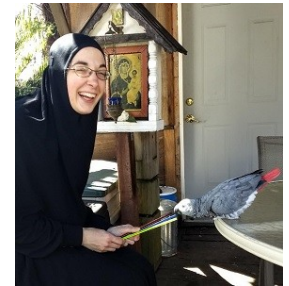
*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – Bird Training



I don't know why we're doing this, but the treat had better be worth it!

After a recent visit from our "bird friends," Chloe and John, the sisters have started a training routine with the parrots. All four birds know to touch the end of a training stick to earn a treat, but the training can also teach them to enter cages, step onto specific perches, or turn in a circle. The biggest challenge we are offering the African Grays, however, is learning colors! John and Chloe left us with three brightly-colored plastic sticks--red, blue and yellow--and Petie and Sunrise are being asked to touch specific colors to earn their treats. Some sessions go better than others... We're not sure right now if they are learning anything, or just guess at random. But they get treats (eventually), and we get to laugh over the process. It's a win-win.



Who's training whom?



AROUND THE MONASTERY



Beautiful flowers gracing our beautiful bells



Feed us! Feed us!! Feed us!!!



Life couldn't be better!



Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night can stay the cookie buyers from their rounds

SPRING RETREAT



Fr. Ian MacKinnon

On Saturday March 9, we were blessed to have Fr. Ian MacKinnon and Fr. Timothy Winegar lead a retreat on “Seeking First the Kingdom ... Our Lord’s Teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.” First, Fr. Timothy gave a session entitled “Two Mountains, Two Covenants.” The first idea here was to show how St. Matthew (whose Gospel was written most particularly to demonstrate to Jews that Jesus is the promised Messiah) pointedly compares Christ giving the Sermon on the Mount to Moses receiving the Law on Mt. Sinai. Moses is a “type” of Christ in that many events in his life foreshadowed and were fulfilled in the life of Christ. To name a few – Pharaoh’s slaughtering of the Hebrew male infants around the birth of Moses prefigured Herod’s slaughter of the Holy Innocents at Christ’s birth. As Moses led the people out of Egyptian bondage, so Christ leads us out of bondage to sin into eternal life. As Moses fed the people with manna from heaven, so Christ feeds us with the

heavenly bread of His own Body. In the Sermon on the Mount, the focus is on Christ the Lawgiver – the One Who gave the Old Covenant Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai now declares in His own Person the New Covenant Law.

Second, the New Covenant does not annul the Old Covenant, but fulfills it and brings it to a far deeper place. The Old Covenant is expressed in commands – do this; don’t do that. The New Covenant, however, is expressed as a series of invitations “Blessed are ___ for they ___” that go down to the very depths of our hearts, inviting us to fulfill our humanity through true Christlikeness and purity of heart. This is beyond our own power, but not God’s. So, we should be both humbled and inspired by the Beatitudes. We cannot attain them by our own power and we fall terribly short, but God will give us the grace to attain hearts that CAN keep the Beatitudes.

Third, keeping the Beatitudes is the result of a hidden, simple life. We are called to be lights in the world, but that is the result of a hidden, simple life of prayer and of living out the two great commandments of love of God and neighbor. If we try to be lights without cultivating the Light of Christ inside us, we will just be hypocrites. A simple test to see how we’re doing is “How do we pray, fast, and give when nobody’s looking?” In summary, the One Who gave the Law to Moses comes Himself to give us a new commandment – to love each other as He loved us. Loving our neighbor is NOT a new commandment. Loving each other with the self-sacrificing love of Christ IS.

In the second session, Fr. Ian focused on particular ways we seek God’s Kingdom or fail to do so. Given the timing of the retreat, he talked a fair bit about Lent. Lent is both a divine rest and a time of warfare. It’s a time to seek holy simplicity (which is restful), but we attain that simplicity by warring against our sinful inclinations and our tendencies to blame external things and other people for our own faults. But we are saved together, not apart. So, Lent is a joint experience. We all have blind spots, and we’re tempted to judge each other. Instead we are called to fill in each other’s blind spots. All this is in the context of receiving the Eucharist together, so that our spiritual sight can be sanctified and we are given the grace to serve God alone.



Fr. Timothy Winegar

Another topic Fr. Ian focused on was anxiety. When we’re anxious, we whip up fantasies about what might happen in the future. And that’s a real problem because, as a Russian saying puts it, “God is everywhere except in fantasies.” But the problem itself shows the cure – to recognize that God is here with us in the present and that He will always give us what we need. And if He doesn’t give us what we need, then He’s giving us something better.



A very attentive group of participants

The last session was a question and answer period, which was too wide-ranging to recap. But it was spirited, and we all wished the retreat could have gone on longer. Maybe next time!

April 2019 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery
 Monastery contact info – (707) 942-6244; email – sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com;
[website – http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com](http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2	3 5:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	4	5 1:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	6 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy Soul Saturday 5 pm Vigil
7 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy St. John of the Ladder	8	9	10 5:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	11	12 1:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	13 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy Akathist Saturday 5 pm Vigil
14 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy St. Mary of Egypt	15	16	17 5:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	18	19 1:00pm Pre-sanctified Liturgy	20 9:40 AM Hours/ Divine Liturgy Lazarus Saturday 5 pm Vigil
21 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy 6pm Bridegroom Matins Palm Sunday	22 9am Vespers & Great Compline (tentative) 6pm Bridegroom Matins Great and Holy Monday	23 9am Vespers & Great Compline (tentative) 6pm Bridegroom Matins Great and Holy Tuesday	24 9am Presanctified Liturgy (tentative) 6pm Matins of Holy Thursday Great and Holy Wednesday	25 9am Vesperal Liturgy 6pm Matins w/ 12 Passion Gospels Great and Holy Thursday	26 7am Royal Hours 1pm Vespers 6pm Lamentations Matins Great and Holy Friday	27 9am Vesperal Liturgy (tentative) 11:30pm Midnight Office Great and Holy Saturday
28 12am Paschal Matins/Divine Liturgy 11:00am Agape Vespers (Macedonian Park) Pascha	29	30	NOTE: Our schedule sometimes changes unexpectedly. Please check our website or the recorded message on our telephone for last minute changes.			

SAVE THE DATE – Saturday June 22

Fr. Edward Henderson and Veronica Ruby will be speaking on the Sanctity of Life