



Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – January 2019

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

A cute internet story starts with a little girl asking her grandfather, “Who made me?” When he replies, “God made you,” she asks, “Well, then, who made YOU?” The grandfather answers, “God made me, too.” His granddaughter runs her hand over his wizened cheek and says, “He’s gotten better, hasn’t He?”

The humor here is a thin veil over profound tragedy. Feeling our own bodies breaking down over time is painful – and not just physically. Watching the same happening to our loved ones is even more unbearable.

Yet, what is the alternative? That God would permit us to have perfectly healthy bodies and ever more decrepit souls? The relationship of physical and spiritual illnesses is a complicated one. Many physical ailments are directly connected to spiritual ailments – you just have to look at ‘lifestyle’ diseases to see the truth of that. But even when the direct connection is not there, our physical ailments are a constant reminder that we live in a broken world. We can rage at the brokenness (especially at the broken people whose jagged edges rub on ours ☹), or we can humbly turn to God and seek healing for ourselves, our loved ones and all of creation. If we do the former, our souls sicken even faster and more calamitously than our bodies. If, however, we do the latter, then we will see what a remarkable Craftsman our God is. He takes us – decrepit of body and soul – and remakes us in His own likeness.

As Theophany approaches and we prepare to celebrate the baptism of Christ, let us join Him in the streams of the Jordan, by dying to our own broken and sinful wills and rising anew in Him.

with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania
and the community
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

ZOO UPDATE – CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE ZOO

As a reminder that Christ was born in the manger for the salvation of the entire creation, we follow a beautiful Christmas Eve tradition of feeding the animals a special treat before starting the 12-course Holy Meal. What do the animals think of this tradition? See below!



*Koi – So much to eat,
so little time!*



*ChaCha - I'll eat after I perfect
my 'adorable' pose.*



*Crackle - Food down there. Me up
up here. Time to correct that!*



*Petie - A toy AND a treat!
What could be better?*



*Balou – Hurry up and
feed me already!*



*Cookie - I'll come up for
air when I'm done.*



*Simba - Cute picture, but I'll
take the food any day!*



*Philly – There IS
more of this, right?*

CHRISTMAS 2018

We thank God for granting us to celebrate once again the Nativity of Christ. It was a joy to have Fr. Edward Henderson with us once again, along with our good friends and parishioners. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Christmas Eve



Enter His gates with thanksgiving!



We magnify Thee ...



12-course holy meal with carols



Christmas Liturgy

Christmas Day



Festal Icon



Christmas Day – Let's get the carols right this time!

Plus two new (to us) traditions: Jesse Tree & Caroling with a Caroling Star



Our Jesse Tree – a close relative of the Charlie Brown Christmas Tree

We adopted two new Christmas traditions this year – Jesse Tree and Starring. The Jesse Tree's name comes from the Isaiah prophesy of a shoot that shall come forth from the root of David. From the beginning of the Nativity Fast through Theophany, an Old Testament prophesy (and later on, a Gospel passage) is read and a handmade ornament illustrating the passage is added to the tree. All of us appreciated and benefited from the readings and enjoyed making the ornaments. Hopefully, next year will be even better!

Singing carols is something we do every year. This year, though, we went caroling to friends' houses and even sang to some new friends as we walked from house to house. Also, for the first time, we followed the Ukrainian custom of caroling with a caroling star (see picture). Caroling of any sort has become enough of a rarity in our culture that just going about singing Christmas carols was an especially joyous opportunity to spend time with friends, meet new friends, and worship God. Come join us next year!



What did we say we were going to sing?



HAVE BOOKSTORE, WILL TRAVEL

Calistoga Christmas Faire – December 1



Cookie Monster - One cookie for you, two cookies for me!

Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Menlo Park – December 1



Decisions, decisions!

St. Nicholas Christmas Fair, Holy Dormition Church, Santa Rosa - December 8



With such a beautiful display, we hate to sell anything!



NEXT STEPS

Two more of our sisters have taken their vows. On the evening of Wednesday, December 19, Archbishop BENJAMIN tonsured the former Sister Margarete as a stavrophor with the name Mother Macrina (after St. Macrina the Younger) and the former Sister Xenia as stavrophor with the name Mother Monica (after St. Monica of Hippo, the mother of St. Augustine). Please keep our new Mothers in your prayers!

Mother Macrina, Archbishop Benjamin, Mother Monica



January 2019 Schedule for Holy Assumption Monastery & St. Simeon Church

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	6:00pm Vigil	1 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>The Circumcision of Christ/St. Basil the Great</u>	2	3	4 7:00am Royal Hours 6:00pm Vigil	5 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy with the Indoor Blessing of the Water, followed by Great Vespers <u>Eve of Theophany</u> 5:00pm Vigil
6 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy followed by the Outdoor Blessing of the Water <u>Theophany</u>	7	8	9	10 6:00pm Vigil	11 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Ven. Theodosius the Great</u>	12 5:00pm Vigil
13 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy	14	15 6:00pm Vigil	16 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Veneration of the Chains of St. Peter</u>	17	18	19 5:00pm Vigil
20 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy	21 6:00pm Vigil	22 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Apostle Timothy</u>	23	24	25	26 5:00pm Vigil
27 9:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy	28	29 6:00pm Vigil	30 8:40am Hours/ Divine Liturgy <u>Synaxis of the Three Holy Hierarchs</u>	31	NOTE: Our schedule sometimes changes unexpectedly. Please check our website or the recorded message on our phone for last minute changes.	

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday March 9 Retreat

led by Fr. Ian MacKinnon