



# Holy Assumption Monastery Newsletter – May 2020

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Dear Friends of Holy Assumption Monastery,

Every year at Pascha, the last lines of the Paschal stichera jump out –

*This is the day of resurrection! Let us be illumined by the feast! Let us embrace each other!  
Let us call brothers even those that hate us and forgive all by the resurrection, and so let us cry,  
“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”*

To our fallen reasoning, it might make more sense to say “forgive all by the crucifixion.” We sinned terribly and Christ ransomed us by His death. It is true of course that there could be no forgiveness without the Crucifixion, but there could be no life and no joy without the Resurrection. “Forgive all by the Resurrection.” This is not an order to be grudgingly followed, but an astonishing invitation to be joyfully grasped, and a promise of strength to the powerless. How many times have I tried to forgive others, but just couldn’t do it? Too many to count. I CAN’T, but Christ CAN. He trampled down death and bestowed life to those in the tomb. He can bring my stone cold heart to life and fill me with His love for my brothers and sisters. His is the victory! Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

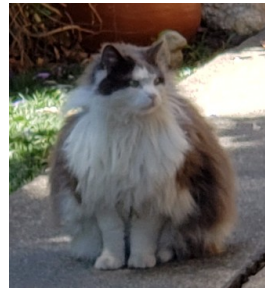
with love in Christ,

*Mother Melania  
and the community  
of Holy Assumption Monastery*

## ZOO UPDATE – Cats again!



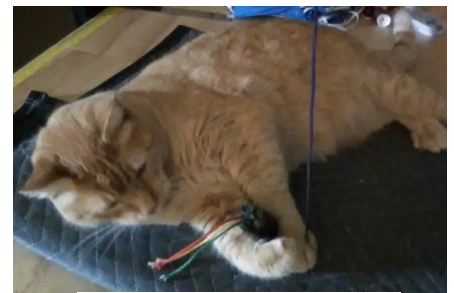
Balou – Who’s doing quality control on the palm crosses?



Philly – I’m ignoring you. Can’t you tell?!



Goolya – I’ll come out when you offer a better bribe.



Simba – You didn’t need this yarn, did you?



## LIFE IN THE PANDEMIC

We are keenly aware of the blessings God has given us in the last couple of months. Praying the services while so many of our brothers and sisters can’t. Live-streaming the services, which are being watched literally all over the world (well, in quite a few parts of the world, anyway 😊). Experiencing the incredible generosity of our friends, despite the economic situation. And on and on and on ... Our deepest thanks to God and to all of you. We love and miss you and are looking forward to being together again soon!

## MAY CALENDAR – still a mystery

MAY 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

## ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM

With social distancing still in place, we have ventured into the world of Zoom. On Bright Friday, Fr. Anthony Roeber gave a Zoom presentation (see next page). It was a great success, and we’re already planning the second:

### COVID-19 and the Value of Life: Practical Implications

Very Reverend Spyridon Jajeh

Clinical Pharmacist, Director of Hospital Pharmacy,  
& Adjunct Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Sunday June 7, 1:00-2:30 pm

## *From PALM SUNDAY to RADONITSA*



*Palm Sunday  
Icon procession*



*Taking palms to the  
parishioners*



*Bridegroom  
Matins*



*Fr. Spyridon Jajeh at  
Twelve Gospels Matins*



*Lamentation  
Matins*



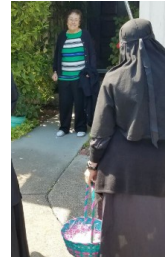
*Fr. Nicholas Carr  
Vespers Liturgy  
of Pascha*



*Fr. John Takahashi  
at Paschal Matins*



*The Temple during  
Agape Vespers*



*Taking Pascha baskets  
to the parishioners*



*Bright Saturday  
Procession*



*Fr. Alex Krassovsky and  
the sisters singing to  
our departed sisters*



### **ZOOM RETREAT!**

“The Legacy of the Eyewitnesses: Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection” was the topic of a Zoom retreat conducted by Fr. Anthony Roeber, Professor of Church History at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary. The retreat was given for the monastery community on Bright Friday. Friends of the monastery and others joined the hour and a half presentation and discussion. Father Anthony began by emphasizing that we can only hear and read the Scriptures through the testimony of those who witnessed the events of Lazarus Saturday, Holy Week, and the Resurrection appearances of Christ. As devout Jews of that time, the apostles and disciples had to learn to hear and understand both the ‘Old Testament’ scriptures and, eventually, Christian writings, within the context of eyewitness testimony (their own or that of others) that Christ, the Son of God, died and rose from the dead at a certain time and in a certain place. The answer to Christ’s all-important question “Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:29) can only receive the right response of faith because Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection occurred in history, and apostles and early disciples were eyewitnesses to this astonishing truth. So important was this received testimony that the Apostle Paul, who scholars believe authored the earliest Christian writings, (Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians—45-53 AD?) based his claim to apostleship on the voice of the resurrected Christ.



*Fr. Anthony Roeber –  
Zoom speaker extraordinaire!*

Father then reflected on the different memories of the faith communities that made up the early Church. The differences between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John about when Passover occurred, when Jesus observed Passover, and hence the use of leavened bread in the ancient Church’s celebration of the Eucharist can be traced to difference observances of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover among Jewish communities of the time. Some celebrated Passover as early as Tuesday, others Thursday, of what we now know as “Holy Week.” All the gospels testify that the events from the raising of Lazarus through the Crucifixion and death were historical realities that occurred in a very specific place and time. But only as the first witnesses were martyred or reposed peacefully did the different communities begin to write down what we now call the Gospel of Mark (66-70 AD?) to the Gospel of John (90-100 AD?). The Johannine tradition is the clearest in locating the death of Christ on Friday, the day of Preparation for what John calls “a special sabbath,” i.e. Passover, where Christ himself has been sacrificed as the new Paschal Lamb. John’s emphasis upon the “living bread” (John 6) and the distinct difference between “manna” and the “living bread” (artos in Greek) have shaped the Orthodox celebration that is not a memorial commemoration nearly as much as a forward-looking celebration of the kingdom whose fulfillment the Church awaits because of the testimony of the witnesses, of whom John is identified as “he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true: and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” (John 19:35.) A lively question and answer and discussion followed the reflections and ended with the community leading all the participants in the singing of “The Angel Cried” and the thrice-repeated “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life.” All in all, it was a great success, and we hope this will be the first of many Zoom retreats. (See the front page for details of the second ☺!)