



# HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

## AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

When I was young, I liked the chorus of the Rolling Stones  
"You Can't Always Get What You Want"

*You can't always get what you want (2x)  
But if you try some time, you just might find  
You get what you need*

Quite a statement from rock stars!

As I've gotten older, though, I've realized that most of us don't usually get angry at not getting what we WANT, but at not getting what we THINK we need. Then, we resent the people who are keeping us from getting what we "need," or we feel justified in TAKING what we "need."

This brings up the question, "What DO we need?" which in turn requires us to ask ourselves "Need for what?" To live a reasonably comfortable life? To do my job? To stay alive?

And one more question - "At what cost?" Humiliating another person? Harming my relationships? Losing my integrity? Destroying my immortal soul? In the end, all that we NEED is to love God and our neighbor. And if we try THAT some time, we just might find, we DO get what we need.

With love in Christ,

Mother Melania and the sisters

### ZOO UPDATE - Ducklings or Ducks?

We aren't sure when ducklings officially become ducks, but ours have grown out of all recognition - so much so that they have quickly outgrown their indoor accommodations. Fortunately, our friend Denny is a skilled woodworker, and thanks to him, our ducks have a lovely new hutch. For a week or so after they moved, we kept them confined near the hutch so that they would recognize it as home. We opened their gate today, but as far as we know, they spent the whole day huddled near their hutch. So, they DO recognize their home. Now, we'll see how much a group of homebodies they are. Stay tuned!



The door is open! Let's explore! But not TOO far!



Like a duck to water

### CALENDAR

**SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10:00AM**

**TRANSFIGURATION - Friday, Aug 6, 9:00AM Divine Liturgy**

**DORMITION - Saturday, Aug 14, 5:00PM Vigil; Sunday Aug 15, 10:00AM Divine Liturgy**

**- for other services and more details, please see our website**

### ZOOM RETREATS

**SAT. AUG 21, 10AM-12PM: TBA**

**SAT. SEP 11, 10AM-12PM: TBA**

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## July Zoom Talk

On Saturday July 17, Mother Melania gave a talk entitled *Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us: How she saves us and how we should respond*. Of course, neither the Theotokos nor anybody else saves in the ultimate way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ saves. Still, she has a unique role in our salvation because of who she is in relation to her Son. So, we looked at three major roles she has in relation to Christ and us - Virgin Mother, Royal Intercessor, and Military Leader.



I AM smiling!

The Theotokos is depicted wearing three stars for virginity of body, soul, and spirit. These indicate her total fidelity to, love for, and trust of God, which enabled her to become the Second Eve (the Mother of all the living). The first Eve lost her virginity of soul and spirit when she chose the serpent's lies over the love of God. In contrast, the Theotokos always desired to love and obey God, and thus she was able "to bear the Fire of Divinity in her womb without being consumed." Only a virgin of body, mind, and soul COULD bear God because only the pure can endure the holiness of God. So, Mary, the pure Virgin Mother was able to nurture Christ in her womb, with her milk, and with her whole being. Because we belong to Christ, she nurtures us, too, as her own children. Question for us - What keeps us from loving God and our neighbor with our whole being?

In Judah, the queen was the king's mother, not his wife. As the king's main counselor, she also functioned as an intercessor. The Theotokos fulfilled this role at the wedding in Cana. With the boldness of humble love, she told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do - even though He SEEMED to be saying no. She wasn't being presumptuous. Rather, she KNEW Him and therefore knew what He would do. Questions for us - When we are under authority, are we bold to say what we need to say and yet also humble and loving as we say it? When we are in authority, do we exercise it decisively, but also humbly and lovingly?

The Akathist Hymn refers to the Theotokos as the champion leader. "Champion" here mostly means "one who fights on behalf of others." "Leader" actually refers to a military general. So, here we are in an hierarchical Church that teaches that the man is the leader in the home and does not have women clergy. Yet THE greatest saint is undisputedly the Theotokos, a woman. And this woman who is famed for her humility and obedience is also our great champion and general. If that seems strange to us, it's because we have lost the Christian understanding that leadership does not imply "more important," nor does submission imply "less important." St. John Chrysostom goes so far as to liken husband and wife to God the Father and God the Son - authority and submission between full equals. But we don't believe this, and so we all want to be leaders. As a result, we no longer fully appreciate the distinctly womanly role of bearing, nurturing, and raising children - it's not glamorous, you can't make a lot of money, and people don't say "Wow!" So, it is no wonder that we have also lost appreciation of men as leaders in the home. This is not a call to male and female stereotypes - the Church has empress saints and sensitive male saints, too. It's not a matter of being the 'proper' type of man or woman, but of pouring ourselves out in love to God and neighbor.

So, it does make sense that the Theotokos is the champion leader. Firstly, she is our Mother, and who will fight on our behalf if our mother won't? Secondly, we are fighting a battle far beyond our own strength. Victory is only possible through humble, joyous, submissive, and courageous reliance on Christ. And THAT, in a nutshell, describes the Theotokos. Questions for us - Whose strength are we fighting with? Are we even in the battle? May Christ, through the intercessions of His Most Holy Mother, grant us His salvation. Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

## Work Parties x 4

### St. Athanasius Goleta Youth Group - July 2



Buckets of fun!



A little light cleaning

### St. Innocent Service Works Interns - July 8



Ready to work?



Yep!

### Stylite Tree Trimmers & Friends - July 10



Worth it for the view



Quite a hair cut!

### St. Nicholas Church, Saratoga - July 31



An apple a day isn't enough to make apple butter!



Flower power!

## ZOO, Part 2



Don't disturb me. I'm getting my beauty sleep.



Don't disturb me either - on general principle!

Many of you will remember staying next door to the monastery, at Washington Street Lodging. When the B&B cottages were converted to long-term rentals a few years ago, they were no longer available for monastery guests.

# A place for YOU at the monastery!



Recently, Cottage #1 became available for a new tenant. The monastery will be renting this cottage on a month-to-month basis, as a guest-house for pilgrims.

The cottage includes its own small kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and living room.

We  
need  
your  
help!

The rent for this cottage will be **\$1200/month**, which is extremely reasonable for Calistoga, but a stretch for the monastery's operating budget. While pilgrims generally make a donation, the sisters never insist on a particular amount in order for someone to stay with us.

We are humbly appealing to you, our friends, with the hope that some of you would be able to make a monthly donation toward the cottage rental. May this be a blessing for all of us!