



# HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY



## DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

*And in that day, you will say, "I will bless You, O Lord. Although You were angry with me, You turned away Your anger and had mercy on me. Behold, God is my Savior and Lord. I will trust in Him and be saved by Him. I will not be afraid, for the Lord is my glory and my praise. He has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:1,2 (OSB)*

The preceding chapter (Isaiah 11) prophesies the coming of Christ, His destruction of His enemies, His restoration of the faithful remnant of His people, and the healing of the earth.

When this happens, THAT is the day when we will say that the Lord is our strength and song and has become our salvation. That day can be understood as the Second Coming, but it also the First Coming. So, we already live in the day in which Christ has destroyed His enemies and restored humanity and the creation. That's not very obvious, especially with all the craziness going on these days. But Christ HAS already conquered, and we are living in the last days of a war that He has already won.

So, as we go forward towards the Nativity of Christ in these uncertain times, let's remember that He has already restored creation through becoming part of it and has already defeated our REAL enemies (sin, death, and the devil, and MAINLY our own sin). And in that knowledge, may we do our own part as members of His Body to bring His peace to earth.

with love in Christ,

Mother Melania and the sisters

### ZOO UPDATE - Frisco winning hearts

Frisco hasn't taken long to find his place. He might not be top cat yet, but he's very adorable, which goes for a lot. He and Goolya are fast pals now. He hasn't met Simba yet and has only met Philly once, but we predict that his kitteny charms will win the day!



*Why did you give us the second drawer? Clearly, we're TOP drawer cats!*

### Giving Tuesday - Amazing Response

Last year on Giving Tuesday, you all amazed us by donating over \$30,000 in response to a \$20,000 matching grant. So, when donors gave us \$30,000 for a matching grant this year, we were quite hopeful that we would be able to match and even exceed it. To our astonishment, though, we had far surpassed \$30,000 the day BEFORE. As we are preparing to send this newsletter out on the night of Giving Tuesday itself, we have received upwards of \$37,000. What can we say except, "Thanks be to God for His love that He shows us in so many ways - not least, our truly wonderful friends!!!"

### CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10AM

**Christmas Eve (Fri Dec 24)** - 7am Royal Hours, 1pm Vesperal Liturgy, 5pm Christmas Eve meal, 9:30pm Vigil

**Christmas (Sat Dec 25)** - 12am Divine Liturgy

for other services, please see our website

### ZOOM RETREATS

SAT. DEC 11, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Anthony Roeber - Reflections on St Ephrem the Syrian's Hymns for Nativity

SAT. JAN 8, 10AM-12PM: His Grace, Bishop DANIEL - Priest and Parishioners: Sharing the Journey

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## "How Good and How Joyous: Exploring the Special Relationship between the OCA and the Polish Orthodox Church" - Saturday, November 13th, 2021

In 2018, Fr. Arkady Mironko of Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, arranged for Mother Macrina to spend a month at two monasteries in Poland. Within hours of her arrival in the country, Mother Macrina realized that the Orthodox of Poland share a special relationship with the Orthodox in the United States, and with the OCA in particular. She met many clergy with links to the Orthodox community in the United States through family (like the dean of the Warsaw cathedral!) or education (at St. Vladimir's Seminary). She encountered Saint Vasily Martysz, a Polish hieromartyr who had served as a missionary priest in Alaska, Pennsylvania, and Vostok, Canada. The monastics she stayed with had welcomed OCA hierarchs at their monasteries on various occasions. And most astonishingly of all, one of the monasteries (Nativity of the Theotokos in Zwierki) turned out to have the same spiritual roots as Holy Assumption Monastery and St. Barbara Monastery in California; its founding abbess had been trained and tonsured at the Monastery of the Protection of the Theotokos in Bussy-en-Othe, France, just as Abbess Victoria of St. Barbara Monastery had been! Partly because Mother Macrina had not been very enthusiastic about her visit to Poland before her arrival, she has been wanting to share something of this special experience since her return to the United States.

Fr. Arkady then presented four general topics: an overview of the modern history of the Orthodox Church in Poland; the postwar process of the Orthodox in Poland gaining autocephaly (first from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and then from the Moscow Patriarchate); saints of the Orthodox Church in Poland (like Saint Vasily Martysz); and commonalities and differences between the OCA and the Orthodox Church of Poland. As the modern Polish state emerged, the Orthodox Church was viewed as an arm of Russian power (whether Tsarist or Soviet), thus generating political as well as religious conflict. Part of this conflict included forced migrations of the Orthodox communities, first from eastern Poland to deep within Russia during World War I (in order to protect the Orthodox from invading Germans), and later from eastern Poland into western Poland (in a post-war effort to disperse and weaken the Orthodox communities). The Polish government of the 1920s pressured the Orthodox to obtain autocephaly; but while the first tomos of autocephaly was granted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1924, the Moscow Patriarchate granted its own tomos of autocephaly to the Polish Orthodox Church in 1948. Fr. Arkady pointed out that although there have been many efforts to weaken the Orthodox Church in Poland, these efforts have inadvertently led to the spreading and strengthening of the Orthodox faith, as exemplified by St. Vasily. Today, Poland has about half a million Orthodox faithful, concentrated largely in the northeastern part of the country. Fr. Arkady highlighted some commonalities between the Orthodox in Poland and the US with their interest in the youth and the ongoing development of their identities as a tiny minority within their homelands.

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak joined the Zoom retreat from Poland, where he has been living with his family for the past year. However, his link with the Orthodox Church in Poland goes back to his early professional career, when he was invited to spend six months working for the Church (with Syndesmos) in Poland, but stayed many years. Father Dn. Joseph testified from his own experience that, aside from its relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, from which it received its autocephaly, the Orthodox Church of Poland's most important relationship is with the OCA. Why is that? A large majority of people who founded OCA parishes came from the southeast corner of Poland, known as Carpatho-Russia. Many hierarchs of the OCA, most notably Saint Tikhon, were from Poland. But it only became common in the 1990s for anyone from the OCA to refer to themselves as "Polish Orthodox." It was especially at that time that the relationship between the two communities blossomed through educational and youth programs (which were also linked to monasticism, as many youth programs were hosted at the monasteries in Poland). Archdeacon Joseph spoke of his participation in youth programs that sent groups of young American Orthodox pilgrims to Russia and Poland in the 1990s. Today, there are fewer official links between the Orthodox in Poland and the United States, due at least in part to the Church in both areas going through "growing pains": in Poland, the native Orthodox population is declining, and in both countries the enrollment in the Orthodox seminaries has dwindled. But Archdeacon Joseph emphasized that the Orthodox in Poland and the United States have a wonderful history and foundation to build upon, and that both communities can benefit from a renewal of exchange and mutual support.

At the end of the talk, several listeners were excited enough by what they had heard to ask about the possibility of organizing a pilgrimage to Poland! Anyone interested?

This Zoom talk can be found at <https://holyassumptionmonastery.com/november132021ocathepolishorthodoxchurch>

## Have Bookstore, Will Travel

Nativity of Christ Church,  
Novato, CA - Nov 13



*I think I spy a customer!*

Sts. Peter & Paul Church,  
Santa Rosa, CA - Nov 13 & 14



*Oops! Did we forget to send someone to man the booth?!*

## Pilgrimage, Work Party

Nativity of Christ Church,  
Novato, CA - Nov 19



*Coming to visit us a week after their holiday bazaar AND shelling pecans. That's TRUE love!*

## THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving 2020 was a rather lonely affair. So, we were deeply grateful that God granted us to share THIS Thanksgiving with a full house!



## Free Kindle Downloads of ALL the Fearless & Friends Books!

Wed Dec 1, 12:01am - Thurs Dec 2, 11:59pm Pacific Time



### CAPERS AND HARRY: HIGH CLIMBING

Download the free Kindle book or buy the paperback – <https://bit.ly/Capers-Harry>

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### MIMI THE MYNAH: IT'S ALL MINE!

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### BLUSTER BLUE JAY: NOT MY FAULT!

Download the free Kindle book or buy the paperback – <https://bit.ly/Bluster-Blue-Jay>

Leave a rating or review – <https://bit.ly/Review-Bluster-Blue-Jay>

Get worksheets – <https://bookconnect.review/dp/WorksheetsBlusterBlueJay>

### PASCHA AT THE DUCK POND

Download the free Kindle book or buy the paperback – <https://bit.ly/Pascha-Duck-Pond>

Leave a rating or review – <https://bit.ly/Review-Pascha-Duck-Pond>

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*Please leave a review. It helps the books reach a wider audience. Thanks!*

*NOTE: If you can't download Kindle formats or get this too late for the free download, email Mother Melania at [mothermelania@holyassumptionmonastery.com](mailto:mothermelania@holyassumptionmonastery.com) for free pdf versions until December 31, 2021.*



## Coming Soon - *Bad Dog, Scooter!*

### the next book in

## *The Adventures of Kenny and Scooter*



# Cookie Decorating at the Monastery

Come decorate a Christmas cookie  
at Holy Assumption Monastery



**Friday, December 3rd, 2pm-6pm**

**Friday, December 10th, 2pm-6pm**

**(Children must be accompanied by an adult)**

Holy Assumption Monastery  
1519 Washington St.  
Calistoga, CA 94515

**Donations welcome! Cookies limited!**