



# HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

## JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

In his May Zoom talk, Fr. Anthony Roeber characterized the Pentecostarian season as a time of grateful reception. This led to a discussion of the importance of balancing receptiveness and action in our lives, which in turn brought up Fr. John Behr's depiction of our Christian lives as "active passivity."

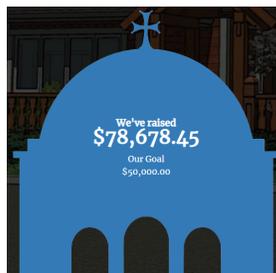
This phrase brings to mind the catcher on a baseball team. He spends most of his game in active passivity, crouched in position while focusing intently on the pitcher and the ball. And he can't do the specifically active part of his job until he receives the ball. Similarly, we Christians need to be quietly focused on Christ and His commands, and if we have any good effect on others, it is only by employing what we have received from Christ.

Of course, like all analogies, this one falls short. For one thing, there is never a time that we DON'T need to be actively waiting on God. So, let's all get busy WAITING on Him and see what happens!

With love in Christ,

Mother Melania and the sisters

### St. Nicholas House Matching Grant - SUCCESS!



We have no words for our gratitude to God and our friends for the great success of our \$50,000 matching grant drive in May. By May 20, we had already reached \$50,000. As of May 31, we are over \$78,000 and well on our way to \$80,000.

This puts us within \$40,000 of our year-end goal of \$235,000. This will bring our total to \$500,000 and allow us to begin the process of applying for a loan from the Orthodox Christian Capital Improvement Fund. With their help and with continued fundraising, we hope to begin securing permits and contractors in 2022.

We are grateful and humbled for the outpouring of love from friends and even from strangers. May God reward your sacrificial love with His blessings and may you prosper in every good thing!

### CALENDAR

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

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 9, LEAVETAKING OF PASCHA - Paschal Matins 8:00AM, Divine Liturgy 9:00AM**

**THURSDAY JUNE 10, ASCENSION - Divine Liturgy 9:00AM**

**TUESDAY JUNE 29, SS. PETER & PAUL (tentative) - Divine Liturgy 9:00 AM**

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

### ZOOM RETREATS

**SAT. JUN 12, 10AM-12PM: TBA**

**SAT. JUL 10, 10AM-12PM: TBA**

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## May Zoom Talk with Fr. Anthony Roeber

On Bright Saturday, Fr. Anthony Roeber gave our monthly Zoom talk, giving his reflections on how to celebrate the 50 days from Pascha to Pentecost. Fr. Anthony began by suggesting that the appropriate state of mind for all Christians for this season is one of grateful reception, and that we should put aside concerns about our responses to God's great gift of faith, grace, and salvation.



Fr. Anthony Roeber

The original Feast of Shavuot, which forms the basis for Christian Pentecost, celebrated and gave thanks for the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt Sinai. So too with Christians, who should be grateful recipients of God's grace like the earliest witnesses to the Resurrection.

Fr. Anthony then turned to a second set of perspectives to help us understand how we move through the 50 days in proper liturgical celebration. Christians both East and West have commonly celebrated Thomas Sunday eight days after Pascha. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing women and the commemoration of Joseph of Arimathea keep us focused on the empty tomb and the joyful response of the disciples. But lest we become unwilling to move forward—away from the tomb and to the broadest implications of what the Cross and Resurrection mean for the entire cosmos—the liturgical life of the Church begins to address this in the liturgical texts that follow.

The third perspective pointed out that, at first glance, the next two Sunday Gospels seem to take us back to events before the Resurrection. Why do we return to the stories of the Paralytic and the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman? What have these to do with a proper Paschal celebration? The healing of the Paralytic in John 5 is one of three signs (including the miracle at the Wedding Feast at Cana and the healing of the royal official's child) that happened as the Jews were celebrating Passover in Jerusalem and Jesus was returning to Galilee via Samaria. So this Sunday is about God's work—his offer of the gift of faith and healing—taking us back to the Paschal emphasis of the Gospel of John, but hinting as well at the coming feast of Pentecost. Likewise with the story of the Samaritan Woman, which picks up on the centrality of God's gift of faith, promised to the Samaritan woman Photini (which means "bright and shining"). Photini finally accepts that God is not to be worshiped on Mount Gerazim or in the Temple of Jerusalem. Rather, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The townspeople listen to Photini. But once they meet Jesus and urge him to stay with them, they conclude that they had finally "heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." St John Chrysostom's Homily 31 on John 3:4-5 recognizes that we sometimes risk becoming complacent, "unable to endure anything that is said, but are jaded in our knowledge."

The leave-taking of Pascha allows us one more opportunity for the full celebration of the Feast of Feasts before we turn to the Ascension and the angel's promise that "this same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner. . . ." With the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Church celebrates this great feast, asking "Who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God who worketh wonders." And even as we turn in the Kneeling Vespers to remember that our Lord descended "from heaven upon the earth and took upon himself all our nature and made it divine. . . and did send down the divine and holy Spirit," the Church lifts fasting for the following week and celebrates again the mighty works of God as it prepares to go into all the world, "giving an account of the hope that is in us."

## Palm Sunday - Pascha 2021



Palm Sunday -

Fr. George Washburn



Holy Monday -

Fr. Constantine Efstathiou



Holy Wednesday -

Fr. Ian MacKinnon



Holy Thursday -

Archbishop BENJAMIN



Paschal Nocturnes -

Fr. John Takahashi



Christ is risen!

Truly He is risen!

## Zoo Update - Philly Vindicated

Last month, our vet suggested that Philly was due for a "spring tune-up," involving, among other things, a hair cut. As a result, Philly has proven once and for all that he is NOT a fat cat. Rather, as he has always maintained, he was just a very FLUFFY cat. Being a very forgiving cat, Philly isn't holding a grudge against us. In fact, his hair cut seems to have made him very affectionate. So, he's cooler, sweeter, and vindicated. What more could anyone ask for?



I am NOT fat!



See? I told you!