



HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

Have you ever seen the poster with the following text?

Optimist – my cup is half full

Pessimist – my cup is half empty

Christian – my cup runneth over

"My cup runneth over." That sounds wonderful, but what does it actually mean? The reference, of course, is to Psalm 23/23, the great psalm of comfort and fullness of joy. But we often overlook the context of this lovely little phrase. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." (v. 5) One meaning of the word 'table' here is 'tableland.' So, this verse is still about a shepherd and his sheep – the shepherd provides a place of safety and fullness for the sheep in the midst of predators. Safety in the midst of predators? That doesn't make much sense unless we have the greatest ever shepherd. Thankfully, we DO. He not only protects us, He lays down His own life in order to do so. And He feeds us not with grass, but with His own Body and Blood. So, this cup that runneth over is the Eucharistic cup, through which we eat and drink Christ. At the same time, it is the cup of His sufferings, which we are called upon to participate in, as members of His Body. And if we do so with love and trust in Him, then this is joyful, too.

As we travel through these uncertain times, neither the optimist nor the pessimist is likely to fare well. But if we willingly drink the cup of Christ, we will have unshakeable joy – no matter what predators lurk on the edges of the tableland!

With love in Christ,

Mother Melania and the sisters



CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10:00AM

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

ZOOM RETREATS

SAT. OCT 09, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Ian MacKinnon and Fr. Timothy Winegar -

The Orthodox Understanding of Illness and Healing

SAT. NOV 13, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Arkady Mironko, Adn. Joseph Matusiak, and Mother Macrina -

The Polish Orthodox Church and the OCA: A Special Relationship



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ZOO UPDATE - Like Ducks to Water?

As we mentioned last month, the ducks love to swim in their 'pond.' What we didn't mention is that their 'pond' is a small plastic box, which they have consistently preferred over our other efforts - including a kiddie swimming pool and the small 'trough' they lived in when we first got them.

One of the sisters suggested that the problem is that they have to step up (or across a wooden plank, which they were completely unimpressed with!) into either of these bodies of water. So, the current plan is to make a shallow pond that they can easily walk into. Check back next month to see if they took our suggestion or not!



When are you going to stop talking about the ducks and notice how cute I am?

September Zoom Talk

Our September Zoom retreat took place this year on Saturday, September 11. The retreat opened with a prayer by Fr. Anthony Roeber for those who lost their lives in the attacks of 9/11 20 years ago, and for the survivors and those who mourn the loss of loved ones. Fr. Anthony pointed out that one dimension of the Christian focus on the Cross is that of the Suffering Servant – a God Who, as the Prophet Isaiah wrote, “has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”



Fr. Anthony went on to explore the connections between “exalting” or “lifting up” the Cross that the Church observes on September 14 and the Lord’s command that those who wished to follow Him must take up the Cross. Taking various passages from the Gospel of John and the apostolic letters, Fr. Anthony pointed out that the Lord revealed His purpose in coming into the world and that only when He was “lifted up from the earth” would He “draw all peoples” to Himself. He it was who laid down His life and took it up again to demonstrate the love of God for His creation by sending His Son, who is the source and the example of the bearing of the Cross, the emptying of ourselves out of love for the other.

Although early Christians avoided representing the suffering Lord on the Cross, both devotion to making the sign of the Cross and, after the recovery of the relics of the Cross, the wearing of reliquaries with slivers of the wood testified to the deep devotion Christians have always had for the Lord’s sacrifice of His life on behalf of His creation. But more importantly, Christians are called to imitate the servanthood of Christ, in accordance with the Lord’s examples in the parables of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46) and of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-38). These parables illustrate what it means to give without any expectation of recompense or acknowledgment – the example Jesus pointed to in the act of the widow who gave to the Temple treasury not out of abundance but “out of poverty,” “her whole livelihood” (Mark 12: 42-44). Christians must therefore be careful in celebrating the exaltation or elevating of the Cross that it not be misused or misunderstood as a sign of our own superiority, of victory over temporal enemies. Instead, we can share in the exaltation of the Cross because of His Resurrection and in recognition that ours is a continual life of repentance, of moving in humility fully admitting that we are poor examples who often fail to bear the Cross as He asks of us. Yet because of His victory over death and sin, we have confidence that we are indeed children of God as the Apostle John reminds us (1 John 3:2-6) and that by putting our hope in Him we will be pure “just as He is pure” because “He was manifested to take away our sins.” It is for that reason that we can both take up the Cross and exalt in it as we pray:

“In that we have beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus the only sinless one. Thy Cross do we adore, O Christ, and thy Holy Resurrection we praise and glorify: for thou art our God and we know none other beside thee; we call upon thy name. O come, all ye faithful, let us adore Christ’s holy resurrection. For, lo, through the cross is joy come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us sing His resurrection: for in that He endured the cross for us, He hath destroyed death by death.”

The retreat reflections generated a number of questions and comments from members of the monastic community and those who joined via Facebook and Zoom. Again, we thank Fr. Anthony for his informative and useful retreats!

NOTE: All our Zoom talks are recorded. This one can be found at <https://holyassumptionmonastery.com/september112021takingupexaltingthecross>

Children's Book Corner

A few months ago, we mentioned that we will soon start up again with publishing children's books, in particular the next book in the *Fearless and Friends* series - *Bluster Blue Jay: Not MY Fault!*

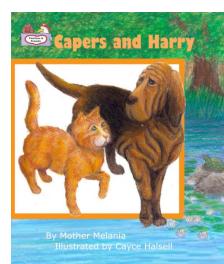


Bluster is ready to go, but first, we will re-launch the original three books in the series - *Capers and Harry: High Climbing, Greedy the Crow: Finders Keepers*, and *Mimi the Mynah: It's All Mine!* For successful re-launches, we need your help!

Starting with *Capers and Harry*, the Kindle versions of each book will be available free on Amazon for three days. (If you don't have a Kindle, you can download the Kindle app to read the book on your device.)

During those three days, please download the free Kindle version and leave a review. We are aiming for at least 100 reviews per book!

If you buy a paperback or two while you're at it, even better! We should be starting in mid-October. So, please watch for emails and social media for updates.



Support the NEW St. Nicholas House Fund of
Holy Assumption Monastery
with



Dinner & a Movie
at
Mount View Hotel
GOING MY WAY
with Bing Crosby,
Winner of the 1944
"Best Picture"
Academy Award

Thursday, October 28, 2021
6pm-9pm

Mount View Hotel
1457 Lincoln Avenue,
Calistoga CA 94515
(707) 942-6877

Tickets: \$95/person
Call hotel reception for
purchase and meal
selection
(707) 942-6877

Fantastic Food &
Classic Entertainment
for a Good Cause!



Save The Date

GIVINGTUESDAY

November 30, 2021



Tuesday, November 30th, is #GivingTuesday!

All donations made to the monastery on this day will go towards the **New St. Nicholas House Fund.**

Rebuilding this house is essential for the monastery to continue to work and grow

Our Goal: \$30,000

Generous donors have already pledged to match every donation on Giving Tuesday, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$30,000!

Double your donation, and plan to contribute to the St. Nicholas House Fund on Tuesday, November 30th!

Plan now to donate towards St. Nicholas House
on Giving Tuesday 2021, November 30th.

Checks may be mailed in advance (memo: #GivingTuesday)
to 1519 Washington St, Calistoga, CA 94515,
or donations made online all day on November 30th
www.holyassumptionmonastery.com/support