



HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

Our dear friend Cheryl lived in the nursing home where our Mother Anna was. Whenever we visited Cheryl, the last thing she would tell us was, "Don't drive any faster than your guardian angel can fly!" We would laugh, but we would also be a little more aware of how fast we drove home 😊.

I'm not exactly sure if angels fly, but if they do, I'm sure they can fly faster than I drive 😊. The valid point behind the remark, though, is this: "Don't put yourself outside of heavenly protection." Again, I'm not exactly sure what that involves. After all, if every sin puts us outside of heavenly protection, we would all have been dead long before this! Still, if we consistently ignore the laws of God, we are certainly not putting ourselves in a good place! That doesn't mean that God isn't still taking care of us. Most likely, though, the way we will experience His care is by His allowing us to face increasingly severe consequences of our actions. Not the best way to experience God's love!

So, next time we're driving, we might take a look out our windows to make sure our angels aren't falling behind. If they are, it's time to slow down!

With love in Christ,

Mother Melania and the sisters

ZOO UPDATE - Home-duckies

Last month, we were just at the point of letting the ducks wander past their hutch area. As it turned out, it wasn't so much a matter of LETTING them wander around, but ENCOURAGING them to do so. That has meant enticing them little by little to expand their horizons.

They are now comfortable ranging the lower half of the monastery and swimming in their 'pond.' We were a bit surprised at how timid they are, but all in all, that's a good thing. We won't be spending a lot of time worrying that our home-duckies are going to run (or swim or fly!) away from home!



Hey! When is OUR turn?!

CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10:00AM

NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS - Wednesday, Sep 8, 9:00AM Divine Liturgy (tentative)

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS - Tuesday, Sep 14, 9:00AM Divine Liturgy (tentative)

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

ZOOM RETREATS

SAT. SEP 11, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Anthony Roeber

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

1519 Washington St., Calistoga, CA 94515

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August Zoom Talk

On Saturday, August 21, Mother Melania spoke on *The Beatitudes and the Pursuit of Happiness*, comparing what Christ tells us will make us blessed and what our secular culture says will make us happy.



"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Our culture sells us on high self-esteem, but self-esteem is junk food - too little and you starve on junky food; too much and all the junk makes you sick. The solution is to eat real food - Christ, the Word of God, Who was born in a manger of dumb (i.e. wordless) beasts so that we can feed on Him and find our true being again. Since He is humble in spirit, we can not feed on Him (let alone live in His Kingdom!) unless we are willing to be poor in spirit also. In heaven, everyone bows to everyone else and delights to do so. Only the poor in spirit can do that.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." We have entire industries trying to remove grief and discomfort from our lives. But true comfort requires addressing our underlying problems - chiefly, our own sinfulness. So, the main mourning we need to do is for our own sins. Then, we can mourn properly for the sins of the world. In both cases, the comfort is that Christ is the healer of souls and bodies, and the only thing He can't heal is our refusal to admit our sickness.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Our culture tells us to be assertive (as opposed to aggressive or passive), but if we are asserting anything other than the love of God and neighbor, is it worth it? Christian meekness does not mean being easily imposed upon, but is controlled strength - like a guard dog that is patient with the family baby, but fierce to intruders. The reward for the meek is to inherit the earth - foremost, the earth to come, but also the present earth, because the meek see reality for what it is, and therefore live lives of thankfulness and joy.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." We try to avoid hunger and thirst of any kind, but that only highlights how empty we are - like a child bored with all their Christmas presents before they're even finished unwrapping them all. But to hunger and thirst after righteousness is first and foremost to hunger and thirst after God Himself - and the more we thirst for Him, the more deeply we are filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." We're all for showing mercy until it starts to hurt, then we multiply excuses why not to. But we are followers of the One Who died on the Cross to show mercy to those who didn't love Him. He commands us to do likewise, and if we do, we are given mercy far beyond our worth and our comprehension.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We think we can do anything as long as we don't hurt anyone, but sin ALWAYS hurt others because sin keeps us from doing our part in the Church, our community, and the world. But if we are pure, we can see God because nothing gets between us and Him, and so we can fulfill our part in the universe.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Again, we're all for making peace until it really costs us something. But real peacemakers must be like Christ, Who died on the Cross to make peace with us, who were at war with Him through our sin. This does not mean that we acquiesce to whatever we are asked to do because, again, true peace is first peace with God. But it does mean that we love people self-sacrificially no matter how they treat us. If we do this, we will be truly like Christ, and therefore, can truly be called children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall...persecute you...for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven..." Sometimes, we think that when bad things happen, God is not fulfilling His side of the bargain. But God never made a bargain with us. In fact, He PROMISED us persecution, and told us to REJOICE in it. This is crazy unless we are so focused on Christ that earthly pains pale in comparison to our love for Him. The beatitudes end with the same reward as they begin with - the Kingdom of Heaven, for only the poor in spirit CAN be persecuted for righteousness sake, because only the poor in spirit are righteous.

This is God's recipe for blessedness. It's hard, but it will bring joy. So, let's get started!

NOTE: All our Zoom talks are recorded. This one can be found at <https://holyyassumptionmonastery.com/august212021thebeatitudes>

Dormition 2021

One thing about living through the COVID lockdowns - we are much more appreciative of having our Church family with us. We are thankful to Bishop DANIEL, Fr. Stephen Tumbas, Dn. Justin Margitich, and all who joined us to celebrate our Feast! And first and foremost, thanks be to our Lord and His mother!



Fr Stephen, His Grace Bp Daniel, & Dn Justin



and some of the faithful



Fr Peter Fermeglia serving
3rd Day of Dormition Vigil

St. Innocent Service Works Interns & Friends - Aug 7



Fan-tastic
cleaning job



When's the last time
this roof was cleaned?



Singing for our supper (or lunch)