



# HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

## DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

I get a 'word of the day' email every morning. Recently, the word was rescipiscence, which was defined (among other things) as repentance; recognition of a past mistake, especially with a desire to improve in the future. My first thought was, "But isn't that THE definition of repentance?" But that is only the definition of TRUE repentance. All too often our repentance is just about being sorry we got caught or fear of the consequences of getting caught. And when that's the case, any desire we might have to do better in the future is more an effort to avoid consequences than a true desire to repent. And when we do have a real desire to do better, it is often overshadowed by a weary belief that we're never going to change.

Every so often, though, we do experience a real desire to repent, and when there is, it's always about love. I remember, when I was a child, that the only thing that our grandmother ever had to do to get us back in line was to say, you're cruising for a bruising! She never had to say more than that because the thought of offending against a person who loved me so much was enough to make me not want to do it again. I wish I loved God that much, but I don't. And I know that I'm not going to love God that much this week, or this month, or this year. But I can practice thankfulness to the God Who died for those who do not love Him. The more I do that, the more I will know this One Whom I have sinned against, this One who IS Love. And then I may not just know the word rescipiscence, but actually experience it.

with love in Christ,  
Mother Melania and the sisters



Hey! Why don't we install a slide instead of stairs?

### ST NICHOLAS HOUSE UPDATE

Construction on St. Nicholas House continues apace, as do our funding efforts. We are currently in the midst of a \$100K Giving Tuesday Challenge (see enclosed flyer). As this is being written, we have raised over \$35,000!! Many thanks to all who are helping us meet our goal!

### ZOO UPDATE - Who's the Boss?

Goolya and Frisco, our two indoor cats, share the same living space and - surprise, surprise - they don't always agree on what belongs to whom. Lately, Goolya has started playing in a collapsible tube that up till now she has had no interest in and Frisco is NOT happy.



What part of "MINE" don't you understand?!

Now what? Will Frisco bully Goolya out of the tube? Will Goolya decide that might makes right? Or will she show mercy and give way? Stay tuned!

### KIDS' BOOKS CORNER

*The Nativity of Our Lord* will be available as a free PDF download throughout December as part of a bookfunnel giveaway at this link:



[bit.ly/Nativity-of-Our-Lord-Book-Funnel-Giveaway](https://bit.ly/Nativity-of-Our-Lord-Book-Funnel-Giveaway)



*Best Buddies: What's in a Name?* is nearly finished. If all goes well, it should be available on Amazon by the end of the year! Stay tuned!

### CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10AM  
Christmas Eve Liturgy - Saturday Dec 24, 8AM  
Christmas Day Liturgy - Sunday Dec 25, 10AM  
for other services, please see our website

### ZOOM RETREATS

December 10 - Fr Philip Halliwell. Lessons from the Lives of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip  
January 14 - Fr Spyridon Jajeh, Topic TBA

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## NOVEMBER ZOOM TALK

Mother Melania gave the November Zoom meeting on the topic, “How do you love people that you don’t like?” First, we need to stop even thinking in terms of “I don’t like that person.” In making that statement, we’re basically reducing that person to their real or imagined faults. And who in the world are we to do such a thing?



*Headphones are a cheap way to cure deafness!*

Second, pray for that person – especially using this variant of the Jesus Prayer – “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on \_\_\_ and through their holy prayers, have mercy on me a sinner.” By doing this, we are recognizing that a) we need every stitch of prayer we can get and b) no matter what condition a person’s heart may be in now, they may be the great saint of our time and certainly God’s intention for that person is to be a saint (just like that’s His intention for us).

Third, make a list of their good points and rehearse it (the list is likely to start off very small, but if we give it an honest try, we’ll see more and more good things to add to the list).

Fourth, give them the benefit of the doubt. And there is LOTS of doubt in any given situation with any person. For example, do we know that we remember correctly? Do we know that we heard what they said correctly? Are we mind-reading or assuming a negative motive for something that was really positively motivated? Did we do something to cause them to respond the way they did? And the list goes on ...

Fifth, take an honest inventory of our own faults. That can be too hard for certain people who tend to be self-hating. So, if we can’t do that, at least we can work very hard at being thankful for all the gifts God gives us.

Sixth, hate the sin, but love the sinner (but make sure to do the previous steps so that we aren’t sanctimoniously hating a sin that the person didn’t actually do and that we are more guilty of than they are!)

Mother Melania finished with a story about Genevay and Kathy – two women we knew who were roommates in a nursing home. They were both very sweet ladies and loved each other, but one day when I was visiting, Genevay was all upset because “There’s a stranger in my house.” Well, it was Kathy, but when I told Genevay that she was her roommate, she got mad at me because she thought here was this nun lying to her. Kathy had been a nurse. So, between that and her lovely personality, she could for short bits of time recognize that Genevay was speaking from her dementia. But Kathy also had dementia, and when she couldn’t hold on to the knowledge of Genevay’s condition, she was deeply distraught that her beloved roommate was treating her that way. The point of the story is that we all have some level of spiritual dementia, and we don’t know what the other person’s looks like on the inside or what OURS looks like on the outside. The more we realize that about ourselves, the more we can truly love others – and even learn to like them more!

<https://holyasumptionmonastery.com/november122022howdoyoulovepeopleyoudontlike>

## HERE & THERE

Pilgrimage Group  
St. Herman of Alaska Church, Sunnyvale



*How many nuns can you find?*

Christmas Faire  
Nativity of Christ Church, Novato



*Open for business!*

Christmas Bazaar  
Saints Peter and Paul Church, Santa Rosa



*Start your volunteers young!*

Thanksgiving Day



*Shamelessly putting our guests to work!*

# Gi♥ing Tuesday

**Nov 29 – Dec 31, 2022**

**\$100k Challenge!**

Since 2019, Holy Assumption Monastery has been raising funds to replace a dilapidated residence on our property. In three years, we've raised over \$700,000 of our \$1.2 million total.



In the early weeks of November, a generous group of donors came together, pledging to match every dollar donated toward the St. Nicholas House Project during our Giving Tuesday campaign, up to \$50,000!

Then, the day before Thanksgiving, another anonymous donor decided to **DOUBLE THE CHALLENGE**: he is offering another \$50,000 to be matched! Our year-end fundraising target is now \$100,000! If we can raise this money, our donors will match every dollar, putting a total of \$200,000 toward the completion of the new St. Nicholas House.

You can help by making a donation, keeping us in your prayers, and sharing this campaign with friends. This construction is part of the ongoing renewal of Holy Assumption Monastery--the oldest Orthodox women's monastery in the United States--so that the prayer and hospitality offered here to the glory of God can continue for many generations to come.

Donate online at  
[holyassumptionmonastery.com](http://holyassumptionmonastery.com)  
or mail a check (memo:SNH) to



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