



HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY



FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Recently, I discovered that there is a community in the South Bay called Freedom, by virtue of passing a sign on Hwy 1 that said "Freedom, turn right." My first thought was "Hmm! If only it were that easy." We all have our habits that we want to be free of, and it all seems so impossible. But that reminded me of something else – the difference between simple and easy. Attaining freedom IS simple – Christ came to set us free and true freedom is in Him – the freedom to be what we were made to be, to love God with our whole being and our neighbor as ourselves. But it's not easy because in one way or another, most of us have learned to love our chains. The good news, though, is that the One Who sets us free from sin and death can set us free from that insane love of our slavery. Which brings us back to last month's Friends' letter – "Lord, grant me the intention to convert and disdain me not, in that Thou art good!"

with love in Christ,
Mother Melania and the sisters

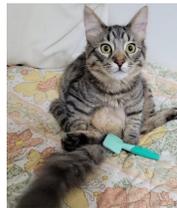
ZOO UPDATE - Goodbye, Jazzy

Sadly, Jazzy is no longer with us. We lost her to an unknown predator just a couple of weeks after her adventure in the river. The drakes (Jasper and Onyx) have been very protective of the remaining hens (Lenochka and Olive) since then. So, hopefully, everyone's safe now. But the remaining ducks miss Jazzy and we do, too!



Bye, bye, Jazzy!

On a happier note 😊



I need a bigger brush for my luxurious tail!



Lounging in comfort



Who's disturbing my beauty sleep?



It wasn't me!

THEOPHANY 2022



Indoor blessing of the waters



Blessing the Napa River



and the monastery in general



and don't forget the roi!

CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10AM

Meeting of the Lord (Wed Feb 2) - 9am Divine Liturgy

for other services, please see our website

ZOOM RETREATS

SAT. FEB 12, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Constantine Efstathiu
Things I Wish I Had Known when I Was Ordained

SAT. MAR 12, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Anthony Roeber
A Eucharistic Understanding of the Church: The Role of the Presanctified Liturgy, East and West.

1519 Washington St., Calistoga, CA 94515

Phone: (707) 942-6244; Email: sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com

Website: www.holyassumptionmonastery.com

JANUARY 2022 ZOOM TALK

On January 8, His Grace Bishop Daniel blessed us with a talk entitled *Priest and Parishioners: Sharing the Journey*. The title implies that 1) there IS a journey; 2) we all share in this journey to Christ and His Kingdom; 3) we have different roles on this journey. This commonality and difference are most deeply expressed by our being members of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:4-7; I Cor. 12:1-31) through being baptized into Him. We all have different gifts, but for one purpose – to build up the Body of Christ. If we fail to live this out, we easily fall into one of two opposite errors – congregationalism (priest has no role) or clericalism (laity has no role).



His Grace Bishop Daniel

The priest is the spiritual father and teacher of the parish (the local eucharistic community) under the authority of the diocesan bishop. He presides at the Liturgy and over the community in all its aspects, making sure that everything that happens under the auspices of the parish align with the general mission of the Church (preaching the Gospel). He heads the parish office and represents the parish to the diocese and to the community at large. These expansive, demanding responsibilities require him to have a very large skill set but also to know how to delegate. No activities should happen without his knowledge and blessing, and he in turn should do nothing without informing the appropriate parish bodies “so that always and everywhere there may be mutual trust, cooperation, unity, and love” (*Statute of the OCA - Article XII - Orthodox Church in America*). Most problems in the parish arise from a lack of this give and take between priest and parish.

His Grace then gave a list of things we can and can't reasonably expect from our parish priest. For example, we can expect the priest to serve the Liturgical services, but not to tailor them to our preferences. To be there for us during emergencies, but not be at our beck and call. To pray for us, but not to pray INSTEAD of us. In short, we can expect him to do his best to be a good priest, but not to be God or our slave. We also need to be aware of our expectations of his family. We can expect his wife and children to be active in the parish, but we can't expect her to be a leader or a slave and we can't expect his children to behave differently than any other children.

As parishioners, we also have duties. We must live according to and witness to the Orthodox Faith; participate in the services and sacraments; and support the Church (*Statute of the OCA, Article XII*). To do this, we must be seriously committed to one parish and one spiritual father.

His Grace finished by listing some ways we can support our priest: 1) pray for him and his family by name; 2) let him know we are praying for him; 3) live in unity with the community (attend services and parish-sponsored events, be involved in the Church); 4) don't be unreasonable in our expectations of him; 5) if we disagree with him, speak directly to him instead of gossiping; 6) be mindful of how we speak about our parish priest, especially around children (don't poison their minds); 7) be appreciative (thank him for a good sermon, send him a birthday card, etc.); 8) on a more general note, encourage vocations to the priesthood and monastic life.

The attendees all agreed that this talk encouraged us to be more supportive of our priests. We thank His Grace for the talk and look forward to the next!

This talk can be found at <https://holyassumptionmonastery.com/january82022priestsandparishioners>