



HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)

Have you ever noticed the THEREFORE in v. 6? The disciples asked Christ if He was going to restore the Kingdom of Israel at that time BECAUSE He had just told them to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I can see why they would ask that. Christ had died and risen from the dead and was now going to send the Holy Spirit on the disciples. What could be left for them to do except to enjoy the glory of His Kingdom?

Well, what still remained was to be witnesses to Christ to the end of the earth (v. 8), which involved a few minor difficulties such as stonings, beatings, prison time ... Yet, amazingly, the apostles WERE enjoying the glory of His Kingdom WHILE they were enduring stonings, beatings, prison time and their eventual martyrdoms because the Holy Spirit HAD come upon them and they were living in His Power. So, to the world, it certainly did not look like the Kingdom had come. And in one sense that was certainly true. But that's because they lived in the time of now, but not yet.

Our world right now certainly DOES NOT look like the Kingdom of God has come. And yes, that is partly true. But the Kingdom HAS come. For we too live in the time of now but not yet. And we too, through baptism, have received the Holy Spirit and CAN live in His Power if we are willing to be witnesses (martyrs) of Christ. And while I hope that doesn't mean stoning, beatings, prison, etc., it does mean willingly carrying whatever crosses Christ gives us until we have arrived in the Kingdom that is no longer "now, but not yet," but at last "now and forever, amen!"

with love in Christ,
Mother Melania and the sisters

ZOO UPDATE - the OTHER birds

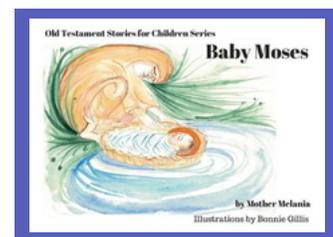
In mid-May, we said goodbye to ChaCha and hello to Shannon. ChaCha's "mom" was finally in a housing situation where she could take her back. So, we had to find a friend for Pixley. Enter Shannon - a cherry head conure just like Pixley. In a short time, the two of them have gone from staying on opposite sides of the aviary to hanging out on the same perch. Yay, team!!



Just do what I tell you & everything will be fine!

KIDS BOOK CORNER

We're finally reprinting the original *Old Testament Stories for Children* books! First up is Baby Moses. It's available at bit.ly/BabyMosesBookFunnelPromo as part of a Christian book giveaway till the end of June. Please check it out and leave a review. Thanks!



CALENDAR

SUNDAYS - Divine Liturgy, 10AM
ASCENSION (Thursday June 2) - Divine Liturgy, 10AM
for other services, please see our website

ZOOM RETREATS

SAT. JUNE 11, 10AM-12PM: Fr. Anthony Roeber - Honoring Saints Peter and Paul

SAT. JULY 9, 10AM-12PM: TBA

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MAY ZOOM TALK

On Saturday May 14, Bishop Daniel gave a talk entitled *Mary: Mother and Disciple*. Modern Protestant culture finds the veneration of Mary suspect because of a laudable concern for our understanding of the divinity of her Son. Yet no less a figure than Martin Luther says that no single word can sum up who she is for us, except Mother of God.



This is completely in line with Orthodox theology. Theotokos (mother of God; literally, birth-giver of God) is her primary title among the Orthodox. This title (upheld in 431 by the council in Ephesus) protects the truth of Who her Son is – fully God and fully Man. So, we venerate her precisely because of who she is in relationship to her Son. By honoring her, we honor Him.

His Grace then talked a bit about the expressions of our devotion to her. First, we have many icons of her. The vast majority of these icons show her with her Son because, again, we honor her chiefly because she is the mother of her Son. The most prominent icon of the Theotokos is on the iconostasis – with her holding Christ on the left side of the royal doors, and Christ Himself on the right side. These icons represent His two comings, and everything we do in this world is in between. Her name is also invoked in the Orthodox Liturgy – to a degree unknown in the west – both to honor her and to beg her to intercede for us to her Son.

The Theotokos directly appears in the New Testament nine times (not counting the slightly veiled reference in Revelation) – the Annunciation and her visit to Elizabeth (Lk 1:26-56), the birth of Christ (Mt 1:18-25, Lk 2:1-20), the presentation of Christ in the temple (Lk 2:22-38), the visit of the wise men (Mt 2:1-11), the flight into Egypt (Mt 2:13-21), finding Christ teaching in the Temple as a 12-year-old (Lk 2:41-52), the marriage in Cana (Jn 2:1-12), trying, with His 'brothers,' to speak with Him while He was preaching (Mt 12:46-50, Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21), and standing by His Cross (Jn 19:25-27). Of these instances, she only speaks at the Annunciation, when visiting Elizabeth, when Christ was teaching in the temple, and at the wedding of Cana. In none of these cases does she fully understand what is happening (she even mildly rebukes the 12-year-old Christ

in the temple). Yet in all cases, she humbly opens herself to the will of God. She consistently says yes, even though she can't fully know what the consequences of the yes will be. She also expresses joy in being chosen by God (in the Magnificat) and boldness before her Son (at the wedding of Cana). In all of this, she acts both as the mother and the disciple of her Son.

In answer to a question, His Grace spoke a little about the difference between Orthodox and Roman Catholic veneration of Mary. The two have many similarities (images of her, main feasts on same days, honoring her with prayer, etc.), has over time become very different. The Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception (made official only in the late 1800's) holds that she was uniquely preserved from the stain of original sin (a grimmer idea than the Orthodox doctrine of ancestral sin). This effectively makes her not in need of salvation and sets her outside of humanity. For the Orthodox, though, much of her glory is precisely that she's just like us and yet chose to give herself fully to God.

Bishop DANIEL finished his talk with practical suggestions of how we can bring Mary into our lives and our homes. Certainly, we should pray to her and ask her intercessions before her Son. She is the most perfect of disciples. So, who better to ask than her that we become better disciples? We can pray to her heart-to-heart, using our own words. But the prayers of the prayer book are particularly important because we can fully trust them, when we can't trust ourselves. We should have icons of her in our icon corner, but also somewhere separate. After all, if we have pictures of our loved ones all over our house, why would we not have her icons all over our houses, too? Last, His Grace emphasized the importance of attending the feasts, especially feasts honoring her.

Of course, all these things (prayer, icons, attending services, etc.) apply first and foremost to how we bring Christ more fully into our lives and homes. And yet again, that's why we love and honor her – she wants nothing more than for Christ to live fully in each of us.

We thank His Grace once again for his kindness in spending this time with us, and we look forward to his next talk!

MAY MATCHING GRANT MET!!



Our deepest thanks to all of you who have helped us meet our \$50,000 matching grant! As this is being written on May 31, we have just gone over \$50,000, bringing us to a total of more than \$700,000. Thank you once again, and stay tuned for updates!

HAVE BOOKSTORE, WILL TRAVEL

Ascension Greek Orthodox
Cathedral, May 20-22



Ready & waiting!

Nativity of Christ Greek
Orthodox Church, May 27-29



We DID have lots of customers.
HONEST!