



# HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

## SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

### LAVENDER HARVEST GUEST POST

The other day, I was listening to the second movement of Dvorak's New World Symphony, which always brings me to tears because it's so heartrendingly beautiful. Why do we cry at beautiful things? Don't worry. I won't attempt a sufficient answer to a question that philosophers and neuropsychologists haven't unraveled! But when I asked myself that question this time, the thought came, "It's the dim reflection of God's glory, the grief that we've lost it and the hope that we can regain it."

There's a lot of grief in our world right now, and the temptation is to lash out at the people we think are responsible for it. That's a great recipe for toxifying our grief, not for dealing with it. But what if, while acknowledging all this grief, we look for the reflection of God's glory in the midst of it? Maybe even in the people we blame? And what if we start grieving over our own sin and its effects on the people around us? And what if we do some small thing to alleviate the suffering of somebody we know? Then another small thing and another ...?

It won't make grief go away, but it will remove the venom. And we - and the people around us - will reflect God's glory a little more brightly, become a little more steadfast in hope, and find a bit more joy in the midst of sorrow.

with love in Christ,  
Mother Melania & the sisters

It's literally taken me years to harvest lavender with the nuns of Holy Assumption Monastery. It was always a matter of scheduling that prevented me from volunteering at their annual harvest until a couple of months ago. I was ecstatic that I finally got to be part of the hands-on process that helped make the lavender oil.



*Our Intrepid Crew!*

The monastery lavender oil is extremely high quality, I store their bottles in my purse, glove compartment and my home. When I see their oil in their monastery bookstore or on the road at a church feast day or festival, I can't help smelling it, rubbing it in my hands and buying assorted sizes as gifts. Needless to say I'm a huge fan of the monastery lavender oil. Not all lavender oils have the same scent and I have years of experience with testing different brands. Lavender is widely known for its calming and healing properties. I couldn't wait to visit the lavender field and take in the rich purple colors of the flowers and the scent wafting through the air.

I stayed overnight at the monastery because I travelled far and we had to depart by 5 am. I was surprised by the cool weather of Napa County and that the lavender field was on someone's private property. The landowners weren't even Orthodox and I was proud of how much the community adores and supports the nuns. I felt an abundance of generosity between the nuns and the community. The nuns have always been very generous to their local community by serving in a variety of ways. Here their community was showing up for them by offering as much lavender as we wanted.

The cool weather slowly became very hot. I quickly figured out why we had started harvesting so early in the morning. We would use scythes to cut bunches of lavender at a time. We'd throw them into our buckets, which we would empty onto a giant tarp. The tarp would then be carried into the flatbed of the pickup truck. It was grueling, satisfying work. It was also an excellent opportunity to say the Jesus Prayer silently as we worked. I worked alongside other nuns and volunteers. Next time I plan to invite a bunch of friends who would really enjoy it.

After we finished, we returned to the monastery and quickly changed out of our lavender scented clothes. There were lavender buds all over my room, no matter how hard I tried to keep it tidy. My room smelled heavenly.

It was hard work and well worth it. The scenery of the lavender fields was gorgeous, and the time went by quickly. God's creation is so beautiful. I feel extremely blessed to volunteer this year and I'm looking forward to the next harvest. I hope you can join us and invite your friends.

-Christine Gindi

### SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

**SUNDAYS** -Liturgy at 10am on September 17. Other Sundays tentative  
**Friday September 8 (Nativity of the Theotokos) - Liturgy at 10am**  
**Thursday September 14 (Exaltation of the Cross) - Liturgy at 9am**  
For the rest of our calendar, please see our website

1519 Washington St., Calistoga, CA 94515  
Phone: (707) 942-6244; Email: [sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com](mailto:sisters@holyassumptionmonastery.com)  
Website: [www.holyassumptionmonastery.com](http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com)

## DORMITION 2023 & OPEN HOUSE

We are grateful to God and all who joined us for Dormition this year.



Fr Stephan Meholick with choir



Fr Andrew Smith, Fr Ian McKinnon, Fr Kyrill Sokolov, Fr Lawrence Margitich



The faithful join the procession



We magnify thee ...



Blessing St Nicholas House



Fellowshipping together

## HERE & THERE

Kazan Church Group, SF  
August 17-18

Church of the Redeemer Teen  
Work Party August 19



Getting sustenance

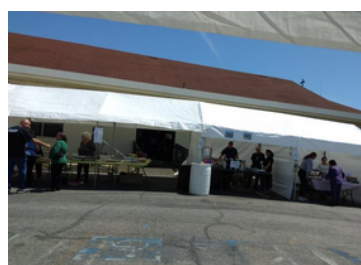


Getting marching orders!

St. George Cathedral, Daly City



Ready to go! Just need a few customers

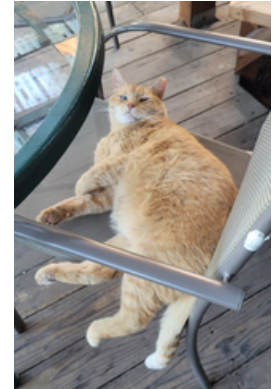


Yay! Customers supplied!

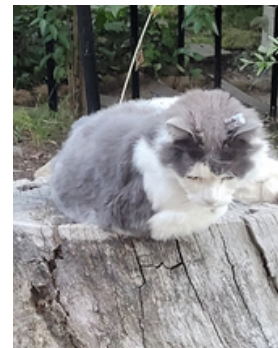
## ZOO UPDATE - Fun with Felines



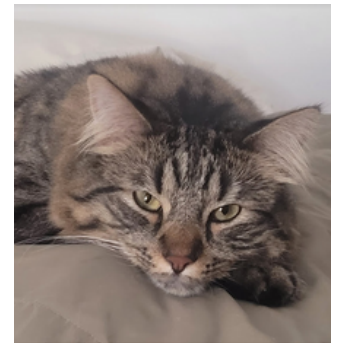
You would think they could afford to buy us beds!



Or chairs big enough to sprawl out on!



Frankly, I'm stumped at your attitudes!



Sounds like a blanket condemnation to me!

## BOOK UPDATES

Quiz Yourself on the Pentateuch is finally available, both as a Kindle ebook and in paperback. Yay!!!

QUIZ YOURSELF  
ON THE PENTATEUCH

Quizzes from Easy-Peasy to Mega-Master



QUIZ YOURSELF  
ON THE BOOK OF  
JOSHUA

Four Quizzes from Easy-Peasy to Mega-Master



AND NOT ONLY THAT! Quiz Yourself on the Book of Joshua is available as a Kindle ebook for \$0.99 till Sept 30, when the price goes to \$2.99. We're also hoping to get another picture book out soon - more about that next month!

Also, please check out the September issue of Mother Melania's Monthly Missive here.

This month's Beatrix Potter book is *A Fierce Bad Rabbit*. This book is about - you guessed it - a fierce, bad rabbit! The fierce, bad rabbit grabs a carrot from a good rabbit and scratches him in the process. He gets his comeuppance, of course, but how? Join us and find out!

For a free copy of *A Fierce Bad Rabbit*, click here.

