

MONASTERY OF ST JOHN

of

San Francisco

May 2019 Newsletter

Diocese of the West—OCA

The Triumph of God

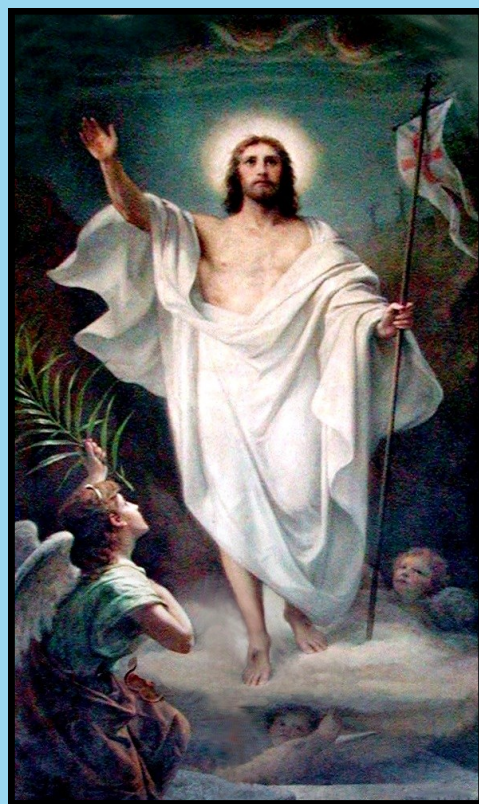
“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.” (II Corinthians 2:14)

During this season, we celebrate the mighty work of God: Christ’s conquest of Hell and Death. As I write, Lent is past and we find ourselves entering the services of Holy Week. It is assuring how Christ enters the last week of his earthly life with such eagerness and love. He accepts all that happens to Him as God’s will. He knows that through his suffering and death, the way will open for lost humanity to be reconciled to God. Though, as a man, He faces death and experiences the fears that go along with it, yet, as God, He overcomes. Ultimately, He triumphs.

As part of my priestly formation, I take a correspondence course through an Orthodox seminary. I was recently assigned to read *Letters to Olympia* by Saint John Chrysostom. These letters were written from the last years of his life when Chrysostom was exiled. Olympia was understandably distressed and despondent, but time and again he warns her to choose not to live in such a state. Part of how we transform despondency is to see our trials and temptations as opportunities to eradicate previous sins and win heavenly rewards. God is in control of all situations. If He wanted to, He could remove our trials. But He does not wish this, so that we can obtain profit—this is God’s wisdom.

It is that spirit of triumph in face of temptations that we, as Christians, inherit by right. Christ has not only done His salvific work, he also leads us in daily victory. The wonderful, bright, joyous season of Pascha has its roots in what God has done in Christ. Those roots should nourish our lives and bear the fruit of perseverance. We never have a reason to be despondent. All is sent from God for our salvation. All is a test and a cause for God to reward us richly in the life that is to come. Let us not be defeated. We must not become puffed up in our status as victors in Christ, but we must joyfully and humbly live like Christ in everyday triumph.

—Hieromonk Innocent



Monk Cosmas Receives Relic, Returns to Gagauzia

Our Holy Church treasures the memory of the Saints. We have been blessed with many relics of saints, including a small portion of a garment worn by our patron. It even has some wear and sweat stains on it—a real connection to our beloved Saint John. More than gold and riches, the memory of the saints and their relics are our real treasure.

Monk Cosmas, a member of our community, was able to spend much of January and February with us. He usually resides in Gagauzia, Moldova where he ministers to the local Church by translating liturgical texts. His most recent translation projects include portions of the Psalms, the Hours, and the priestly prayers of St. John Chrysostom’s Divine

Liturgy. Currently, he is embarking on an ambitious plan to translate the Octoechos.

Cosmas enjoys his work in Moldova and has decided to settle there permanently. He rents a room close to the Cathedral in Comrat and is able to attend daily services. Before his departure to Gagauzia last February, the Brotherhood divided the cloth relic (mentioned above) and presented it to him as a parting gift. If ever Fr Cosmas establishes or joins a monastic community where he lives, this will be a token of connection between our monastery and his. In the meanwhile, he will be missed. May God bless Monk Cosmas's work through the prayers of Vladyka John.



Two Parishes Visit for Volunteer Work Weekends

Spring is a busy time of year for us at the monastery. We are very glad that two parishes have come and helped us with seasonal projects. Members of Saint Gabriel Orthodox Church (OCA) from Ashland, OR came in March to help with cleaning, baking, gardening, and forest thinning. Folks worked hard, even youngsters pitched in to help. We worked on thinning out the forest and making numerous small piles of brush to be burned next winter.

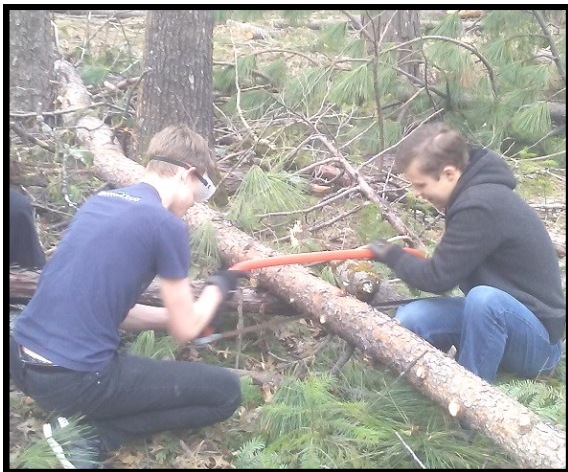
Our second group came from Holy Trinity Cathedral (OCA) in San Francisco. The work party was led by Protodeacon Brendan Doss. Everyone worked with all their might on the forest project and cleaning the chapel. They stayed for the Saturday Vigil and the Sunday morning services at the monastery. This is the second year for this group. We look forward to their coming again next year with even more participants.



Saint Andrew's Anglican Academy Visits the Monastery

When our community first moved to Manton thirteen years ago, we were visited by members of an Anglican community from the nearby town of Chester. Father Brian Foos is the rector of St. Andrew's Anglican Mission as well as the Schoolmaster of St. Andrew's Academy. Our friendship has grown over the years. They have visited us and we have attended their beautiful services in the town of Chester. We both live in remote small towns, so we face similar struggles.

Knowing that the Academy likes to take their students on various trips for their education, we invited them to visit us last March for a work day. They helped us with our forest thinning project and with planting potatoes in our garden. They are a wonderful group of young people. It is delightful to have such well-mannered people come and visit. After the meal, Fr Brian conducted as they sang beautiful Church hymns.



St. John's Hosts Orthodox LIFE School for the Third Year

If you are an Orthodox man or woman between the ages of 18 and 35, consider coming to the Orthodox LIFE at St. John's this June. You will meet and interact with a number of wonderful, influential Orthodox speakers who will inspire you to stand firm in the faith and lead an exciting life in the service of Christ and His Church. You will meet many like-minded young people who face the same challenges as you. If you are a parish priest or leader in the community, encourage your young adults to come.

Speakers for 2019:

- His Grace Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa, CA
- Abbess Melania of Holy Assumption, Calistoga, CA
- Hieromonk Innocent of Saint John Monastery
- Ginny Nieuwsma, of Saint Vladimir's Seminary

Here's what previous participants have written:

"My participation in the 2018 Orthodox LIFE School at the Monastery of St. John was a really beautiful experience for me as a new catechumen and now soon-to-be-baptized Orthodox Christian.

The combination of monastic services, prayer, lectures, heart-to-heart conversations, manual work, and community service brought the Orthodox faith to life in a way I couldn't have just learned from a podcast, book, or even catechism class."

"A perfect balance between prayer, talks and work. Amazing speakers and fellowship with everyone. I want to come back next year! This week will stay with me for a long time."

"I believe I am closer to finding my path in life, and that I will look back at this week as a turning point. It has been a very eye opening experience!"



Upcoming Events

- **Open House (Sunday) June 2** Tour of the monastery, including candleshop and bee yard, complimentary lunch provided
- **Orthodox Life School (Sun– Sat) June 16-22** For young adults 18-35 yrs. old ; Many Orthodox guest speakers, manual work, outreach
- **Feast of Saint John (Monday & Tuesday) July 1st & 2nd** Vigil at 7PM Monday, Hours & Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Benjamin at 9:00AM Tuesday

Read more about these at:

<http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org/retreats/>

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