



ARCHANGEL BULLETIN

*Holy Annunciation Monastic Community
Our Lady of Solitude Cloister & Retreat*

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Icon at top of back page:

The Maternity of St. Anne
depicts the joy of Ss.
Joachim & Anne at the
miraculous immaculate
conception of the Theotokos.

Icon at bottom of back page:

The Theotokos Riza depicts
the Mother of God
surrounded by the Prophets
who foretold of the Divine
maternity.

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Hidden Beauty

The thoughts for this article came back in the early days of this past summer. I was walking around the wrap-around porch of our 19th century cloister house inspecting the various plants blooming before my eyes. I peered at a green bush tucked away to the right of the house that I had recalled flowered with a certain white tassel-like boom — pretty and petite. But it was not time for the bloom. But as I turned away, I thought I caught sight of something red from within the bush. Perhaps I had the Patriarch Moses on my mind and was imagining a burning bush scenario. So I looked back ... no, there was nothing red. But then, I glimpsed it again! Gracious, am I losing it and I'm not yet 50!



With a touch of incredulity — superceded with wonder and expectation, I parted the branches of the bush — and lo and behold, there

was a beautiful five-pointed redish flower, too perfect to be possible. As my mouth dropped open, there was not just one but several of these hidden beauties — remarkable! All these years these blooms have been present yet hidden. It caused me to ponder a point about our Faith.



At this time when we contemplate the manifestation of Christ's Incarnation — His Nativity in the cave at Bethlehem — we are considering a very hidden moment in the Christian Mystery. Except for a few shepherds and later the Magi, the event pretty much took place unnoticed. Even the villainous Herod, unable to discover exactly where the newborn King of Kings was, had all the newborns slaughtered in Bethlehem and its environs. And then from the age of 12 when the Christ Child was found in the Temple in Jerusalem, the next expanse of time in His life is known as the “Hidden Years”.

Whether or not aspects of the Saving Mysteries are hidden, they are still present and effective to us. We need only to search for them. And the Good News is that the Mystery and reality of the Church is to make them available through her Sacramental economy (arrangement). This was Our Lord's will in establishing His Church: that the Saving Events of Christ's Incarnation and Redemption would always be available to mankind through the Holy Church. They are right there, if we take time to discover them.

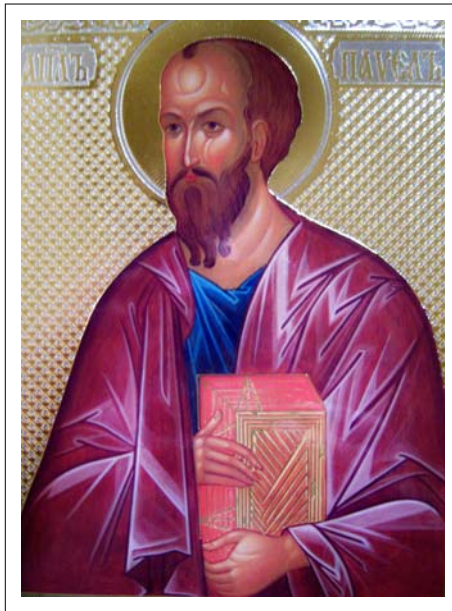
For believers, it is a matter of practicing the Presence of God in our daily lives and utilizing the transformation and sanctification of the Sacraments of the Church. Knowing, in the most difficult and obscure times, that God is present to us — seemingly hidden — yet always present and effective. And for unbelievers, it is a matter of searching for the “bush” to end their anguish that when parted, reveals the hidden beauty of that five-pointed star — not the flower I discovered one summer day here at the Cloister — but the Star of Bethlehem.

Rev. Hieromonk Angelus, Superior

St. Paul on the Incarnation

As Melkites, when we stand before the Holy Doors, we are reminded that we live between the Incarnation and the Paraousia. During the Divine Liturgy,

when we hear one of St. Paul's epistles, he inevitably draws us towards the mystery of the Resurrection. And yet, St. Paul also speaks eloquently of the Incarnation: “*And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit*” (1 Cor 15:45) and “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation*” (Col 1:15).



The Incarnation is the foundation for the Gospel preached by St. Paul. Christ, perfect God and perfect Man, has superseded the Mosaic Law. Each of us is “*an heir of God through Christ.*” (Gal 4:7).

We Feed the Poor

Monasteries have always been places of charity throughout the Christian centuries. Since its foundation, Our

Lady of Solitude has continued this tradition. Over the years we have maintained a food pantry, assisted the homeless and the suffering, and distributed clothing. Although we are located in a rural setting, more and more needy people are finding their way here. Presently, each week we provide food and clothing to several families in need. Our good friend, Tom Sivak, brings food from CHOW, an organization sponsored by the Council of Churches in the Binghamton area. Other local families have contributed non-perishables and always seem eager to help. The monastic community also depends on this donated food as our vow of poverty binds us with our needy brothers and sisters. Please remember this charitable cause in your almsgiving.

Quote for the Jubilee Year of St. Paul

Commenting on what St. Paul says about distinguishing between the Wisdom of God and the Wisdom of the World, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed that the wisdom of the world “*... is a way of living and seeing things divorced from God, following dominant opinions according to the criteria of success and power*” while the Wisdom of God “*... consists in following the mind of Christ; it is Christ Who opens the eyes of the heart to follow the path of truth and love.*”

Update on our new Book & Gift Shop

In our Spring/Pentecost issue, we provided you with pictures of our new Cloister Monastic Book & Gift Shop. We are happy to inform you that the structure was endowed with stock and opened at the beginning of summer.



Pictured here is the Chancellor of the Eparchy of Newton, Fr. Deacon Paul Leonarczyk, who, with his family, spent several days with us and was one of the first to visit our new shop. In addition to visitors, please know that we ship items anywhere through mail order. In addition to our regular stock items, we added all natural Pennsylvania raw honey, 100% pure maple syrup, *hand-written* icons from Greece, 100% soy votive candles, holders and ten different kinds of liturgical incense. Contact the Book & Gift Shop at (570) 395-0234 — if we're not in, the answering machine will pick up after the sixth ring.

Our regular stock items:

- Greek and Russian icons
- Many, many spiritual books
- Statues and Crucifixes

- Hanging Lamps
- Rosaries
- Prayer Ropes
- Icon greeting cards
- CDs, Videos, and DVDs

By Popular Demand: Pentecost Puppies

Readers of our Spring/Pentecost Bulletin have wondered at what the puppies described in the cover reflection actually look like. Far be it from us to deny the expectations of our readership, so here they are doing what they do best on that Spring afternoon:

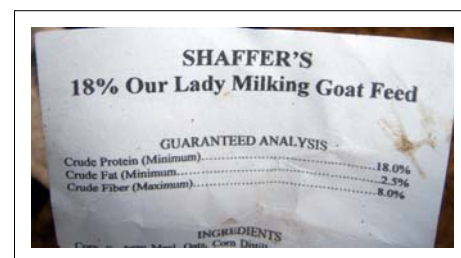


Marcellus is the big fluffy white Great Pyrenees, and brothers Vladimir and Justinian are the Black Labrador/Bluetick Coonhounds.

Our Lady Milking Goat Feed

Monasteries have traditionally influenced the areas in which they are located in a variety of ways. For example, whole towns have been named after monastic foundations as

in the case of the city of St. Meinrad, Indiana named after the Benedictine Archabbey of the same name. Soups, coffee, teas, candy, fruitcakes, jellies, wines and beers can all be found carrying monastic labels. But as far as we know, there is no other monastic foundation that has a Dairy Goat Feed named after it.

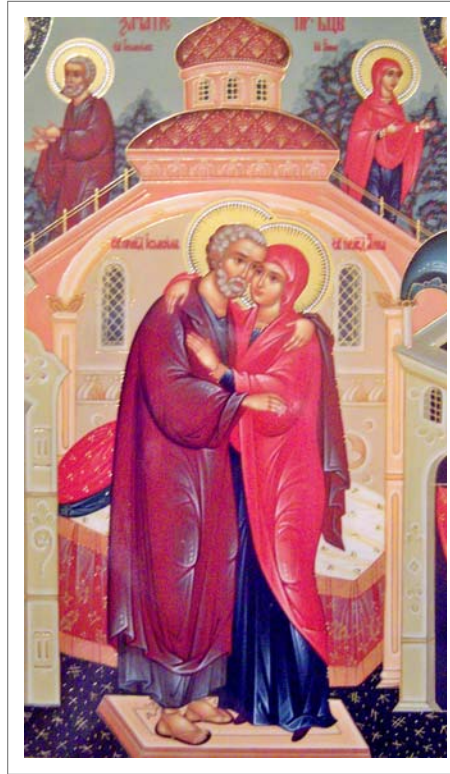


Here's the story: when we first began goat dairy farming we purchased a standard goat feed formula from a local feed yard. As time went on, we discovered that some of the goats developed strange patches on their coats. After investigation, it was discovered that they had a copper deficiency. And after further investigation, we discovered that our feed supplier only carried a goat-sheep feed that removed copper (which is toxic to sheep.)

So we got together with our supplier and came up with a specifically dairy goat formula (our special thanks to Angela). Since this was a new item for the feed yard, we were able to assign a name — Our Lady (yes, after our Lady of Solitude) Milking Goat Feed. So now all our farm neighbors are able to go to the feed yard and come back with a 100lb. sack of feed “Made in Heaven!”

CHRIST IS BORN: GIVE HIM GLORY!

Today the bonds of barrenness are loosed: God has heard the prayers of Joachim and Anne. He has promised against all hope the birth of the Maiden of God from whom the Infinite Himself is to be born as a man, He who had ordered an Angel to cry out to her, “Hail, O Full of grace! The Lord is with you!”



Today the whole world celebrates the Conception of Anne provided by God Himself, for Anne has born the Pure One who will give birth to the Word of God in a manner that is beyond all telling.

*Troparion and Kontakion of
the Maternity of St. Anne
9 December*

O Christ, Eternal God, by Your birth from the Virgin, You appeared on earth as a man and enlightened the whole Creation. Steady our footsteps in the way of Your Commandments. Infuse in our hearts the grace of knowing You and loving You, through the intercession of Your All-pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary and all Your Saints.



For You are our Light and our Redemption, O Christ God, and to You do we render glory and to Your Eternal Father and Your All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

*Antiphon Prayer at the
Divine Liturgy
25 December*