

NEWS FROM THE MONASTERY

Since January the monastery has taken on a new rhythm, in order that we may adapt to the difficult circumstances which we face

First, after an operation for an abdominal hernia, the doctors discovered Fr Mikael to be suffering from advanced cancer. We have arranged a part of the monastery for him and equipped it for the care a seriously ill patient. Thanks to the generosity of the faithful of the church, we have most notably acquired a medical bed. Fr Mikael's condition requires much care and attention. Two brothers take it in turn to care for him, following a heavy course of chemotherapy, the side effects of which one knows. This test arrives when we are about to start on the restoration of the monastery and we must modify and adapt some of our plans for this work.

Moreover, your servant slowly recovers from a bacterial infection, contracted some two months ago, which has required a course of anti-biotic. The draining of a swollen gland, infected by the bacteria, also had to be done. Thanks to God, I am on the way to recovery, but my work remains limited for some time.

Many things are thus suspended for the moment. The monastic offices are reduced to the Eucharistic Liturgy in the morning and Vespers. Each monk completes the Community offices in his private prayer life.

All pastoral placements are deferred or cancelled. The theological courses have been continued, but the annual retreat for the faithful, which should begin in the first week of July, remains uncertain.

The Sainte Presence bulletin is considerably late and we apologise to our subscribers. The next edition, however, is in hand. We will not be able to hold the conference this year. Unfortunately we have neither the time nor the energy to prepare.

All the same, we envisage, one day, a conference at the time of Saint Tugdual and for the canonisation of Sister Clotilde, a nun from our American Eparchy. The details will be given soon.



We face this test with confidence in the mercy of God and a beautiful rush of prayers, the outpouring of care from friends and the faithful of the monastery which has not weakened these past two months. Prayer walks, pilgrimages and offices, undertaken by them, are organised each week. Our brothers in the Communion of Western Orthodox Churches, and also friends from other churches and ecumenical groups, ensure us of their prayers and fraternal love.

Some words on the construction. We continue with installations in order that the monks can re-house during work at the monastery. We benefit from the help of a professional craftsman. The Hermitage, which is situated in the 200m² woodland belonging to the monastery, was isolated against the cold and heat. A small woodburning stove was installed. It remains to install the solar panel on the roof making it ready for use for the brothers on retreat.

The nuns took possession of their monastery. Important installation work is envisaged during the year. For the time being, the nuns work in the garden, creating a space for flowers.

In all this, it is a time of divine grace. God does not allow a test without a blessing for those marked by the test of disease, but for every one of us also. Let us be united in prayer, because it is in this unity that the Spirit resides in us. Father Mikael and the brothers of the monastery need your prayers.

May all be accepted and done for the Glory of God.

BISHOP MARC