

Magnificat

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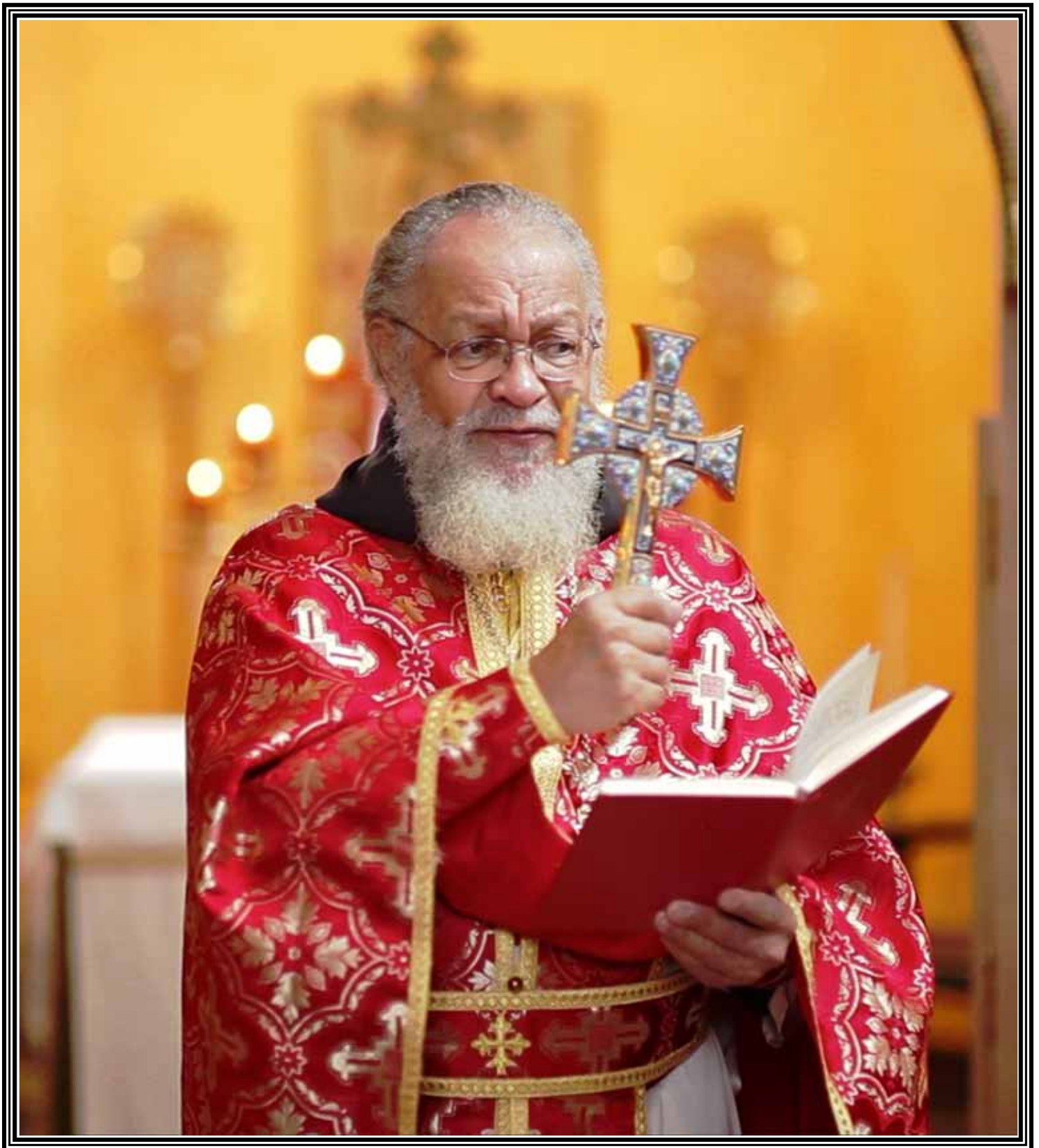
News from
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
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Summer
2017

Sole Creator, who with profound wisdom,
order all things in Your love for mankind
and bestow on each man what is best for him,
now give rest, O Lord,
to the soul of your servant,
the Hieromonk Nicholas,
for he has set his hope in You,
our Creator, Redeemer, and our God.

Troparion of the Faithful Departed

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.



Hieromonk Nicholas Glenn

August 8, 1945 - May 26, 2017

Hegumen of Holy Transfiguration Skete

1983 - 2017

Eternal Memory

Our God-beloved Hegumen, Hieromonk Nicholas Glenn, fell asleep peacefully in the Lord at the monastery in the late morning of Friday, May 26, 2017, the day following the Feast of the Ascension. Some hours earlier, he had received the Mystery of Holy Anointing. Though uncommunicative, he had appeared grateful for the chanting of the monks who surrounded his bed, for the holy oil placed on his forehead, eyelids, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands, and feet, and for the Precious Blood from that morning's Divine Liturgy administered as Viaticum. With the Rites of the Church, his long ordeal had come to an end and he could depart in peace.

Fr. Nicholas suffered from a rare, slow progressing, form of leukemia, which depleted the white cells in his blood stream, compromising his immune system and rendering him susceptible to all sorts of infections. Although it was definitively diagnosed only in December of last year, he apparently had the condition for a long time. The blood cell anomaly had been noted some dozen or fifteen years earlier, and he confessed to having always been susceptible to sore throats and colds.

What seemed to him a nuisance he had to live with became progressively worse as time went on and became serious during the past two years. He fell ill – never completely to recover – before Christmas of 2015. He endured two major abdominal surgeries in 2016, the second at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where he spent his last Christmas.

In Rochester for a scheduled follow-up and evaluation in early May, he developed a high fever and became agitated and then unresponsive. After a trip to the emergency room and a night in intensive care for stabilization, Fr. Nicholas was

transferred to the now familiar surroundings of the hematology unit. A battery of tests revealed a new – and nearly always fatal – opportunistic autoimmune disease, which was attacking several vital organs, as well as his nervous system. Two weeks of treatment proved futile, and he was remanded to Hospice care.

Fr. Nicholas returned to the monastery via medical transport on Tuesday, May 23. He remained mostly unconscious, but there were signs that he knew he was at home. His brother and sister-in-law, as well as a niece and a nephew, came to be at his side during his final days. They helped keep watch and administer his scheduled medications while the monks were celebrating the

Office and Divine Liturgy. They were present, along with most of the monastery's employees, when the monks sang the Panakhyda – a short memorial Service – around his body shortly after his passing.

The future Hieromonk Nicholas was born Steven Nehemiah Glenn in Ann Arbor,

Michigan, on August 8, 1945, the second son of Nehemiah and Zorabell (Richardson) Glenn. He attended public elementary and secondary schools in Ypsilanti, Michigan, graduating from Ypsilanti High School in 1963. He attended the University of Michigan's School of Music, attaining a Master's degree in music performance (choral conducting) in 1968. He subsequently taught voice and conducted choirs at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, and at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. Returning to Michigan in 1971, he taught music in the St. Clair Shores and Detroit Public Schools, served as Artist in Residence at Wayne County Community College, and as music director at Holy Redeemer and St. Agnes Roman Catholic Churches in Detroit.

All you who in this present life
have trod the narrow way in sorrow
and taken up your cross as a yoke
and faithfully followed Me:
come and receive in joy
the heavenly crowns
I have prepared for you.

From the Evlogitaria of the Dead

Known for his vision and leadership abilities, he was adept at organizing music performance groups. While still in High School, he conducted the Junior Choir of his church in Ypsilanti. During his time in Detroit he organized and conducted in numerous performances the Detroit Schola Cantorum and Orchestra Detroit. He also founded, and for several years directed, the Rosa Parks Community Arts Center in Detroit. This career was not without its ups and downs, but he accepted its various reverses philosophically, saying that "sometimes God has you do something only to get you ready to do something else."

His conversion to Catholicism in 1980 led him to monasticism. In the late summer of 1983, he came to Jacob's Falls and, with one other pioneer, founded the monastery he guided for thirty-three years until his passing. The pair precariously secured a three-acre parcel of property on land contract, hunkered down for the winter in an un-insulated former one-room schoolhouse, said their prayers, and looked to the future. It would be ten years before another joined them.

Meanwhile, the land contract was paid off, by donation and purchase the monastery's property grew to sixty-five acres, the old schoolhouse sprouted two new additions, and **Jampot's** new kitchen testified to the growth of that improbable business of making wild berry jam. Soon came the transition to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, further additions to the monastery - including the golden domed church - more monks, several land acquisitions up to today's seven hundred acres, and the new production wing of the **Jampot**. Fr. Nicholas took no personal pride in this and accepted no credit for the accomplish-

ment. Rather, he kept looking to the next project and gave the glory to God, who was the true Builder of the monastery.

Although always acutely aware of his prerogatives and responsibilities as Hegumen, he eschewed pomp and circumstance. He most often wore a simple wooden crucifix as a pectoral cross and posed for no formal portraits. He disliked liturgical ostentation and frequently preferred to sing with the monks in the choir. He abhorred argumentation and delegated other monks to represent the monastery at public meetings. Yet he was tenacious in countering threats to the monastery and its future potential, successfully pursuing a number of legal and political disputes with local government - and with individuals who sought to exploit or harm the monastery.

To the end, Fr. Nicholas remained enthusiastic about the monastery and took every opportunity to expound on the vision. He sometimes overstated the case, speaking of a possibility for the distant future as if it were imminent. As illness closed in on him, he continued his forward gaze. Between hospitalizations he presided over the acquisition of a work vehicle and a new community travel van in the fall of 2015. A year later, now mostly confined to his bed and chair in the monastery's community room, by phone he negotiated the purchase of a heavy duty snow blower and expanded and re-equipped the monastery's laundry facility.

His zeal for provision will stand us in good stead for years to come. We can only make our own the sentiment of Fr. Nicholas sister-in-law who at his passing echoed the Lord's (Mt. 25:21) words: *Well done, good and faithful servant...*

Indeed, all is vanity!

Life is but a shadow and a dream,
and man troubles himself in vain;
even should he gain the whole world,
yet will he take his place in the grave,
where kings and beggars together lie.

Therefore, O Christ our God,
give rest to the soul of your servant
in the land of the living
and the abode of the just.

From the Office of Parastas

Rites of Departure

The Panakhyda around his deathbed was merely the beginning of our liturgical remembrance of Fr. Nicholas and his being taken from us. The following morning (Saturday) we sang the Divine Liturgy for the Departed, followed by another Panakhyda. This pattern would continue – except for Sundays, when, in acknowledgment of the Resurrection, special Services for the dead are not to be celebrated – each morning for the forty days following his passing.

Fr. Nicholas had died on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend; it would not be possible to get an obituary into the local paper until the following Tuesday. Though seldom seen at the **Jampot** for many years, Fr. Nicholas was well known and well liked in the local area, having always – up until the last few years – run the monastery's errands into Houghton and Calumet. Suspecting many business and casual acquaintances might wish to attend, we planned his funeral for Thursday, June 1, in order to give more than a day's notice.

On the afternoon of Memorial Day, the funeral home returned his body to the monastery, where it was to lay in state in the midst of the temple until the funeral. That evening (Monday) we sang Parastas – a wake Service – for him; members of his family joined us, as did several of the faithful who regularly attended Services



What earthly joy is unmixed with grief?
 What earthly glory endures unchanged?
 All are insubstantial as a shadow,
 more fleeting than a dream!
 The moment of death
 wipes them all away.
 But in the light of Your face, O Christ,
 and in the joy of Your beauty,
 grant rest to the one You have chosen,
 O Lover of Mankind.

From the Ideomela
 of St. John Damascene

at the monastery. The morning memorial Divine Liturgies and Panakhyda continued, and we again sang Parastas on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

The obituary published in the local paper had noted the time of the Wednesday evening Parastas and coupled it with visitation. An overflow crowd pressed into the church and stood for the ninety-minute Service. Many people stayed afterwards to pray and pay their respects. We saw and spoke with numerous old friends who had known Fr. Nicholas from the monastery's early years, as well as a large number of more contemporary associates and acquaintances.

The press for the funeral was even greater. Additional family members from Milwaukee and Chicago joined those who had been present throughout the ordeal. Friends from Wisconsin, New York, and Virginia swelled the ranks of the local faithful, many of whom had also attended the previous evening's Parastas. Also present were Archimandrite Nicholas of Holy Resurrection Monastery in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, along with one of his monks, several of the local Roman clergy, and the pastor of the local parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Bishop John F. Doerfler of the diocese of Marquette had previously phoned in condolences, as had our former Bishop, Michael Wiwchar, Emeritus of Saskatoon.

Divine Liturgy and Panakhyda having already been celebrated earlier that morning, the two hour funeral followed the order of the Office of Departure for Monks. Like the Parastas of the previous evenings, the Service is a strictly prescribed sequence of Psalmody, Pss. 90(91), 50(51) and 118(119) - we divided its verses among the funeral and the three wake services because of its great length - and Scripture, I Thess. 4: 13-17; Jn. 5:24-30; Jn. 11:17-26, as well as the Beautitudes from St. Matthew's Gospel (5:3-12). Litanies of petition and meditative texts from the Church's ancient hymnographers intersperse the Scriptures, augmenting the themes of the Service, as well as providing some melodic variation.

The Service makes no allowance for testimonials or personal remembrances. Far from a celebration of the departed's life, it is a strong reminder of the universality of physical death, the leveler of all, which severs human relationships and renders void all earthly accomplishment. It shares the mourners' grief and expresses horror at the cessation of life, speech, and movement, which is the common lot of us all. While expressing our feelings of loss for the one who has departed from us, it also moves us to consider soberly the end that inevitably awaits us.

Still less is it a quasi-canonization. Acknowledging the reality of human sinfulness, it beseeches the Lord to overlook the many failings of the departed's life and, despite these, to



O You who with divine authority
rule over both the living and the dead,
give rest to Your servant
in the abode of the elect,
for even if he has sinned, O Savior,
he did not turn away from You.

From the Office of Parastas

As we contemplate the cold, lifeless body of our departed loved one and bid him our final farewell, the hymns being sung grimly remind us of the harshness of death and fearsomeness of the coming judgment. It is moment for fear and trembling, as well as for tears. Hearing the deceased beg our prayers on his behalf for the Lord's mercy, we come to understand how much we also stand in their need.

After yet another litany begging the Lord's mercy and the final absolution of the departed, we seal his remains in their coffin to the singing St. John Damascene's Ideomela on the end of all earthly vanities in death. Yet we know that this is not the end. We consign to the earth the clay that had been taken from it, and we trust that what God has created in His own image He has already redeemed.

allow him entrance into Paradise and everlasting peace. It makes no pretense of knowing God's sovereign will in the particular instance, rather, it offers the hope of Christ's words that those who live and believe in Him will not truly die (cf. Jn. 11:26).

For by His sacrificial death on the Cross and glorious third day Resurrection, Jesus Christ has rendered death powerless. In rising from the grave He overcame death in Himself and freed His life-bearing body from corruption. We firmly hope that we, who have been baptized into Christ and have clung to Him throughout our lives, may, likewise, share in His Resurrection.

Forget Me Not



Fr. Nicholas had a great love for beauty.

His training as a classical musician grew out of his early exposure to the power of music which he experienced as a child in church. Indeed, his approach to music was always spiritual, and his monastic vocation sprang, in some part, from his frustration with others not being able to share his perception. He sometimes described the most moving of musical performances as “an aspirin on a big toothache.” For those who were moved or uplifted by the performance the elevation was temporary, at best, and soon enough they would be back fighting and clawing in the world’s gutters. He came to realize that people are raised up only by being touched by God, and that God’s touch came through prayer.

Yet, even after embracing the life of prayer, he never lost his love for beauty and his conviction that human artistry existed as a means of coming to the knowl-



edge of God. He firmly believed that art should be promoted and artists supported, and he strove to have the monastery work towards those ends, in so far as it was possible. Thus, he instituted a series of music recitals at the monastery, hired teachers to help develop the musical and artistic abilities of the monks, commissioned paintings, and adorned the monastery with many

locally produced glass and ceramic artifacts.

Above all, he loved the beauty of nature. He marveled at the ever changing sunsets to be seen over the Lake from the many-windowed community room of the monastery, and he chose that room, the coldest in the house, to be his bed chamber – so he could “see the snow come down” – his final winter, when he had become too weak to climb the stairs to the dormitory. In warmer times he especially loved the sight and fragrance of flowers.



Though long unable to work in the soil, himself, because of his susceptibility to infections, he claimed the gardens and landscape around the monastery as his particular purview. He would meet with the gardeners every morning to discuss the day's work, to assess progress and particular needs, and to instruct them on the special care of certain delicate species. These meetings continued even as he became incapacitated, with the gardeners reporting to him as he sat in his chair in the community room, well into his final autumn.

Sensing that the landscape around the monastery was suffering some neglect because the added responsibility of the orchard and trails had stretched the crew too thin, Fr. Nicholas hired an additional gardener in the late winter. He interviewed the new man over the phone and met him once briefly in the early spring. He began full-time work a few days after Fr. Nicholas' funeral.

Fr. Nicholas had bought many bulbs for planting the previous fall, and during the winter he ordered up a large number of bare-root perennials for the spring. He also ordered sixty new rose plants in over-compensation for the attrition of the previous several years. These arrived and were duly potted and the perennials planted during his final visit to the Mayo Clinic.

He had left at the end of April, ahead of the daffodils' blooming. In two weeks they had come on strong. We took pictures, planning to email them to him in the hospital. As it was, the crisis came earlier than we had expected, and we soon found ourselves at his bedside in Rochester. We shared the photos with him on the screen of a laptop computer on his last "good day", less than a week before his passing. He kept saying, "How beautiful they are! It's so beautiful."

When he returned to the monastery via medical transport some three days later, there were still many daffodils blooming in parts of the garden, the last magnolia petals were dropping from their trees, and the sugarplums were in full bloom. He was largely unconscious of the beauty, but he seemed to know he was home.

One evening, after Parastas, some children gathered a few forget-me-not blossoms from the lower garden - Fr. Nicholas had over the years scattered their seeds throughout the monastery property - and placed them at the foot of a small monument they had built of pebbles near the church steps. It seemed an entirely appropriate tribute. There were forget-me-nots to be found blooming somewhere on the grounds throughout the forty days in which we sang *Eternal Memory* for him.

Meanwhile, the blossoming continued in its course: tulips, pincherries, poppies, hawthorn, lilacs, irises, peonies... The fortieth day of his passing, the final day of mourning, when we sang *Panakhyda* for him the last time until his anniversary next year, was the Fourth of July. And the roses had begun to bloom.

At the Jampot



At the Jampot circa 1990

Recent friends who know the monastery only from **Jampot** encounters would have had little occasion to meet Fr. Nicholas. It had been nearly twenty years since he worked there full-time, and, on those extremely busy days when he would come to help out, he stayed mostly in the kitchen, bagging cookies or frosting and wrapping muffins. During his final years he would occasionally stop in briefly to greet the crew on his return from a hospital stay. Otherwise, he was to be found at the monastery, in the church, or on his forays into town. Yet, unbeknownst to the casual **Jampot** patron, he had a profound affect on their experience.

Indeed, it was he who had coined its very name. He foresaw when we opened the shop in 1986 that, not only would its principal offering be jam, but it would be jammed full of other stuff, as well. Certainly, that was the case in the beginning, when the counter was only a few feet inside the door, and all the mixing and preparation for baking took place in what is now the sales room. Additional products have kept it that way even after the building, in 1990, of a new kitchen.

It was Fr. Nicholas' idea to add baked goods to our **Jampot** offerings. We had already been

baking bread for a few neighbors, and it seemed a small jump to muffins and cookies. So, despite a friend's warning, "If you start baking, they'll never give you any rest!", we added hermit cookies and our signature giant banana walnut muffins to the counter. *And the rest is history*, as they say. And most of that history flowed through Fr. Nicholas.

While continuing to contribute significantly to the jam-making – he was half the team! – he took up a special care for the bakery. In the beginning he was our only baker; and he was the mastermind behind



Jampot Crew 1993

the bakery's growth. He tested, selected, altered, and adapted all the recipes that came to us, whether by discovery, gift, or inheritance, and made them **Jampot's** own.

By the time failing strength in his hands and arms dictated that he turn the work over to others, **Jampot's** offerings were pretty much set. Until there is a new store front with more counter space, there is room for nothing more. As it is, people seem sometimes overwhelmed by the variety, but almost everyone finds something for their enjoyment. The enjoyment stems ultimately from Fr. Nicholas, as we continue to use the recipes he developed and follow the procedures he established.

As the product line grew, so did the business, and the original arrangement – considered provisional from the beginning – quickly became untenable. Wielding sledge hammers on the last day of business in 1989, we swiftly brought the tiny old kitchen down. We were committed! But we shortly ran out of money, and work stopped. It was only through the help of friends and the volunteered services of two retired tradesmen that we were able to open by Memorial Day of 1990.

The new kitchen represented a ten fold increase in production space and allowed the entire front to be devoted to display and sales. It seemed like more space than we would ever need; the Lord had other things in mind! Growth brought more ovens, mixers, and personnel. Eight people now rub elbows there in the chaos of the

busy times. After 27 years, the space still functions fairly well as a bakery, and the building of two years ago brought some relief with additional storage space, but jam production remains much as it was in the beginning, and it has long not kept pace with demand. Here, as always, Fr. Nicholas would have us look to the future.

Phase II of the **Jampot** expansion approved by the Township in the summer of 2014 provides for a new jam kitchen. Completion and equipment of the new facility should allow us to increase jam production significantly and alleviate the shortages we have experienced in recent autumns. We hope to begin construction in the fall.

Fortunately, unlike the expansion of 1989 and that of two years ago, the new wing will not entail the demolition of any existing structure. Production by current methods will continue, uninterrupted, throughout the mail order season. Some two months remain until then. We hope to see you during the late summer or the glorious days of fall. If you are unable to visit, we invite you to avail yourself of the offerings detailed on the following pages.



HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
Society of St. John
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The Lord's Work

Late summer, with its very busy days at the **Jampot**, is hardly the most opportune time for us to be issuing a newsletter. But timing is ultimately the Lord's to determine, and the thoughts contained herein needed to be pulled together soon after the events. Formulating them into words and putting them to paper has not exactly been a therapeutic exercise, but it has brought many things into focus and placed them in perspective.

As founder of the monastery and its guide from the beginning, Fr. Nicholas naturally had a great impact on its development and on the lives of each of its monks. His passing leaves a hole that can never be filled. Yet, in many ways, he is very much still with us. Almost everything we see here came through him, and, to a large extent, his thought and outlook – even his foibles – continue to shape our actions.

Inevitably, time and distance will change some of that. New leadership will bring new initiatives, and there may well be necessary changes of direction. Fr. Nicholas, himself, would be the first to admit that new challenges

often need different, sometimes unprecedented, responses. Yet, at this close juncture, his stamp on this monastery seems near to indelible. He made it what it is today.

He, of course, would give the glory to God. He never saw himself as someone special, only an unworthy tool in the Lord's hands. The work of building the monastery was great and important, but it was God's work, and He it was who was bringing it about. And many others would also serve as His agents. The monastery's benefactors, its **Jampot** patrons, those who support it by their prayers, even its enemies or those who try to take advantage of it, all play a part in shaping its future, a future that he always believed, despite various hardships and setbacks, would be bright.

Those who remain profoundly grateful for having been touched – directly or indirectly – by Fr. Nicholas and his great dedication to the building of this monastery, and who feel the loss of his passing, may take comfort in knowing that we, too, had touched him, and that he felt a deep gratitude to us and for us who shared with him the accomplishment of the Lord's work.