

Magnificat

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News from
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
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Autumn
2018

Thirty-five Years!

The Churches of the Byzantine tradition celebrate the Indiction, the beginning of the New Year, on the first day of September. The date is arbitrary, at best, and has nothing in particular to recommend it liturgically. Pascha, the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, the seminal event of Christian belief, is in fact the axis of the liturgical year. Fixed for the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox, it governs the weekly cycle of services throughout the year. For the service books containing the texts for the many celebrations tied to dates on the solar calendar, however, a less variable point of reference was in order. Books have to begin somewhere, after all, and a significant date in the secular calendar would serve as well as any.

The Roman Empire balanced its accounts and reassessed taxes every fifteen years. Both this fifteen-year cycle and the proclamation that announced its beginning were known as the

Indiction. The Roman economy was largely agrarian, and the Empire taxed land based on the quality and quantity of what it produced; assessment of crop values was best done in late summer, during or just before the harvest. In 312 AD the Emperor, Constantine the Great, fixed the Indiction to begin on September first in the East, and that date endured throughout the remaining eleven hundred and forty years of the Eastern Empire's existence.

The Byzantine Roman Empire of the East is now more than five hundred years extinct. Even for those who are blessed with its religious heritage, the Indiction has little or no meaning. In most parish churches it provokes no notice, unless it happens to fall on a Sunday. For most of the faithful, life rushes on according to secular time keeping.

But life in a monastery moves to liturgical rhythms. Divine Services fill a significant portion of each day, and the books that regulate their

O God of all,
Creator and Master of all ages,
send grace and blessing
upon the year to come;
in Your compassion and mercy,
our one and only Master,
save all those who worship You, O Savior,
and cry out to you with fear:
Grant us all a blessed and fruitful year .

Kontakion of the New Year

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparch 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.

celebration see daily use and profoundly impact the community's life and outlook. Reaching the end and turning back to the beginning bring a real sense of time's passage. We observe the Indiction, then, with due solemnity, and, for us, the celebration holds a particular poignancy.

We arrived to stay at Jacob's Falls on August, 29, 1983. We had come to build a monastery for God's glory and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts. The call had come upon us gradually, and our resolve had been firm for some time, but, despite the many developments and turning points we have encountered along the way, we have always regarded that day of our arrival on this severe and windy shore some thirty-five years ago as the foundation of this monastery.

We mark the anniversary of that joy each year with no special festivity. Indeed, since it is the liturgical commemoration of the Beheading of John the Baptist, we observe a strict fast, as the Church prescribes. But the coming of these luminous days, when summer begins its decline into autumn, always brings back a flood of memories, a renewal of our sense of wonder at the glories of this particular corner of God's creation, and an overwhelming gratitude for His having planted us here to undertake this arduous and enlightening pilgrimage, the great adventure of building this holy monastery. Celebration of the Indiction, then, offers the occasion for an annual introspection, for recollection of way traveled so far, for thanking the Lord for the many mercies He has shown us along the way, and for contemplation of the long road ahead.

Certainly, the way has not always been easy, nor the path clear. There have been times of hardship, anguish, and darkness. We know that

they will inevitably come again, and we embrace them; they constitute the cross we must carry in our following Christ. Uniting them to the Cross of Christ, we gain a share in His victory. And, as the shortening of days continues toward the autumnal equinox, we are so reminded liturgically by the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, a major feast of the Lord and another day of strict fast, which the Church celebrates each year on September 14.

Rededicate yourselves, O Brethren:
 put off the old man
 and live a new life;
 controlling the passions
 which lead to death,
 let us chasten our members
 and hate the fruits of evil,
 recalling our former errors
 only to flee from them,
 that we may all be made new
 and worthily honor
 this day of dedication.

From Vespers
 for the Dedication

Originating in events associated with the dedication of the Emperor Constantine's Great Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem in 335 AD, the ensuing centuries have seen the celebration enriched with scriptural and liturgical texts suffused with confidence and joy. They expound the Cross to the faithful as the instrument of salvation, the restoration of creation, the bond of Christians, the source of our glory, and the symbol of our ultimate victory.

On the day before that great feast, September 13, we commemorate the initial dedication of the Great Church and the rededication of its successor by the Emperor Heraclius after the original's destruction by the Persians in the seventh century. The texts for the feast universalize the meaning of the celebration, relating that particular church in Jerusalem to the Church throughout the world and praying for its endurance throughout the ages. In remembrance of the past dedication and rededication encourages us to renew our own dedication to the Christian life to which we have all been called.

That the season of recalling the beginnings of our life as a monastic community should come at a time filled with these liturgical reminders seems truly providential.

In the Beginning



Jacob's Falls had not been our first choice for the foundation of this monastery. Indeed, we had investigated it some ten months before our arrival and had rejected it out of hand because we judged its buildings unfit for year round habitation. Its location on the shore of Lake Superior and near a waterfall was esthetically pleasing, but practical wisdom prevailed, and we selected a property on an inland lake with larger and better equipped buildings.

We had planned our move for June, allowing plenty of time for settling in and preparing for winter. When the deal fell through a week or so before the scheduled signing, we were left scrambling, and the trip that was to be our definitive relocation became a frantic search for another site. After a half-hearted attempt to find temporary rental lodgings, we gave the property at Jacob's Falls a more thorough look. We met the seller's price, and he agreed to our terms. So it was, that we began monastic life on this blessed shore at the end of August in 1983.

Our monastic patrimony on that bright, late summer morning consisted of a narrow, three-acre parcel of beach sand and bedrock with five small buildings stretched out along eight hundred feet of two-lane highway. The buildings were without insulation or permanent

foundations and could be supplied with running water for only half the year. We had purchased the old "summer resort" on a three year land contract with a small down payment borrowed from a church. It seemed a precarious beginning for such a great undertaking, but it was what we found possible; in time, we would come to see God's guiding hand in having brought us to this holy place.

We took up residence in the largest of the five buildings, a former one room schoolhouse that had been set up as a summer cottage near the lakeshore. Despite its lack of insulation it was tight, the candles did not flicker even in the strongest blow, and, with fires in both parlor and kitchen stoves, it could be made reasonably warm. The highway afforded easy winter access to all the buildings, and, although the pipes were too shallowly buried to prevent freezing, the spring that fed the rustic water system never failed. So, through that first winter, we hauled water, we stoked fires, and, with the help of neighbors, we survived.

Spring brought a higher profile in the local area, an article in a big city newspaper, and more help. The St. Vincent de Paul Society and the ladies of a local church saw that we never lacked for food. By fall, the men of another local church had re-roofed and insulated our residence; with a more efficient parlor stove and a now abundant wood supply - though still having to haul our water - we faced our second winter with confidence.

Financial problems continued, however. Our first efforts at self-support brought meager results, and resources from our former lives in the world had been exhausted. Several times we came close to default on our land contract, and each time a last-minute unsolicited gift saved the day. We were barely staying ahead of disaster, and the land contract payment loomed ever closer.

In Lent of 1985 we sent the first issue of **Magnificat** to a few hundred family members and friends. Courtesy of a retreat center, the next several issues reached about 2500 homes across the Upper Peninsula. With only two weeks to go before the October 1, 1986, deadline, we found ourselves \$15,000.00 short of the land contract balloon payment. We addressed an emergency appeal to the friends who had been receiving the newsletter for the previous year; we had the payment – and to spare – by the appointed time.

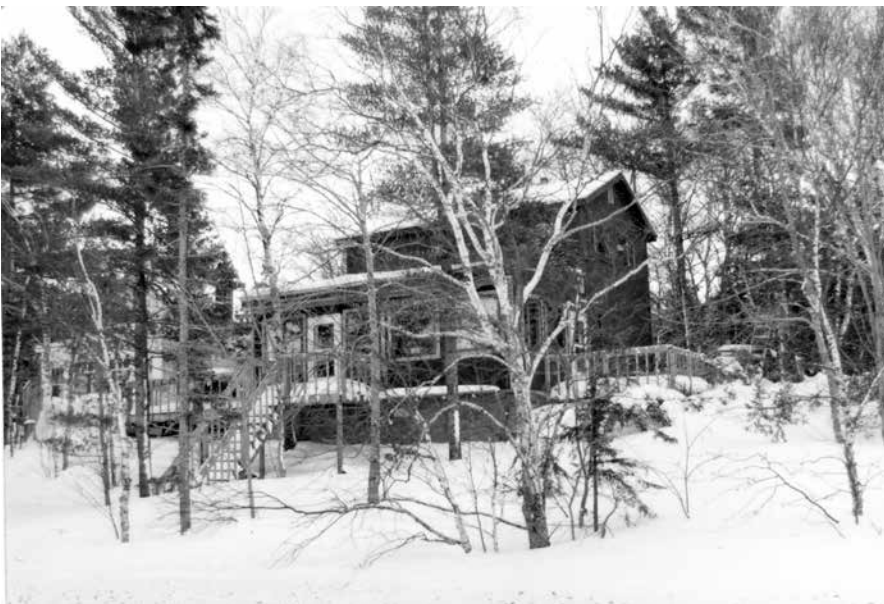
We saw this as miraculous, a second founding of the monastery. The debt relieved, we began to build. We purchased materials with the overage and set cedar posts as a foundation for an addition to our residence. A local mill donated some rough lumber, and, with the help of friends, the two-story structure was closed in before the winter of 1986. We worked on it as funds and the time of friends allowed; by the spring of 1989 we had installed our dormitory on the upper floor and developed a common room on the lower. A shuffling of other functions allowed us to devote half of the old schoolhouse to a chapel. As a priest friend celebrated the first Eucharist on its new altar, we felt another milestone had been passed.



Other buildings quickly followed. A deck on the lake side of our new dormitory building became an enclosed porch and then a year-round community room and refectory. We added a bedroom and bath to one of our guest cabins, dramatically increased our work space, and began making plans for a new church and monastery to replace our existing complex.

There were signs of progress everywhere, but, as we approached our tenth anniversary, two long seemingly intractable problems darkened our hearts: the community had not grown in numbers, and a deepening estrangement with the local Church made the likelihood of official recognition of our monastic life increasingly remote. There was little we could do about either situation but persevere and pray for brighter times. We put on a good face and planned a celebration.

During his homily at the Liturgy of Thanksgiving for our first ten years at Jacob's Falls, the priest predicted the approach of a major turning point in the history of this struggling monastery. He proved prophetic. Within a week two men had joined the monastery as candidates, and, a few days later, a brightness appeared in the East.



Continuing Blessings

Fr. James Scharinger was a bi-ritual priest of the Archeparchy of Winnipeg who was serving for a time in the Upper Peninsula's Diocese of Marquette. He had been coming to our monastery for brief monthly retreats for about two years. On one occasion as we discussed our growing despair of ever receiving the Church's recognition of our monastic life, he had said: "You know, you would get a more sympathetic hearing from an Eastern bishop."

It was, of course, a moot point; we knew no Eastern bishops, nor did we have any ethnic connection with an Eastern Catholic Church. Fr.



Church of St. Nicholas at Mt. Tabor Monastery.

Jim called shortly after Labor Day in 1993 and announced: "My good friend, Fr. Michael Wiwchar has just been appointed Ukrainian Catholic Bishop of Chicago. You are within his jurisdictional territory. Once he's consecrated and installed, I can make an introduction for you, if you would like."

We journeyed to Chicago early the following January to speak with Bishop Michael. He quickly welcomed the idea of our monastery coming under his protection. He noted, however, that things had to be done properly and with due deliberation. So he referred us to Archimandrite Boniface at Mt. Tabor Monastery in California; having brought his own monastery into the Ukrainian Catholic Church some years before, he would know how to proceed. We should also closely observe the life of the monastery, Bishop Michael advised. "Who knows, you may not like it..."



Founders receive monastic consecration.

With some trepidation we visited Mt. Tabor about six weeks later, during Lent. We arrived in the midst of Great Compline; by the end of the Service, we were convinced on the rightness of the path to which we had been so suddenly directed. We negotiated an agreement with the Archimandrite whereby we would return to Mt. Tabor each winter for an extended period of formation until we had thoroughly absorbed the tradition. Although there was much to learn, Fr. Boniface assured us that the East would no longer seem foreign; we would soon recognize it, instead, to be the home we had been searching for all along without knowing it. He recounted his own monastery's travails and its ultimate entrance into the Ukrainian Catholic Church: "And it's been nothing but blessings, ever since."

We began our first long stay at Mt. Tabor in January of 1995. Toward the end of our time, the Archimandrite told us each to present him with a list of three potential monastic names and



Discussing possible expansion with Archimandrite Boniface.

to search the storeroom for habits of appropriate size; he planned our investiture as novices before we left. He also drew a document for the Bishop detailing our community's relationship to Mt. Tabor. We returned to Jacob's Falls that spring bearing new names, wearing new habits, and with official recognition as Holy Transfiguration Skete.



Priestly ordination of founders.

The following winter, by virtue of their long struggle, the two founders of our monastery received monastic consecration at the hands of Archimandrite Boniface. He instructed them to begin a course of directed readings in theology, with a view toward ordination; the following winter, he ordained them subdeacons. In June of 1997, Bishop Michael ordained the founders to the diaconate at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Chicago; he ordained them to the priesthood at Mt. Tabor on November 8, 1998.

In so many ways, the blessings continue to flow.

Toward the Future

7



We broke ground in the fall of 1996 on the south side of our existing structures. Funding necessitated that the work proceed in phases. First would come the kitchen, the bathing area, and the entire basement. The new areas would allow us to make the entire old school house a chapel and buy us time to secure funding for the remainder of the expansion. We occupied the new kitchen and bath after returning from Mt. Tabor early in 1998. Two years later, a generous gift allowed us to retire that mortgage and begin construction drawings for the second phase of the project.

Common prayer is the essence of monastic community life, and the place where it occurs is the very heart of the monastery. As our buildings expanded, we were able to devote a larger and increasingly elaborated area exclusively to liturgical prayer, but we had not yet achieved a proper, well functioning church. Our affiliation with the Ukrainian Catholic Church having given us a renewed sense of direction, we again turned our gaze toward this cherished goal.

Construction began on the new church, refectory, library, and dormitory wing of the monastery in the summer of 2002. Bishop Richard consecrated the new church in August of 2003, and we spent the rest of the year settling into the new spaces.

Through the great generosity of a benefactor, we retired the debt entailed by this second phase of construction in January of 2007. We

The church is the most important and the most public building in the monastery; in addition to being a functional area for the Liturgy, it must also reflect the community's faith to the world at large. In both respects, the design we had conceived prior to our turn to the East no longer worked. We quickly sketched out a church of Byzantine/Slav design that would fit into our available building space. At the suggestion of Bishop Michael, we also included in the plan living space to accommodate twelve monks.





breathed a sigh of relief and planned some time for small projects and consolidation. God, however, has a way of upsetting our little plans.

By gift in 1985 and purchase in 1989, the original three acres of our monastic patrimony had grown to sixty-five. Most of the new land, however, was too wet, too steep, or too fragile ecologically for significant development. Eventually the monastery would have expand beyond its current circumscribed location between the highway and the lakeshore. For some time we had been considering adjacent land to the south of us on the ridge. In March, a mere two months after the mortgage payoff, 160 acres of the property in question became available, and we learned that the land company would be willing to part with more. By year's end, we were back in debt, and the monastery's patrimony had increased seven fold. An additional purchase some years later, to provide access from a public road to our land on the west side of Jacob's Creek, brought the monastery's holdings to some seven hundred acres.

For the most part the land is undeveloped forest. Heavily cut over before we acquired it, it will be some thirty years or more before it bears significant marketable timber. But it possesses great beauty even now, as have noted many of the people who walk the trails we have developed in the upper gorge of Jacob's Creek. The orchard we planted in 2009 and 2010 is beginning to produce fruit, some of which has already reached the shelves of the **Jam**pot, and in the nearby cemetery rest the remains of our beloved Founder, the Hieromonk Nicholas.

The land also holds numerous potential building sites. We have not yet explored many of the possibilities. The need, in any case, does not seem immanent, but we know the Lord has surprised us in the past. How soon a new monastery will rise on the uplands, only the He can tell - and He does not often apprise us of His plans ahead of time. As always, we remain oriented toward the future and await His direction. We trust that when the time comes He will make good our lack and see the work done.



Hierarchical Visitation

Of the many blessings showered upon this holy monastery during our thirty-fifth year on this blessed shore, surely the greatest was the mid-December visit of our Hierarch, His Grace, the Most Reverend Bishop Benedict Aleksiychuk.

Installed as fifth Bishop of the Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago on the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, June 29, 2017, Bishop Benedict comes to us from Ukraine, where he had been

serving as auxiliary bishop in the Archeparchy of Lviv since 2010. His early training was in the field of medicine, and he worked as a physicians' assistant prior to entering seminary after the fall of communism and Ukrainian independence. Ordained to the priesthood in 1992, he served briefly in parish ministry before joining the Univ Holy Dormition Lavra, the largest monastery of the Studite Order in Ukraine, in 1993. Elected Hegumen of the same monastery in 1999, he served in that capacity until his episcopal election and appointment to Lviv by the Patriarchal Synod. Ratifying his subsequent election as Eparch of St. Nicholas by the same Synod, the Holy Father, Francis, Pope of Rome, appointed him to Chicago on April 20, 2017.

Summer storms and flight cancellations had made it impossible for us to attend his enthronement on the Feast of Peter and Paul, and the December visit was our first opportunity to become acquainted with our new bishop. We anticipated the occasion with some anxiety. In addition to having obtained to the highest ecclesial and monastic ministries, he possessed numerous academic degrees and had authored five books. Reviewing his extensive credentials, we wondered why he had been posted to Chicago, and more particularly, what would he think of our own small, backwoods, struggling monastery?



The Bishop's easy manner and lighthearted conversation did much to allay our fears. He, himself, did not presume to know the mind of the Synod in moving him to Chicago. Although he had spent two years in Canada prior to being elected hegumen of the Dormition Lavra, he certainly never expected to be posted to the United States. English, in fact, had been one of his most hated subjects in school! His three days among us proved a joy.

But the purpose of the current visit was not social. Since the passing of our founder, Hieromonk Nicholas, on May 26, 2017, we had been without a leader for more than six months. Despite the snowy weather – this was the soonest it could be worked into his schedule – Bishop Benedict had come to preside, as required by Canon Law, over the election of a successor.

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 16, 2017, the community elected Hieromonk Basil as their new Hegumen. Sunday saw a somewhat impromptu Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, in our monastic church. The Bishop spent Monday in conference with Hegumen Basil and enjoyed a brief tour of the accessible property, meeting the Jampot employees and examining the work in progress on the new jam kitchen. He returned to Chicago early Monday morning, expressing a desire to visit again in more temperate times. Such did not happen this year; we hope for next.

Election of Hegumen

*In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit!*

Glory to the holy, consubstantial, and undivided Trinity!

We, the monks of Holy Transfiguration Skete, on the sixteenth day of December in the year of our Lord 2017, having celebrated the prayers of the Sixth Hour together with our Eparch, the Most Reverend Benedict (Aleksiychuk), gathered in sobor for the election of an hegumen to fill the vacancy resulting from the death, on May 26th of the same year, of our Founder, the Hieromonk Nicholas.

After an explanation of procedure by the Syncellus, the Hieromonk Basil, and a brief exhortation by the Eparch, Bishop Benedict selected as tellers Monk Ephrem and Monk John; the five electors then proceeded, in turn and by rank, to fill out secret ballots and deposit them in a bowl placed in the midst of the Temple.

Scrutiny of the ballots by the tellers, with confirmation by the Eparch, revealed four votes cast for Hieromonk Basil and one abstention. To acclamations of *Axios* from the assembled monks, Bishop Benedict installed the new Hegumen in his seat and presented him with a pectoral cross as symbol of his lifelong office. Praise God for the many blessings He continues to bestow upon us!

In witness whereof, we hereunto affix our signatures this eighteenth day of December in the year of our Lord 2017.

Benedict

Bishop Benedict

Monk Sergius
Monk Sergius

Hieromonk Basil

Hieromonk Basil

Monk Ephrem

Monk Ephrem

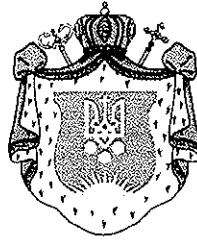
Hierodeacon Ambrose

Hierodeacon Ambrose

Monk John

Monk John

УКРАЇНСЬКА КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЄПАРХІЯ
СВЯТОГО МИКОЛАЯ



UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF
SAINT NICHOLAS

2245 WEST RICE STREET • CHICAGO, IL 60622 • TEL.: 773.276.5080 • FAX: 773.276.6799 • ESNUECC.ORG

OUT-2017-146

To the Glory of the Holy, Consubstantial, Lifegiving and Undivided Trinity,
Father, Son and the Holy Spirit!

Д Е К Р Е Т

According to the Canons 413, 414 §1, 434, 443 of the CCEC,
based on the protocols of Election of the Hegumen (IN-2017-165)
of December 16, 2017

I hereby approve
Hieromonk Basil Paris
as the Hegumen
of Holy Transfiguration Skete
Eagle Harbor, MI

I pray the good Lord to grant you all His graces for the effective execution of your duties.

Given in Chicago, IL,
on the 27th day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 2017,
in the Curia of Saint Nicholas Eparchy.

+ Benedict

MOST REVEREND BENEDICT (ALEKSIYCHUK)
Bishop of St. Nicholas Eparchy

Petro Rudka

REV. SUBDEACON PETRO RUDKA
Vice-chancellor of Saint Nicholas Eparchy

Jampot



Former restaurant building, Autumn 1983.

Jampot existed in concept even before our arrival at Jacob's Falls thirty-five years ago.

We had first visited the Keweenaw eighteen months previous to explore its suitability for a monastic foundation. Topographic maps had already inclined us to a favorable opinion, but friends had challenged: "*Just go there in the winter, and you'll change your mind!*" Our brief visit on a bright February weekend brought confirmation, instead. The dazzlingly pristine beauty of the snow, the intense quiet, and the solitude seemed to make a perfect setting for the contemplative life of monks.

Subsequent visits during the leafy times balanced the picture. The narrative we presented the Bishop of Marquette in November of 1982 envisioned the monks supporting themselves through the sale of products they had made and specifically mentioned *maple syrup, candy, jelly, or baked goods*. It also projected a shop where the monks could sell their wares and noted that the

presence of many summer travelers in the area would allow for a larger market and would help spread knowledge of the monastery abroad.

At the time of these prescient words' writing, we had no firm idea as to where exactly this might take place. We had been looking at property for some time, but we had as yet made no offers; indeed, our coming to the area, at all, was still contingent upon the Bishop's good will. Our June, 1983, tour of the old resort at Jacob's Falls – the property we had rejected the previous October – brought things into greater focus. The small build-

ing near the falls had already served as a simple short-order restaurant; might it not some work for some other commercial purpose, as well? An hour's observation of the traffic on Labor Day weekend – our first in residence – reinforced the notion: half of the passing cars stopped at the falls, and half of those, having missed the sight on first pass, had turned around in front of the boarded-up old restaurant!



Jampot, circa 1990.



Expansion Phase I in progress.

Being able to think of nothing better during our first bitter winter of survival, we began picking berries in the summer of 1984. The old restaurant, with its rudimentary kitchen, was the natural choice for jam production. We had not anticipated retail sales and had posted no signage – berry picking occupied most of the daylight hours, and we produced the jam at night – but that first summer and fall we sold about twenty cases out the door to the curious; the remainder went to a distributor. Having gotten some help with the picking, we began selling directly to the public in 1986. By the following summer we were buying all our berries from other pickers; we added some baked goods to our offerings, and we put up a sign identifying the little building as **Jampot**.

Patronage grew, and the make-shift nature of the operation became untenable. On the last official day of business in 1989, with foul weather and no customers in sight, we demol-

ished the old kitchen. The 720 square foot kitchen built that fall and winter connected the existing sales room with a formerly detached out-building and increased our work space by more than five fold. Sales increased by fifty percent the following season with no increase in staff and fewer hours expended.

Thinking we had all the kitchen we would ever need, we resolved to put no further investment into **Jampot** until we had built the monastery a proper church. (Nonetheless, we did provide expanded parking in 1996 and a 4800 square foot warehouse in 1997.) We consecrated the monastic church in 2003. Having again felt a space crunch at the shop for some time, we applied for a permit to build a modest storage building in 2007. We were denied on zoning grounds: **Jampot** was a non-conforming use and could not be expanded.

After some years of battles in State and Federal Court, the issue was resolved early in 2014



Phase I Complete



Phase II Complete

by means of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance: expansion of non-conforming uses could now be approved by means of a Special Use Permit. We applied in the summer and were granted a permit for a three phase expansion. Work began on Phase I at season's end, and the new facility was functional by the beginning of the 2015 season.

Phase I provided the needed storage space, a receiving area, two rooms devoted to candy production, and an office and lunch room, as well. Phase II, which was completed this spring, adds 1800 square feet of space on two floors for jam production and coffee roasting. Completion of Phase III - as always, the time frame is contingent on funding - will see the 1990 kitchen replaced with a new bakery, along with provision of a larger and more efficiently arranged sales room. The entire project makes maximum use of the site and should fulfill the business' needs for many years to come.

Long time customers, especially those who have not visited the **Jampot** for some years, often express astonishment at the work accomplished so far. *"You've come such a long way; you must be pleased with the progress."* We are, of course, and we are grateful for the blessing.

Jampot is vital to the life of this monastery. It provides seventy percent of our income and is our window on the world. It has been our first point of contact with most of the more than 40,000 people who receive this newsletter; almost all of the benefactors whose generosity has fueled the monastery's physical growth first met us there. Certainly, the words of the aged priest, who advised us in 1986 to place our first efforts into the **Jampot**, because it would be the source of much else, have proved true.

Yet, it is important to maintain the proper balance. **Jampot**

exists to support the monastery and not vice-versa. We must never allow the demands of a growing business to become a detriment to the pursuit of our monastic calling. When it does, changes must be made. Such was the case in 1997 when we cut back our business hours and eliminated bread from our product line.

Certainly, the current situation is not as critical as it was then. Additional employees and equipment have allowed us to burn much less midnight oil than twenty years ago. Still, business details, ordering, processing online sales, bookkeeping, etc., consume many of our hours away from the shop. We find ourselves hard pressed to find time for the contemplation and spiritual reading that must accompany the monk's liturgical prayer. We have already resolved to cut one day from our weekly schedule next season, and other hard decisions may come this winter.

For the remaining weeks of this season, however, **Jampot** remains open six days a week. We look forward to seeing you during these glorious days of autumn. If your own schedule precludes a visit, we refer you to the shippable items offered on the following pages.

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
Society of St. John
6559 State Highway M26
Eagle Harbor, Michigan 49950

Into Year Thirty-Six

The late-summer flood of memories does not often become the sole subject of a newsletter. Our last attempt at such an extensive and organized narrative occurred ten years ago in recounting the celebration of our twenty-fifth anniversary – much of the foregoing material appeared in that issue; we apologize for the recapitulation. This year saw no great celebration, but, as many customers have asked for information about our history, we thought the moment opportune.

The present account is necessarily sketchy, and we have chosen to avoid dwelling on the many hardships and difficulties we have encountered and survived. Our intent has been to recall the journey so far and to tell of the many mercies the Lord has extended along the way. We pray these mercies continue as we begin the thirty-sixth year of the pilgrimage.

The physical accomplishments have been impressive, as many have noted, and we, ourselves often marvel at what the Lord has wrought here. These are easily described and measured. But the true work of the monastery is spiritual, and the effects of prayer are not readily quantified – not personally, in the life of the individual monk, nor in the world at large.

Although we sense progress in this realm, as well, we do not find it amenable to expression in words. Nonetheless, it is to this ministry of prayer – both personal and in common – that we must particularly rededicate ourselves during the year ahead.

This issue of *Magnificat* is the first in many years without inclusion of an appeal letter. Although they will still include mail order information, we hope to maintain a mostly spiritual thrust in future issues. The physical surroundings of monastic life and the soundness of its base of financial support remain critical for promoting its life of prayer, and there are still many needs to be met. We will be contacting you separately about these matters in the future, and we hope you will respond generously to our various appeals. It is your co-operation with the Lord's loving providence that has brought us thus far. We trust in your continued prayerful support of this holy endeavor.

For all those whose prayers, patronage, and generosity make possible the life of this holy monastery, we send up heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving. May the Lord abundantly bless you and yours during the coming days of fall and winter.