

Revised 10-6-2013



## **Guest and Visitor Information**

### **Monastery of St. John of San Francisco**

PO Box 439/ 21770 Ponderosa Way

Manton, CA 96059

**For reservations, call Brotherhood office: 530-474-5964**

**FAX: 530-474-3564**

Email: [office@monasteryofstjohn.org](mailto:office@monasteryofstjohn.org)

[www.monasteryofstjohn.org](http://www.monasteryofstjohn.org)

#### **Important Note: So that we can better serve you...**

- **Please call the office ahead to make reservations.**
- **Fr. Alexis keeps track of reservations. As space is limited, please contact us if your plans change or you need to cancel please call.**
- **Tell us how many will be arriving as well as your arrival and departure times so we can plan meals accordingly.**
- **If possible, please reconfirm your reservation a day before you come.**

#### **Background and History of the Monastery**

The Holy Monastery of St. John of San Francisco was founded in 1996 as a community of Orthodox Christian monks. We are located on 42 acres of scenic Ponderosa forest in the town of Manton, California, in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, close to Mt. Lassen National Park. Manton is less than an hour's drive from both Red Bluff and Redding.

The brotherhood was originally located in Point Reyes Station, California, at St. Eugene's Hermitage, a small facility belonging to the OCA diocese of the West which has had a monastic presence for 50 years. Due to our growth in numbers and industries, the brothers moved up to Manton in the summer of 2006.

The Monastery was founded as part of the Diocese of the West of the Orthodox Church in America, under the omophorion of His Grace Bishop TIKHON. Our current hierarch is His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN. The brotherhood seeks to live the traditional communal Orthodox monastic life as established by St. Pachomios and St. Basil in the fourth century and as guided by the teachings and examples of subsequent Holy Fathers. We are informed and inspired by the living tradition of the ancient monastic centers, including Mt. Athos in Greece, and Valaam in Russia. Along with these two monastic centers, we worship according to the Julian or “old” calendar, which is currently 13 days behind the civil calendar. We are not old-calendarist in the sense of making the calendar a dogmatic issue.

We struggle to be faithful to holy tradition while adapting to the realities of contemporary America. The brothers are all Americans and services are in English. The aim of our life is simple obedience to the commands of Christ in the Scriptures. We strive to earn our living by candle and soap making, publishing, woodworking and operating a bookstore. We also grow some of our own food and raise poultry for eggs.

### **Welcome Guests and Visitors**

We welcome all who come seeking a closer relationship with God. Here you step into another world, a community of redeemed sinners who have chosen a quiet life of intense repentance and prayer. A monastery is a house of God, a “house of prayer for all peoples.” Daytime visitors may drop by anytime Tuesday through Sunday. Those desiring overnight accommodations should call or write in advance as much as possible to confirm availability.

## **Overnight Guests**

### ***The Guesthouse***

The guesthouse is on the monastery grounds and is offered as a reasonable option to staying in a local hotel for those who have traveled some distance for a short retreat. Meals are included—see below for details. As we are located in a rural setting and have limited space, reservations must be made in advance. Call 530-474-5964 for reservations, or email [office@monasteryofstjohn.org](mailto:office@monasteryofstjohn.org).

If you prefer a hotel, we can give you recommendations of where to stay.

To offset costs, a suggested donation for those staying at the guesthouse is as follows:

Singles: \$40.00

Couples: \$60.00

Families: \$75.00

Rooms are shared, as are bathroom facilities. Sheets, towels and two meals at the brotherhood table are provided. In addition, there are lunch items and snacks in the guesthouse itself. Feel free to bring food if you have special dietary needs, but take with you all perishable items.

If you are planning a silent retreat, we will make every effort to accommodate your needs. Please let us know in advance.

In consideration of other guests as well as the monks, we ask you to familiarize yourself with the guidelines below.

**Special note to clergy, long-term guests, and prospective candidates for the monastic life:**

Your arrangements should be made directly through the Superior, Fr. Innocent. We have special facilities for clergy. Those who are seriously thinking about adopting our way of life will want to make sure their visit coincides with a time when Fr. Innocent is free so that they may seek his counsel.

Guests who stay longer than three days, should be prepared to help out with the monks at various tasks. Anyone is welcome to help out with our work. Ask Fr. Innocent how you may help us.

*Everyone who comes should be received.... If he is a traveler, help him according to your ability. But he should not be allowed to stay with you more than two or possibly three days. But if he desires to stay longer, and is a craftsman, put him to work. But if he is not skilled, make a careful judgment as to his living conditions as a fellow believer among you, making sure that he is not allowed to be idle. From the Didache 12:1-4*

## **Arrival Information**

**Arrive before dark please!!** This is for your safety as well as our convenience so that we can give you a tour and get you settled into a room.

**If Driving:**

The monastery is located in a rural area. Cell phone service is spotty, and if you are lost in the dark or experience car trouble, this can present a real difficulty.

**Fuel Service:** The closest reasonably priced gas stations are about 30 to 40 miles away, so depending on your route, it would be wise to fill up in Redding, Chico, or Red Bluff.

**Directions**

**NOTE: The data sources for GPS, Mapquest and Google Maps are all incorrect.** Older maps put us on the wrong side of Ponderosa Way, newer ones suggest either taking an "unknown road" that is likewise unmarked (!) or they suggest taking the back way in from Rock Creek, which requires a serious 4-wheel drive vehicle. So don't trust them!

**Follow these directions instead:**

*From the south:* Coming up I-5, Take exit 649 for Antelope Blvd/Highway 36 toward Central Red Bluff and turn right at 36 East/Antelope Blvd and go 2.1 mi. Turn left at 36 East and go 11.3 mi.

Turn Left on Manton Rd (sign says to Manton) and go 15.5 mi. You will arrive in Manton. Turn right at the Manton store onto Forward Rd. and go 3.8 miles. Then take a **LEFT** onto Ponderosa Way (a dirt road). We are on the right at 21770 Ponderosa Way.

*From the north:* Coming down I-5, take Highway 44 East in Redding to Shingletown (approximately 27 miles from I-5). Turn right at the library at Wilson Hill Rd. Follow the signs to Manton (about 8.1 miles). Go straight onto Forward Rd. about 3.8 miles. Then take a **LEFT** onto Ponderosa Way (a dirt road). We are on the right at 21770 Ponderosa Way.

*From Chico:* Take Highway 99 north 38 miles to Highway 36. Go east on 36 11.3 miles to Manton Rd. (CR A-6). Turn Left and go about 14 miles. Turn right at the Manton store onto Forward Rd. and go 3.8 miles. Then take a **LEFT** onto Ponderosa Way (a dirt road). We are on the right at 21770 Ponderosa Way.

### **Other modes of transportation:**

The closest major airport is Sacramento. Shuttles from Sacramento will go as far north as Chico. One could also take a shuttle from the airport to a bus or train station. Redding is much closer and has flights from San Francisco, Eureka and Portland. One tip: Horizon (Alaska Airline affiliate) is MUCH more reliable than the United counterpart.

They also have Greyhound bus terminals. Amtrak also has stations, but their trains arrive in the middle of the night. If you arrive too late, plan to spend the night in a hotel and we can pick you up in the morning. Amtrak has bus service with arrivals during daylight hours.

**If you need to be picked up, please arrange your arrival and departure on a day other than Sundays or Mondays, as these are days of rest, solitude and prayer for the monks.**

Let us know of your travel plans as soon in advance as possible, so we can make the necessary arrangements to get you here from Redding, Red Bluff or Chico.

## **Guidelines for Guests**

### ***Hesychia***

A visit to the monastery is an opportunity to participate in the prayer life of the community and experience a little of the daily monastic life. As such, it is important for visitors to enter into some degree of quiet while they are here. While we are not a cloistered monastery and we take no formal vow of silence, we ask guests to refrain from talking about the same things the monks are forbidden to: gossip, politics, church politics, theological controversy etc. In addition, it's important to be sensitive to the needs of other guests who may be seeking some solitude.

### ***Spiritual Direction***

If you need spiritual direction, you may request it when you call to arrange for your visit. At no time should visitors approach the monks for spiritual advice. The monks do not have a blessing for this and it will not serve the visitors' need.

When making plans, it is important to remember that the Superior, Fr. Innocent, may not always have time available to meet with everyone who comes for a visit. There are also times when he must be away from the monastery. If you would like to schedule an appointment with him, it would be wise to make arrangements with him first before planning your visit.

### ***Meals***

On weekdays, there is only one formal meal served after Vespers around 6:30 pm. Breakfast and lunch are informal: self-service and eaten in silence. You may eat with us in the trapeza or on your own as you wish. A bell is rung for the formal evening meal.

On weekends, there are formal meals: Saturday, supper at 5:00pm, and Sunday, a brunch after the morning services and supper after vespers. A bell is rung on both occasions and you are invited to join us.

The guesthouse has a small kitchen. You are welcome to bring snacks and non-alcoholic beverages and make use of the refrigerator and cupboards. If you need anything, do not hesitate to ask. Please do not bring any alcoholic beverages to the guesthouse.

Please let us know in advance of any serious food allergies. If your diet is severely restricted, please consider bringing your own food.

### ***Pets***

In the interest of the safety of your pets, wildlife and others at the monastery, we cannot accommodate pets. Due to the heat and cold the car is not a safe option for pets either.

### ***Helping***

Monasteries always have more than enough work to go around. If you would be interested in volunteering, please make yourself available to Fr. Innocent, the Superior. If you have any special skills, let us know.

### ***Clothing***

We ask men to wear shirts and long pants at all times. Women should dress modestly. Dresses or long skirts are preferable. Long sleeves are preferable for everyone. Avoid strong colognes and perfumes. Lipstick on the icons is not very attractive. Sandals are not recommended, as there are scorpions and snakes around. Poison oak is in abundance as well.

There can be snow in the winter and our summers can get into the triple digits, so be prepared. If checking the weather online, our zip code is 96059.

### ***Services***

Guests are expected to attend all the services at the monastery temple. A schedule of services is posted in the trapeza and on our answering machine. Note that sometimes services are subject to change due to the vicissitudes of the monastic life, priest availability etc.

### ***Life in the Country***

There are mountain lions and other natural dangers here. More information is available on arrival. In the summer, forest fires are a danger, so no fires are permitted. **No smoking is allowed anywhere near the monastery grounds please.**

We are so blessed to have this facility for the brotherhood to work out our salvation and provide adequate facilities for pilgrims. We owe a great debt of gratitude to God and to all who have supported the Monastery of St. John over the years. If there is anything we can do to make your stay more beneficial, please let us know.

**Thank you!**