



The Monastery of St John of San Francisco  
Point Reyes Station, California

July, 2004

# Monastic Tonsures at the Monastery of St John of San Francisco, Point Reyes Station, CA

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop TIKHON of San Francisco, His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN of Berkeley tonsured four monks at the Monastery of St John on the Feast of St Sergius of Radonezh, July 5/18. Three monks were tonsured into the Small Schema or stavrophore: Fathers John, Martin and Dimitri. One novice was tonsured as a Rasophore, Father Elijah.

The Monastery of St John has nine brothers, under the spiritual direction of Abbot Jonah (Paffhausen). It was established by the blessing of Bishop TIKHON in October, 1996, at St Eugene's Hermitage in Point Reyes Station, Marin County, near San Francisco. It is the only monastery for men in the Diocese of the West of the Orthodox Church in America. At the Monastery are the Abbot, a hieroschemamonk visiting for an extended period, four stavrophores, two rasophores and one novice. There are several other men who are intending to join the brotherhood in the immediate future, space permitting.

The tonsures of these monks represents a major milestone in the life of the Brotherhood. Two of the monks tonsured, Frs Dimitri and Martin, began their monastic path in this monastery, having come in as novices. Fr John came from St Herman Monastery in Platina, and Fr Elijah came from a Carmelite monastery. Most of the fathers of our community are converts from other traditions.

The ancient rite of monastic tonsure begins with the candidates being brought into the church covered by the mantias (pleated capes) of the abbot and other senior monks. They then lie prostrate, flat as if dead, while the funeral Trisagion is sung. Then the hymn "Make haste to open to me Thy fatherly embrace, for as the Prodigal I have wasted my life..." is sung. The service then proceeds with the renunciation of the world, and the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability. The monks are then tonsured, their hair cut in the form of a cross, given new names, and clothed in the monastic garments.

The sacrament of monastic tonsure is an experience of death and resurrection. It is like a new baptism, the death of the old man and resurrection of the New Man in Christ, clothed with the garments of salvation. It is the consecration of a person's whole life to Christ, and the renunciation of the life and values of worldly existence. It is to be raised up in God, and united in the monastic community for life. That community, like the community of marriage, is a sacramental union in the holy mystery of obedience and self-offering to Christ. The old man dies, crucified to the world, and is resurrected in the communion of the Body of Christ, radiant in the purity of the new life, his sins washed away. Monastic tonsure is a mystery of compunctionate joy, of radiant repentance, full of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

## The Service of Monastic Tonsure to the Small Schema



Holy God,  
Holy Mighty,  
Holy Immortal,  
Have Mercy on us!

Holy God,  
Holy Mighty,  
Holy Immortal,  
Have Mercy on us!

Holy God,  
Holy Mighty,  
Holy Immortal,  
Have Mercy on us!



Make haste to open unto me thy fatherly embrace,  
for as the Prodigal I have wasted my life.

Despise not my heart in its poverty, O Savior,  
and forget not the inexhaustible riches of Thy mercies.

For to Thee, O Lord, I cry with compunction:  
Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.



The merciful God, like a Father who loves his children, beholding your humility and true repentance, child, receives you as a prodigal that is penitent and falls down before Him with a contrite heart.

Why have you come, brother?

I desire the ascetic life, holy Master.

Do you desire to be counted worthy of the Angelic Schema, and to be ranked in the company of monastics?

Yes, God helping me, holy Master.



Do you renounce the world and what is of the world, according to the commandments of the Lord? Yes, holy Master.

Will you abide in this monastery or in that to which under holy obedience you will be sent, and in the ascetic life until your last breath? Yes, God helping me, holy Master.

Will you keep yourself in virginity, chastity, and piety even unto death? Yes, God helping me, holy Master.

Will you preserve, even unto death, obedience to the Igumen, and to all the brethren in Christ? Yes, God helping me, holy Master.

Will you remain unto death in non-acquisitiveness and in the voluntary poverty for Christ's sake which belong to the common life; not acquiring or keeping anything for yourself except in accordance with common necessity, and then only in obedience and not of your own discretion? Yes, holy Master, I will so remain, God helping me.

Will you accept all the statutes of the monastic community life, and the Rules compiled by the holy fathers and given to you by the Igumen?      Yes, holy Master, I accept them and embrace them.

Will you endure all the sorrows and restraints of monastic life, for the sake of the heavenly Kingdom?      Yes, holy Master, God helping me.



Behold, child, what manner of promises you give to the Master, Christ, for angels are invisibly present recording your profession, for which you will be held accountable at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am speaking to you, therefore, of the perfect life, in which by imitation the Lord's manner of life is made manifest, testifying what things you must accept and what things you must avoid. For behold, child, you have purposed to come and to labor for the Lord. If, therefore, you desire to become a monk, above all cleanse yourself of every defilement of body and soul, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Acquire humility, so that you may become an heir of eternal good things. Lay aside the boldness of worldly customs; be obedient to all; be uncomplaining in the services required of you; be steadfast in

prayer; be not slothful in vigils; in temptations do not become discouraged; be not lax in fasting. But know that in prayer and fasting it is necessary for you to make your peace with God. In infirmities do not become indifferent, but be on your guard against evil thoughts. For the enemy will not cease laying before you the memory of your former life in the world, and hatred for a virtuous life. It is necessary for you therefore, having begun the way that leads to the Heavenly Kingdom, not to turn back, otherwise you will not be fit for the Heavenly Kingdom. Therefore prefer not anything before God. Love neither father nor mother nor brethren, nor any one of your own kindred, nor even yourself, more than God, nor the kingdoms of this world, or any sort of repose or honor. Turn not away from poverty (but abide in it until death), nor from hardship, nor from the contempt of men, nor from anything else you may consider to be difficult, and so be hindered from running after Christ. But always behold the things to be hoped for by them that live for God, considering the Martyrs and Venerable Ones from all the ages who by much sweat, labor and countless deaths and shedding of blood have acquired all these things. And above all, have always in mind the saving sufferings and life-giving death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He of His own will endured for the sake of our salvation, that you might endure all the afflictions and hardships of monastic life, for the sake of its sweetness. Be firm, therefore, in all things; endure sufferings as a good soldier of Christ. For the Lord our God Himself, who is rich in mercy, for our sake became poor, coming among us that we might share in the riches of his Kingdom. And it is necessary for us to become His followers, and for His sake to endure all things, advancing in His precepts by day and by night, for the Lord Himself said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). And this means that he is always to be ready, even unto death, for every fulfillment of His commandments. For you have to endure hunger and thirst, to be naked, insulted, and mocked, and suffer reproach and persecution, and to be burdened with many other sorrows, by which life in God is distinguished. And when you suffer all these things, "Rejoice," says the Lord, "for great is your reward in heaven" (Mt. 5:12), to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

Do you confess all these things in the hope of the power of God; and do you agree to hold fast to these vows, even to the end of your life, by the grace of Christ?  
Yes, God helping me, holy Master.

O Lord our God, who hast decreed that they are to be accounted worthy who have forsaken all worldly possessions, family and friends, and have followed Thee: Do Thou receive also Thy servants John, Dimitri and Martin, who have

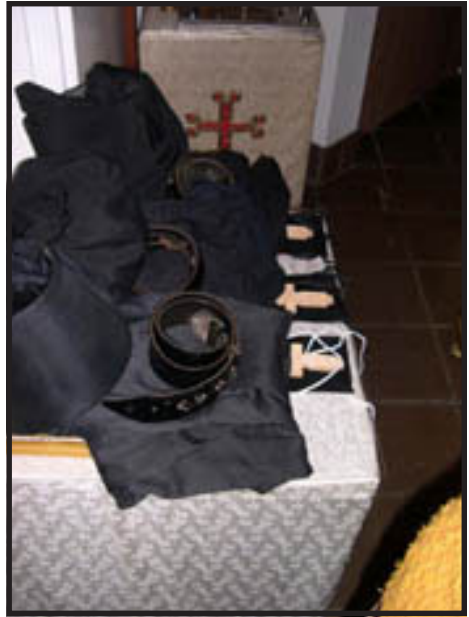


forsaken all these, according to Thy holy commandments, and guide in Thy Truth those who have fallen down before Thee in total submission. Fortify them with the power of the Holy Spirit, that no contrary snares may be able to prevail against them; and endue them with

patience, that they may always be pleasing unto Thee; through the prayers of our Most Holy Sovereign Lady Theotokos and of all the saints...



O Lord our God, the hope and refuge of all them that put their trust in Thee, Who hast revealed unto us diverse paths of salvation, through the Incarnation of Thy Christ: Do Thou receive Thy servants John, Dimitri and Martin, who have forsaken worldly delights and have offered themselves unto Thee, their Lord, as living and acceptable sacrifices. Take away from them all carnal desire and irrational thoughts, that along with the taking away of the senseless hairs, they may lay aside also their unreasonable thoughts and actions, and may be accounted worthy to accept Thine easy yoke and light burden, and to tke up the Cross and follow after Thee, their Master. Preserve them safe in Thy holiness, and give them a good purpose in the keeping of Thy holy commandments, numbering them in due season in the rank of Thine elect. Through the grace and love for mankind of Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy Good and Life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



Take up the scissors and give them to me.

Behold, you receive them from the hand of Christ. See to Whom you promise, and to Whom you approach, and whom you renounce.

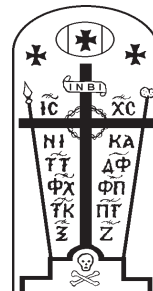


Our brother Martin is tonsured in the hair of his head, as a sign of his renunciation of the world, and of everything that is in the world, and for the restraining of his will and of all fleshly desires, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



Our brother Dimitri is clothed in the garment of voluntary poverty and want, and of enduring of all misfortunes and hardships, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



Our brother Martin receives the Paraman, the Betrothal of the Angelic Schema, as a perpetual reminder of taking upon himself of Christ's easy yoke and of bearing His light burden, and for the curbing and restraining of all his fleshly desires. And he takes also the sign of the Lord's Cross upon his breast, for a perpetual reminder of suffering and humiliation, spitting, reviling, wounds, buffeting, crucifixion and death of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, which he voluntarily endured for our sakes; and to signify that, as far as possible, he will endeavor to imitate this, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!



Our brother John is clothed in the garment of spiritual joy and gladness, for the putting away and trampling of all sorrows and troubles proceeding from the devil, from the flesh, and from the world; and for his perpetual joy and gladness in Christ... Our Brother is girded about his loins with the power of truth, for mortification of body and renewal of spirit, and for courage and caution, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

Our brother Martin is clothed in the robe of salvation and in the armor of righteousness, that he may withdraw himself from all unrighteousness and with carefulness put away the vain imaginations of his mind and the subtleties of his will; that he may have the remembrance of his own death always in his mind and consider himself to be crucified to the world and to be dead to every evil deed, but always alive for the showing forth, without laziness, of every Christian virtue, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!



Our brother Dimitri takes the helmet of salvation in the hope that he may not be put to shame and that he will be able to stand against the snares of the devil; and he covers his head with the veil of humility and perpetual obedience, as a sign of spiritual love of wisdom; and that he may turn away his eyes, that they not behold vanities, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!



Our brother Dimitri is shod with sandals in readiness for the proclamation of the Good News of peace; that he may be swift and diligent in every obedience and in every good deed, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!



Take, brother Martin, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, for continual prayer to Jesus; for you must always have the Name of the Lord Jesus in mind, in heart and on your lips, ever saying, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!





Take, brother, the shield of Faith, the Cross of Christ, with which you will be able to put out the flaming darts of the evil one; and remember always how the Lord said, “He who would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up

his cross and follow me. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!

Take, brother John, this candle, and know that from henceforth you must, through a pure and virtuous life, and through a good character, be a light unto the world. For the Lord said, “Let your light so shine before men



that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Who is in Heaven. Let us all say for him, Lord have mercy!

Our brothers have received the betrothal of the Angelic Schema and have been clothed in the whole armor of God, that they may be able to vanquish all the power and warfare of principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age, of evil spirits under the heavens, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Let us all say for them, Lord have mercy!

**Ephesians 6:10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**Matthew 10:37** “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

**Matthew 11:28** “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> “For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”





## **Tonsure as Rasophore**

We give thanks to Thee, O Lord our God, Who according to Thy great mercy hast delivered Thy servant Elijah out of the vain life of the

world, and hast summoned him to this honorable obligation. Do Thou count him worthy to live meekly in this angelic estate and protect him from the snares of the devil; preserve his soul and body pure even unto death, and make him worthy to become Thy holy temple. Teach him always to remember Thee and Thy commandments. And grant unto him humility, love and meekness: Through the prayers of our Most-holy Sovereign Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all Thy saints.





Receive Thy servant Elijah under the saving yoke, O Master, and count him worthy to be numbered in the flock of Thine elect. Clothe him with the garment of sanctification; gird his loins with chastity; manifest him to be a champion of every kind of abstinence; and perfect him and us in the gift of Thy spiritual graces: Through the prayers of our Most-holy Sovereign Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all Thy saints.

To the Abbot: Behold, I entrust to you before God this new beginner. Instruct him to live in the fear of God and in every virtue. Watch carefully, that his soul not suffer destruction because of your carelessness; for you will give answer to God for it in the Day of Judgement.

To the new Rasophore Monk: And you, as unto Christ, confess to the Elder everything; and in everything be patient, humble, obedient, meek and discreet, that you may obtain grace before God, and be saved.





His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley with  
Monks Dimitri, John and Martin, and Rasophore Monk Elijah