

Letter to the Seeker Martha Jane

Autistic Family

May/June 2003

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So Many Questions, So Little Time

Someone at Church suggested that you purposely put a lot of questions in your letters so that the receiver will be obliged to reply. Probably not, but if so, it makes it easy to outline a reply.

I wish I had more time for detail than what you are getting here, but school (UT and Sevier County) encroaches so much that I don't even feel like I'm getting a summer this year.

I finished spring semester the end of April, had a lot to read and write for the May Saturday my UT cohort met (May 17), then started the summer semester Thursday, May 29.

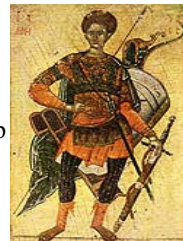
At work, I'm taking off after Monday, June 2 (the last full day of classes), through June 13. But I will have end of year reports to work on a little bit at home and will have Luke and Kate full time as Cathy starts the summer internship with the more limited (cognitively and physically) SpEd kids. Although I won't get to visit

New Jersey this summer, I do have a "fun" statewide meeting to go to in Murfreesboro the week Luke and Kate are in camp (conveniently enough), June 15 to 20 for them; June 16 to 18 for me.

I'm also going to take Luke out to

Arizona the week between my two summer courses for my nephew's July 5 wedding.

My summer workdays will be only 8:30 to 3, not so bad. Luke and Kate will be attending Extended School Year during these hours from June 23 to August 4. I'm also taking my turn hosting the Saturday UT cohort's monthly, June 21 in Sevier County.



St Demetrius

Death of a Truck, Part Two

I did it this time, not Luke.

We had a lot of flooding in early May and I tried to cross a road that was over a foot deep (probably closer to two feet). The Mazda took in a lot of water, and never ran again. This on Righteous Job's feast day, May 6. "How long?" indeed.

I decided that since I'll be transporting both kids

this summer and next school year, I would take primary driver duties with the van and have Cathy pick out B's replacement. We shopped around longer than we have previously and finally decided on a Hyundai Sonata. Standard shift, all black, 4 doors. Cathy seems to like it. I haven't driven it yet.

Haven't gotten the insurance sorted out yet, either, but the Lord will provide.

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Luke and Kate at Church

Since you ask, their behaviors are usually great at church, with an occasional off night. Luke is getting more social, though he does show preferences for certain people: Mother Beth, Father of course, Marc, Charlene and Roxanna, Don and Dave. He likes Ed Krieg (who doesn't?), but I think he views Peggy as competition in his own quest to keep the church tidy.

Kate is branching out as well. She and Kelly Pyle have an understanding. I'd like to say more about that, but I don't share their understanding. Elias Corder's imitation of Kate excited is almost as good as his mimicking Fr Stephen.

I've been attending Wednesday and Saturday vespers regularly with both and bringing Luke only on Sunday mornings. Since I'll

be off, I plan to bring both to the Ascension Divine Liturgy this Thursday. I told Cathy I would stop asking her to come (she hasn't seen 560 OR Turnpike yet), but she'll probably come on June 15 (just so we can head directly to camp afterward).

Kate enjoys having windows in the church itself, though she still spends most of her time in the narthex and "cry" room.

Luke is standing for a lot more (Father is trying to get us all to stand for his sermons) and may even figure out blessing himself soon.



Iconostasis view; Marc and Jennifer getting choir books ready.

Interiors: Iconostatis, Library, Website, Prayer List

During my Holy Week (simultaneous with Sevier County's spring break), I put "property of" address stickers on all of the library books with locator letters for which shelf each should be returned to. Seems to be working out, although we still have a lot of books gone but not signed out. People are getting used to it, especially the newcomers, so I try not to stress about it.

Through the intervention of Ryan/Raphael (as chair of the evangelism committee), I took over website maintenance from Judy Tickel, who was glad to surrender it since she and Bill have been ill a lot recently. Mostly tinkering so far, but I do have up the most recent newsletters from Father and pictures of the church (click on the St

Anne icon and the church name banner on the opening page). I'll send you another iconostatis picture after Ed S and Charlene finish.

The May prayer list is up, but not June yet. Of course you remain on our prayer list. How could we not pray for you? Your kids' families still get mentioned every week as well. I hope to visit you up there, but I'm sure you'll be visiting here first since I won't make it before summer 2007.

"How could we not pray for you?"

A Catechumenate Deferred

As with Luke becoming an alter server, I don't feel like Kate is ready to be a catechumen yet. I'm praying over the timing, but take it slow is the only answer I'm hearing so far.

Even slower for Cathy. She is supportive of my belief in the need to pray and be there, but doesn't feel like it is something she needs.

I'd like to see it happen sooner rather than later, of course, but I'm suspicious of my reasons. Am I being selfish or do I really want it as best for them?

Anyway, this piece of the Autistic Family's spiritual life isn't set-

tled yet. I'm happy enough to have Cathy back in Special Ed, this time for good, I hope.

Keep praying on it and the way will become clear.



Iconostatis as it is now, without feast days and Last Supper.

Acne is Never a Good Sign

Kate is adolescenting apace, even as Luke's winds down. She hasn't begun menstruating yet, but it can't be far behind the physical shaping visible even in this small picture. We may go for the quarterly shots that stop the periods if her behaviors get too out of control as a result. Hopefully, it won't come to that.

Fortunately these days, when she's happy she makes others happy and when she's not feeling great she tends to go off by herself to be alone/left alone. She hasn't attacked anybody since before Christmas, but has thought about it (especially toward Cathy or me) a time or two.

It looks like her acne may be worse than Luke's. I had it pretty bad at 15 and 16, so the genes are not in her favor here.

At the post Pascha feast, as Luke reached for a second piece of cheesecake, Marc asked me if I was going to let him get it. When I said, "Sure. He's a growing boy" Marc said, "Growing? He going to block out the sun soon!" If your Godfather can't insult you, who can?

The two competed in the softball throw and 50 meter dash at the Track and Field Special Olympics and 50 m swim at the Swimming Special Olympics. Mostly 3rd and 4th place ribbons for these events. Luke and Kate have the athleticism of their parents, I'm afraid.

I would have added some pictures from softball season, but none look good yet.



Kate, 4/19/03, Easter Egg Hunt.

The Metropolitan and the Seeker

Okay, I'll stop adding "Sister" to your address until it's official. When my brother-in-law was in Marine boot camp, they made the recruits do 50 extra push ups if anything was wrong with their incoming mail (stamp upside down, misspellings, etc.). They don't assign extra chores for this at your monastery, I hope!

I'm hoping to visit the Dallas cathedral on the way back from Arizona, for Monday night Vespers, I hope. Father said the iconostasis there is done, but I'm sure any place that seats 7 is worth seeing no matter what state of completion it's in. Of course, Archbishop Dmitri likely won't be back from Tennessee yet, but maybe.

Father showed around the pictures from your website of Metropolitan Herman visiting the monastery few weeks ago. Is he really that short, or have you grown taller since the move to New York?



You look healthy. That upstate New York air must be good. Pray for us, as we always do for you.

Shine, Shine Into the Summer

We've joined the Mimosa Estates Recreation Center (for the pool, of course) again this season. Kate and I went yesterday (June 1) for the first time. The water was still a bit cool for me, but she didn't mind, or even notice.

Cathy is going to UT full time again this summer, to add the endorsement for lower functioning kids, as I did in the summer of 2001. She will have some in her class next year. It is a new consolidated developmental classroom (CDC) to open at Northview Elementary in Kodak



Jeff and Luke, 4/19/03.


(just off Exit 407 of I-40). She'll have kids that are about where Luke and Kate were when they were 6 to 10 years old.

If I can't have the Wildwood, NJ, beach, I'll have to settle for the Cox St Marina beach. Maybe between the June/July courses ending and the next school year kicking off. I've always needed a trip to the beach to separate one school year from the next. If I don't get it, I have that weird feeling one gets after staying up all night; nothing to separate the end of one day from the start of the next.



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- If you can fix it with duct tape, it ain't broken.

Charlene mentioned that late morning seems to be a good time to call you. I intend to call next week (the week of June 9-13) while I'm home with the kids. Probably about 10 am on Wednesday, June 11 (or Thursday, or Friday, or all three if you can manage it and we don't get talked out).

I looked on Amazon.com at the Alter book you recommended. It does look like a goodie and I've even added it to my Wish List. However, I bought Christ in the Psalms when you recommended that and have hardly looked at it yet. More "fun" reading once I can stop reading about Ed Admin, I guess.

Picture This

The week I'll be driving to and from Arizona with Luke to witness my nephew's wedding, Archbishop Dmitri will be here to witness Mary and Will's wedding and make subdeacons of Ed and Ed. I really hate to miss this, as I'm sure you do.

Ed S has a lot of pictures of the new church in progress that he's promised to give me for website posting. I'm planning to make the visual progress its own link. Standby for more on this.

I went around in mid May to take a few flower pictures of your previous address, but Sophie wasn't around to ask, so I didn't. Maybe it is for the best. They haven't gotten a new tenant yet, and have put in a gravel driveway all the way up to the house. A man mowing the grass (Hispanic looking; he knew you) volunteered that I had to move the van because they were going to asphalt over the gravel soon. It occurred to me later, you could probably get better pictures from Sophie, but if you want me to go around again, let me know.

Hope to talk with you soon. God bless and keep you until then.



Luke and Cathy, April 2003.