

A day in the Convent

People who come to the convent very often ask us about how we spend our day. We are not surprised to be asked such a question because most of the church traditions were lost or forgotten during the Communist and atheist regime. Nowadays times are completely different and fortunately everyone is free to find out the truth, so people want to know more about Christian life.



There is a mystery about being a nun or a monk. I would describe it like being a child in God's hands. Everything becomes a miracle because I can see good things and bad things that happen to me like a thread which connects me to God. It is He who guides my life. I see light coming from above and everything makes sense and is clear. The closer one gets to God, the clearer the light becomes. So to make the light even clearer, I pray. From the moment I open my eyes in the morning and during the rest of the day I say short prayers to keep my mind close to God.

One typical day

A typical day in the convent begins in church with a service called Matins. We sing and read Psalms and Canons. Matins lasts about hour and a half and after that, we have coffee or tea and it is time to work. Our primary work is to make candles. We use only natural materials (bee wax and palm wax) because everything in the Convent is devoted to God and should be pure. All our candles are hand-made.



In spring we spend a lot of time working in the garden. We work in the flower garden only. There are many people helping us with the vegetable garden so we usually spend less time there. Of course we have other commitments like cooking and keeping the church and other buildings clean and tidy. We have many friends who come and help us with all the work that needs doing. We are really very grateful to them. Some of them are keen to learn reading and chanting Psalms (especially on the unique Byzantine notation). On special feasts we all sing together and that makes the church services even more beautiful.



In the evenings, we have Vespers which is the last service of the day. It lasts about an hour and celebrates the memory of the Saint of the next day. Church feasts begin from dusk of the previous evening - like the Christmas Eve for example. Sometimes we have to work after Vespers until late at night to prepare candles for the next day. But on some other evenings we have a little spare time. Then we read, talk to each other, learn English, sing some new chants or just have a rest.

Summertime

During the long, hot summer days many people come to visit the church, to pray or to talk to us. We often have baptisms (Christenings) and weddings on Saturdays and Sundays.



The happiest days for us are when we celebrate Holy Liturgy once or twice a month. Many people come to take part in the Mass. Some of them sing with us, others just pray. During Lent, many Christians take Holy Communion and we are very happy about them knowing that it brings them closer to God.



Sometimes we travel to the city of Plovdiv to meet our spiritual father Archbishop Nikolai. Meeting him fulfils us with true inspiration. He is a great example of hard work, great faith and devotion. We have been learning that we must work tirelessly and hard to bring the faith to people. We would like many more people to know about him and everything he does for the Orthodox Church!

Special Days

There are the odd days like today when a painter we know, Daniel Kazakov, comes and says: *"I'd like to paint two icons for you as a donation"*. He can finish two to three icons in a week and they are really beautiful!



There is a Sunday school in the Convent. The teacher who gives the lessons is a friend of ours. She is a woman of faith and a very good teacher, too. Children love her very much. After the lessons they play in the garden and we feel their joy and happiness.



Every year in May, young students from a music school in Sofia perform at the Convent. They play both classical and modern music and some of them not only play but even sing as well. This year they began with a piece by Bach and finished with a Deep Purple song! They sang a lot of modern Bulgarian songs, too. The concert lasted four hours. It was a real pleasure to listen to all these young musicians. They are all very talented.



Unexpected

There are days when unexpected and undesirable things happen: something brakes down and needs repairing. Thanks God very soon everything is all right again.



People who help us

Many people help us. Some of them help us with their prayers, some come and work with us and some donate money or other thing we need. God bless them all! We pray to St. Peter and St. Paul for them too and hope God will be in their hearts always.



An elderly woman lives with us. Her name is Penka. She helps us a lot with her moral support and with her knowledge of life. She knows almost everything about gardening and cooking. And she is always smiling!



Our pets

We have two dogs called Chiara and Rocco, four cats and a pair of parrots. They are all very nice but the cats are particularly amusing. Children who come to the convent play with them and some adults too.



Winter days

And finally there are the winter days when we don't have many visitors. On such days we enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the moment. The snow makes everything look white and pure and we pray with the words of King David: "*Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow*" ...

