

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060
(805) 921-1563 – www.stbarbaramonastery.org

THE AUGUST GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

Sunday, August 28, 2016

4:00 pm Presentation:

REFLECTIONS ON THE JUNE 2016 COUNCIL IN CRETE

Speaker: Rev. Yousuf Rassam

Pastor of St. Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA

5:00 pm Vespers

6:00 pm Potluck

DIRECTIONS TO THE MONASTERY

From Highway 101 – Exit Hwy 126 East at Ventura.

Travel 11 miles east along Hwy 126 and exit 10th St/Hwy 150 at Santa Paula.

Turn left from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Travel about five miles (1/4 mile past Thomas Aquinas College) to 15799 Ojai Road.

The monastery driveway is on the right just past our mailbox at Highway Marker 2830.

Drive across the bridge and follow the signs to the parking area.

From Highway 5 – Exit Hwy 126 West at Santa Clarita.

Travel 27 miles to Santa Paula, and exit at 10th St/Hwy 150.

Turn right from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Continue as directed above.



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Not long ago, a visitor presented our monastery with the beautiful icon pictured below. The icon often is called the “Vatopedi icon of the Theotokos,” and our friend had, indeed, acquired our copy from the Monastery of Vatopedi, the home of the original, while recently on a trip to Mount Athos. There it is known as “Paramythia” or the “Consolation of the Mother of God.”

The icon is unusual because it depicts the Mother of God with the Christ Child’s hand on her mouth and her face somewhat turned away from Him. This is because the icon is connected with a particular event. Early one morning, the icon turned Her face towards the abbot of the monastery, who was about to hand the keys of the monastery to the porter so that he could open the outer gates to the open the outer gates to the pirates had come intending to break in and pillage the monastery. Then the Holy Child placed His hand over His Mother’s lips, saying, “Do not protect this sinful flock, Mother, but let the monks may come to their Virgin, pushing away the hand of her Son from her mouth!” The abbot then took precautionary measures, and the monastery was saved.



The story goes that life in time was not in a good the Mother of God in her towards the abbot of the standing nearby and the monastery to the open the outer gates to the pirates had come intending to break in and pillage the monastery. Then the Holy Child placed His hand over His Mother’s lips, saying, “Do not protect this sinful flock, Mother, but let the monks may come to their Virgin, pushing away the hand of her Son from her mouth!” The abbot then took precautionary measures, and the monastery was saved.

To this day, the icon remains as it was at that moment with the Mother of God portrayed pushing away the hand of her Son from her mouth! The monks of Vatopedi treasure this icon and sing a special Akathist before it in celebration of this event, ever giving thanks for the protection given to their monastery by the Theotokos. We are grateful to our thoughtful and generous visitor who gave us this beautiful copy of the icon for our chapel. It is a reminder of her protection to us as well and of her powerful and very motherly intercessions before the Lord.

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

A VISIT FROM THE ST. PAUL GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, IRVINE, WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY GROUP

On August 10th, we were pleased to host twelve ladies from the St. Paul's Women's Bible Study Group led by their president, Dorothea Love. After a brief introduction to the monastery from Mother Victoria, Mother Nina took the ladies on a tour of the monastery property including the new chapel under construction. At noon, all attended the Sixth Hour chapel service with the sisters before sitting down to lunch and an afternoon of processing lavender. At the end of the afternoon, the sisters sang Vespers, and the visit came to a close with a light supper before the women set off on their long drive back to Orange County. Both the sisters and their new friends from Irvine hope this was the first of many visits to St. Barbara Monastery.



CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Over the past month, following the instructions of our iconographer Heather MacKean, the plasterers applied three coats of especially prepared plaster to the interior chapel walls. The result is astonishingly beautiful. Watching the plasterers smooth the final coat, it became evident that they qualify as artists themselves! For several years now, we have stood in the space of the new chapel trying to envision what it would look like when finished. Now at last we can see and “feel” the shape of the interior. Of course, because the plaster has to cure for a couple of years before Heather can begin her iconographic work on it, we will continue trying to imagine what the future chapel will look like once the walls are covered with iconography. Meanwhile, however, we are seeing the structure beginning to “look like a real church,” to quote a comment from one of the sisters.

You might say that we have now officially entered the phase of “final touches.” A carpenter is due on site next week to install a folding 4-door system in the chapel's north wall. This will completely open to allow overflow crowds standing outside to see and hear the services. Electricians are due to install all of the lighting fixtures. And the outdoor patios and walkways, made ready in advance, will be filled with poured cement. Since we are in a rural area and have built on a hillside, we are encountering some challenges to bring the walkways up to code for ADA compliance, but we are confident in our general contractor's ability to troubleshoot any problems that may arise. We remain optimistic that the chapel can be finished in time for the planned consecration on December 3rd.

CHAPEL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Yes, due to building cost overruns, which we are told are usual, it turns out we are not as close to the end of our fundraising efforts as we thought.

Once again, our good friends Bogdan Popescu and Chef Kimmy Tang have come to our rescue. To benefit our Chapel Building Fund, they have offered to provide a world-class dinner featuring Asian fusion dishes developed by Kimmy for her new cookbook published just this month. Archbishop BENJAMIN will be the speaker. The dinner is scheduled for Sunday, September 4th, starting with hors d'oeuvres and wine at 5:00 PM and dinner itself at 6:00 PM at Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Cathedral in LA (650 Micheltorena St., Los Angeles, CA 90026).

Please call the monastery (805-921-1563) or go to our website (stbarbaramonastery.org/benefitdinner) to register for the dinner by August 30th. Payment may be made at the door or online via PayPal. The price is \$50 per person or \$25 for children under 12.

We want to point out that Sunday, Sept. 4th falls on Labor Day Weekend—which means Sunday afternoon and evening traffic in LA should be light.



INTRODUCING A NEW RESIDENT!



Crashing into monastery life like a furry asteroid, our new kitten Cowboy brings joy and rambunctiousness to our (formerly) quiet life. Cowboy, bow-legged and rowdy, ambushes his sisters Blackberry and Trixie, storms the counters in search of prey like butter and tuna, steals prayer ropes, climbs monastic habits and is generally “all-boy.” Thankfully, each week he is more comfortable showing his softer side, sleeping near the other cats, on our office papers or on the sunny couch, and purring loudly when cuddled – well, at least for 30 seconds at a time. He was found on the streets of Los Angeles, dirty and flea-ridden, and came to us through a rescue group. We are so glad he did. Please welcome him next time you come to visit.

WORK PARTY

The monastery is calling a special work party for Saturday, September 10th. For the purpose of fire prevention, the main task will be to clear dead wood that has accumulated on the property and make it into mulch using a wood chipper. Please call the monastery (805-921-1563) or send us an email (sbmonastery@gmail.com) if you are able to participate.