

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060

*The February Gathering of the Friends
of St. Barbara Monastery
Sunday, February 28th, 2016*

4:00 pm Presentation:

CREATION AND TIME:

an apophatic look at Genesis from a scientist's perspective

Speaker: Rev. Iosif Razvan Bena

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

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. mile past Thomas Aquinas College) to 15799 Ojai Road.

The monastery driveway is

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,

Here is a true little tale from the not-too-distant past to encourage us all for our approaching Lenten journey:

Years ago, we knew someone who at the outset of Lent resolved to pray the morning and evening prayers unfailingly as a special “labor of love” for Christ for the duration of the Forty Days. As the days of Lent wore on, she continued faithfully to fulfill her promise; but in the 4th week, which is the week of the Cross, she was struck with a severe temptation. It is enough to identify this as a blasphemous doubt and best not to describe it in any detail. Wisely, at the first opportunity, she went to church and told her priest what she was experiencing. The priest counseled her to remain in the church in front of the Cross and the icon of Christ following the service for as long as it might take for her heart to quiet and the thought to dissipate and then to return home and prepare to receive Holy Communion at the next Divine Liturgy. This she did, staying in the church perhaps as long as an hour until her troubled heart was at peace again.

Following the Divine Liturgy a few days later, as she was returning home, glorifying God within herself at how her dark temptation had lifted, she happened to pass a small orchard all in bloom. The trees and even the ground around them were bright white with blossoms in the morning sunlight, and she stopped for a few minutes to enjoy the unexpected beauty. It seemed to her that nature itself was rejoicing with her.

Wanting to share her discovery of the blossoming orchard, a couple of days later she invited a friend to walk that way with her. To her disappointment, the blossoms were already gone and the trees were looking bare again. Nevertheless, they walked through the orchard, and she tried to describe to her friend how beautiful the orchard had been just a few days earlier. Looking closely at a branch, her friend said: “But don’t you see that these trees have not yet blossomed? Look at the small buds on this branch! They have not yet opened!” Speechless, not knowing what to make of what her friend was showing her, she hurried to the church to tell the priest. Understanding what had happened, that wise physician of souls said to her quite matter-of-factly in his kind voice: “God has granted you a vision. You were in Paradise.”

Passing that way once again a few weeks later, she saw the orchard in full blossom—in pink!

A long time has passed since this little miracle took place. But the woman who experienced it assures us that her memory of it has remained an anchor of faith for her throughout her long life. Glory to God!

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

A NOTE ABOUT OUR SPEAKER



Father Iosif Bena and his wife Preoteasa Christina are old friends from the days when St. Barbara Monastery first moved to Goleta from Santa Barbara. At that time, long before Father Iosif was ordained to the priesthood, they were postdoctoral students in the renowned physics department at UCSB, sometimes attending Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles and sometimes nearby St. Athanasius Antiochian Orthodox Church in Isla Vista. As we settled into our new home, they became invaluable helpers. The “temporary” iconostas, which we use to this day in our present house chapel in Santa Paula, was originally built by them and several other grad students from the physics department at UCSB for our garage chapel in Goleta. They also helped transform our small lawn area there into a productive vegetable garden. Probably our most unforgettable memory from those days is sitting in their miniscule student apartment and watching live—on the powerful computer they had at their disposal—the consecration of the newly rebuilt Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow with the proclamation of the endless names of the new martyrs of Russia.

Subsequently, the Benas moved on to accept positions elsewhere in their respective fields in physics, at last deciding to settle in Paris, France, where Father Iosif’s scientific work focuses on black holes and early universe physics. It was several years ago in Paris that Father Iosif was ordained to the holy priesthood by Bishop Joseph of the Romanian Metropolia of Western and Southern Europe. In addition to his scientific work, he is presently the priest of a Romanian parish in the Paris suburbs.



Father Iosif Bena will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the monastery on Sunday, February 28th, at 10:00 AM, preceded by the 3rd and 6th Hours at 9:30 AM.

Father Nicholas Boldireff will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the monastery on Sunday, March 6th, at 10:00 AM, preceded by the 3rd and 6th Hours at 9:30 AM.

THE MARCH FRIENDS' GATHERING

To the disappointment of many, we were obliged to cancel our January Friends' gathering due to the severe winter rainstorm that visited Southern California on that day. Heather MacKean, the iconographer who was scheduled to speak to us on *The Theology of the Icon* has agreed to give her presentation at our March Friends' Gathering.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



This month, special window frames were installed in our new chapel. In addition to regular window glass, we hope in the future to add etched glass with ecclesiastical motifs to the interior. The window frames were designed with this in mind under the direction of the glass artist Nadia Penoff of Santa Barbara. Thus, when the time comes, such glass can be added without having to retrofit the existing windows in any way.

Meanwhile, there has been a good amount of progress on the ADA restrooms. We have completed the "rough" phase, meaning the restrooms are framed up and have the needed electrical work, plumbing and fire sprinklers in the walls. The fire department inspector has been to monastery and signed off on these items, allowing us to go ahead and close up the walls. This means we are cleared to finish this addition to our garage—a County requirement before we can be granted "occupancy" of the chapel.

Thirdly, the construction crew has put in a lot of work on the patio to the north side of the building, preparing to pour the concrete retaining walls and paths.



NEW MONASTERY PRODUCT!

In addition to our lavender essential oil, hydrosol and other lavender products, our monastery is now making all-natural lip balm. We think you'll enjoy this soothing new product which features both our lavender and homegrown healing calendula. Look for it in our bookstore, on our website and in your local parish bookstore.

