

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

THE JULY GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

July 29th, 2012

4:00 pm Presentation

***Speaker: V. REV. MICHAEL LAFFOON
Pastor of St. Mark Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA***

***THE LOVE OF GOD
ACCORDING TO ST. IGNATIUS BRIANCHANINOV***

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,

The past month has been a “time of troubles” in the Church such as hasn’t been seen in many years. Wave after wave, each greater than the last, or so it seemed, came slamming into our Ship. This is not the place to enumerate these troubles (and if you have no idea what is being referenced, it may be for the best). But this is a good place to reflect on our strategy as Christians for dealing with troubles when they come—all kinds of troubles, but especially the ones that originate in the very place where we expect to look for help and support, that is, among our clergy, monastics, and church leaders of every rank.

We do well before all else to remember that the Lord taught us not to be surprised when troubles arise. “In the world you will have tribulation,” He said. “But be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” [John 16:33] (And the Church, after all, is in the world!) Moreover, where to greater effect would the Evil One wish to attack than in the Church? Indeed, from the days of the Acts of the Apostles onwards the history of the Church is a record of troubles as well as a record of Her triumph over them.

Having recognized that troubles are to be expected, we do well then to “get hold of our anchor,” so to speak. We all have one. Perhaps it is a few words of Scripture or a few words of prayer that we have learned to rely on to bring us to our senses. Or perhaps it is an image—an icon, or the Cross—that, when recalled, puts everything into perspective for us in a flash. More likely it is a vivid memory of some experience from the time when we first began to pray and practice our Faith seriously that grounds us in certainty concerning Jesus Christ and His Church.

Securing ourselves by holding on to that anchor, we can then proceed to look hard at our reaction to the troubles at hand. Are we offended by them? Or depressed? Or scandalized? Are we fearful? Or angry? Are we so shaken that we feel our faith weakening? (Or do we perhaps not react at all? That is, are we indifferent?) Can we justify any of these reactions? The litmus test of whether we can or not is whether we are moved to prayer—for the principals involved, for the Church, for ourselves. And are we moved to repentance? The Lord instructs us to run to prayer and repentance in times of trouble—in other words, to Himself. The saints do this and so it is that they keep their Peace, which is another way of saying that they remain “in Christ.” Prayer? Yes, of course, you will say. But repentance? Why repentance when we are being threatened by all kinds of evil? Well, because repentance is never out of order.

A Russian woman being interviewed by a reporter at the time of the fall of Communism was asked: What do you make of the 70 years of your nation’s subjection to Communist oppression? She didn’t miss a beat, but replied: “It was for our sins.” She had internalized the wisdom of the Church’s perspective and preaching.

In the deep understanding of things offered to us by our Holy Fathers and Mothers “a sign of true repentance is the acknowledgement that we deserve all the troubles, visible and invisible, that come to us, and even greater ones.” (St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 5, paragraph 38)

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

!!! IT'S TIME TO BEGIN !!!

Yes, at long last, we can announce that we have surmounted the final hurdle with the County of Ventura and are ready to begin building the new chapel! We thank our many Friends who have prayed that this day might arrive! In our next newsletter, we hope to have photos for you showing a construction crew hard at work doing the grading of the building site.

If you have an interest in contributing time and talent at any stage of the building process, it's time to let us know. (And if you are someone who has already informed us of your desire to help, we ask that you contact us again to confirm.) We are presently making a list of all those who wish to participate in any way and are beginning to organize and schedule the volunteer help. Please call us at 805-921-1563 or—better—send us an email: sbmonastery@gmail.com.



Mother Victoria announces the news

MAKE A DONATION AND PAY YOUR BOOKSTORE BILL ONLINE

For those of our friends who prefer to make their monetary contributions and pay for outstanding bookstore purchases online, please note that you can now easily do this via Paypal at www.stbarbaramonastery.org/donate. We apologize for the delay in correcting this problem on our website.

Donate

ST. ATHANASIUS SUMMER SCHOOL

On June 28th, in what has become an annual event, we had the St. Athanasius Summer School students and teachers along with their principal, the V. Rev. Nicholas Speier, visiting with us from Goleta. Resplendent in their distinctive bright red tee shirts, they enjoyed the monastery grounds and the wonderful birds—owls, hawks, vultures, falcons—introduced to them in the program presented that morning by the Ojai Raptor Society. At noon, they prayed the 6th Hour together with the sisters in the chapel, followed by lunch in the great out-of-doors. There was time for just a little more play before the return drive to the church in Goleta, where they ended their joyful day. We already are looking forward to having them back next summer!



Best tire swing in the County



Learning about the raptors



A barn owl and its handler

THE PEACOCK AT THE MONASTERY

All the photos used on the covers of our newsletters are taken by the sisters on the monastery property. But we admit this month's is an exception. While the neighbors' peacock was spending part of last week with us, we just couldn't get a good shot of him. So we photographed him on the roof of our neighbors' barn across the creek from us. They are the people who invested in this magnificent bird (but who rarely get to enjoy watching him). It turns out that the peacock is a symbol of immortality, especially in Byzantine mosaics and other ecclesiastical art. So we find it very appropriate to have him strutting about the monastery grounds when he so chooses. The cats tolerate him but are not impressed, and vice versa.



Where are my admirers?



Blackberry: What is THAT?!?