

St. Barbara Monastery—15799 Ojai Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 921-1563 – [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org)

# ***THE MAY GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY***

***Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019***

***4:00 pm Presentation:***

## ***DIGITAL ICONOCLASM***

***Speaker: Rev. John Valadez***  
***Pastor of St. Timothy Church, Lompoc, 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.*



***CHRIST IS RISEN!***

***INDEED, HE IS RISEN!***

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Years ago, a young hieromonk, fresh from a visit to Mount Athos, stopped by our monastery. Preparing to celebrate Vespers for us in what was then a poorly lit chapel, we offered him the use of a floor lamp in the altar. “No, no,” he said. “Nothing hinders prayer like electric light!” A few days later, when our Elder, Father Dimitry, was with us, we related the incident to him. He was quiet for a moment, pondering, and then said in his halting English: “I think we must pray in any light.”

Indeed, Father Dimitry, one must pray in any light, in any place, at any time. . . !

Pilgrims and other visitors to any monastery, ours included, often remark on the peacefulness of the place and how they find it difficult or even impossible to pray in the midst of their own less-than-peaceful usual circumstances. We know what they mean. But, to quote Father Dimitry again, *we must pray in any light*, that is, in any and all circumstances. Yes, we know from the Gospels that the Lord Himself withdrew from time to time to pray to His Father in solitude and quiet. But He showed us—by His very example as well—that exactly when we are beset with anxiety or turmoil or any temptation whatsoever, it is also time to pray.

Do the words of prayer not come easily at such times of stress? Then the Church has a rich gift for us: the Book of Psalms. The Psalms are a treasury of prayers dealing with every imaginable circumstance. It is no wonder that Psalms are appointed for every church service without exception. When David the prophet and king was joyful and thankful, he poured out his heart in prayer. When he was angry or perplexed or beset by enemies, or sorrowful or overwhelmed, or frightened or in need, he did the same. These words of his prayers are available at our fingertips in the Book of Psalms. The Lord Himself knew the Psalms and prayed them. Indeed, it was with words of the Psalms that He prayed as He hung on the Cross and took His last breath: “Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.” (Psalm 31:5).

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***VISIT OF “THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN” OF ST.BARNABAS CHURCH, COSTA MESA***



We had a wonderful day with the ladies from St. Barnabas Church on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. Despite rain before and after their visit, most of the day was sunny and allowed us to spend a lot of time outdoors. The ladies gathered for the 6<sup>th</sup> Hour in the chapel (which most of them were seeing for the first time since it was completed) before we all sat down to the delightful luncheon they brought to share with us. In the afternoon, they helped enormously with the weeding of our lavender fields--a critical task at this season rendered relatively easy by the recent

heavy rains. At the end of the afternoon, there was time to relax and talk together with the conversation settling into a discussion on parenting. Indeed, the scene was reminiscent of St. Paul's vision of Christian community life, where he envisioned the older women instructing the younger (Titus 2). Our day together closed with Vespers followed by a light supper before the ladies set out for home.

## ***OJAI RAPTOR CENTER TO PRESENT ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM AT THE MONASTERY***

Once again this year, the Ojai Raptor Center will bring a collection of birds of prey to the monastery for an educational and fascinating presentation. (The photo at right is from last year's event.) All children and their parents are welcome to attend the presentation, which is free and will begin at 10:30 AM on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Following the 6<sup>th</sup> Hour Service in the chapel, lunch will be provided. If you and your children plan to attend, please let the monastery know by calling 805-921-1563.



## ***MOTHER MARY, PRINCIPAL OF THE ORTHODOX SCHOOL OF BETHANY, VISITS US***

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, we were honored to have a visit from Mother Mary, Principal of the Orthodox School of Bethany for girls in the town of Bethany (presently in the territory of the Palestinian Authority) near Jerusalem. She is a nun of the Russian Orthodox Convent located in Gethsemane, which operates the school. Founded in 1937 as an orphanage and elementary school, today the school's program extends from kindergarten through high school and includes only a small group of orphans who live on the premises. Reflecting the changing demographics of the wider area, the present enrollment of 435 students includes mostly Muslims and a few Christians.

The school property includes a church dedicated to St. Lazarus, the feast day being on



Lazarus Saturday. On the school's property there also stands a chapel containing a large stone dated to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century with the following inscription in Greek: "Here Martha and Mary heard from the Lord word about the resurrection from the dead...."

Mother Mary's description and stories of life at the school and in the surrounding town of Bethany under the restrictions imposed by the Palestinian Authority kept us spellbound. Imagine life, not to mention operating a school, with running water available only one day per week! Or imagine an Orthodox school obliged to include the Koran in its curriculum! Indeed, our evening with Mother Mary ended all too quickly and it was with reluctance that we said our

'goodbyes.'

Mother Mary is visiting the US on school-related business. Notable on her itinerary are a few days in Chicago, where two students of the Bethany School will receive prestigious awards from the U. of Chicago for outstanding high school science projects.

### ***LAVENDER SEASON IS COMING***

The monastery will be selling its lavender and lavender products as well as honey on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Greek Festival sponsored by St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Camarillo and on June 29<sup>th</sup> at the Ojai Lavender Festival.

Our lavender harvest will be relatively small this year, because our fields are not fully recovered and back to full production following the Thomas Fire. However, we will bring everything that we have available for sale to these events.