



***THE MARCH GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS
OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY IS CANCELLED.***



Dear Friends,

This single-sheet “News Page” replaces our usual “Newsletter” this month because of a computer problem. If the problem was inevitable, it certainly was well-timed; because at present we have just about no news except for one main item: St. Barbara Monastery is now officially closed to visitors.

Echoing the directive of Metropolitan TIKHON, Archbishop BENJAMIN’s message to all his parish churches and monasteries is to comply with the order of the Governor of California to “shelter in place” during the present Coronavirus pandemic. We have, therefore, cancelled all individual and group visits including our Friends’ Gathering as well as retreats and work parties that were scheduled at the monastery, and we have restricted the monastery premises to the members of our monastic community. The photo here shows Sister Photini posting the announcement on our chapel doors. (A similar sign is posted at the entrance to our bridge.)



These regulations are, of course, temporary and are contrary to the tradition of monastic community life handed down to us by our holy mothers and fathers, which understood hospitality in the Name of Christ to be an essential component. Nonetheless, until further notice, we are accepting our new circumstances as a peculiarly appropriate Lenten opportunity for greater quiet, greater focus on the rich Lenten round of church services (all “reader’s services,” by the way) which comprises our daily spiritual food during this season, and greater inner preparation for a deeper experience of the goal which lies ahead—Pascha.

Meanwhile, our priest Father Jude and Matushka Brigitte are likewise “sheltering in place” at their home in nearby Oak View. This means, of course, that Father Jude is unable to come and celebrate here either the usual Divine Liturgies or Presanctified Liturgies appointed for this season. So, for the duration, we sisters are back to something like our practice in years past, when we had no monastery priest—with the difference, of course, that we are not traveling to nearby churches for the Liturgy. We console ourselves with the thought that these were (and still are) the circumstances of many who lived as hermits or who dwelled far from towns or monasteries—like our very own St. Herman of Alaska or our fellow Orthodox Christians living in remote places.

Our prayer for both you and us is that the Lord may spare us all from the present pandemic and fill our time of relative isolation with His grace. And may we all reach Pascha, whether our celebration then be while still sheltering in place, all together at the paschal Liturgy—or, to tell it like it is, in the life to come.

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters of
St. Barbara Monastery

MARCH 2020: "SHELTERING IN PLACE" AT ST. BARBARA MONASTERY!

