

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

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

***Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013***

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

## ***THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION THE RESURRECTION IN THE SCRIPTURES***

***Rev. Yousuf Rassam***

***Pastor of St. Innocent Orthodox 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,

As you can see from the cover of this newsletter, our speaker for this month's Friends' gathering, Father Yousuf Rassam, has chosen the Resurrection for his topic. Because we are on the brink of the Dormition Fast, when our focus is already beginning to center on the Mother of God and the special services shortly to be celebrated in her honor, we have in the combination of these two subjects the perfect opportunity to reflect on something our Holy Fathers have noted but that we virtually never hear mentioned: the fact that *the Mother of God was the first witness to the Resurrection*. St. John of Damascus calls attention to this, but more comprehensively and accessibly it is to be found in the writings of St. Gregory Palamas. (See *Homily Eighteen, On the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers*, in *St. Gregory Palamas: The Homilies*, Mt. Tabor Publishing, 2009).

What St. Gregory tells us is this: The accounts of the four evangelists concerning the Resurrection appear to disagree. If examined closely, however, it becomes clear that this is not the case. The key to sorting everything out is the understanding that there were many myrrhbearers and that they came to the tomb in groups and at different times on the morning of the Resurrection. The various evangelists each recount just one of these visits, passing over the others, and so they appear to disagree. St. Gregory carefully reviews all the accounts and demonstrates—mainly on the basis of reference to her elsewhere in St. Matthew's Gospel as “the mother of James and Joses”—that “the other Mary” mentioned in St. Matthew's account of the Resurrection is none other than the Theotokos.

Although this fact is plainly there in the Gospels for anyone to see who cares to probe the text more deeply, the Evangelists have “veiled” it. Their reason for doing so, suggests St. Gregory, is that to cite His Mother as a witness (indeed, the first witness) to His Resurrection could diminish the credibility of the claim that Jesus rose from the dead especially in the thinking of potential believers who were pagans. To us, who are believers, on the other hand, what was formerly veiled can be revealed and preached.

Indeed, many things in Scripture are veiled—and many other things in the life of the Church likewise. While there are no “secret teachings,” as the gnostics would have it, neither is everything obvious.

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

***THE RAPTORS RETURN  
AND SO DOES THE ST. ATHANASIUS CHURCH  
SUMMER SCHOOL***

Once again, the St. Athanasius Church Summer School children along with Father Nicholas Speier and their other teachers all visited the monastery for what has become an annual event: a presentation by the Ojai Raptor Center about raptors and the Center's efforts to rehabilitate injured birds. This year, the representatives of the Center brought a falcon, two owls, a hawk and a kestrel. The presentation, made out in the open in a location the birds might very well have called 'home,' focused on the birds' individual stories and what the children might do and what they should



not do if they were to come upon an injured raptor. "Absolutely do not try to keep a young raptor and raise it yourself," the speakers warned the children. "If that happens, the bird will never be able to return to the wild and feed itself by hunting for prey." The program was enthusiastically received by everyone who heard it.

Afterwards, there was time for play on the swings including the monastery's famous tire swing and opportunity to explore the property, especially the almost dry creek bed. Everyone came to the chapel for the 6<sup>th</sup> Hour, followed by a scrumptious lunch enjoyed outdoors before heading home to St. Athanasius Church in Goleta.



*Fixing a swing.*



***ST. ANDREW TEENS ON PILGRIMAGE***

As part of their annual summer pilgrimage, the teens of St. Andrew Church in Riverside carved out time to stop at the monastery and help out. Having arrived at Steckel Park on Highway 150 where they camped, a mere stone's throw from the monastery, the teens—46 strong, not counting their chaperones!—



spent the afternoon working hard in the monastery's lavender fields, trimming brush near the creek, weed whacking for fire protection purposes, polishing brass, labeling envelopes and working at other tasks too numerous to mention. We are more grateful than we can say for their visit and all they accomplished. The afternoon ended with Vespers in the monastery chapel and a cookout back at Steckel Park.

*Raking the path.* The following morning, everyone was back at the monastery for Matins and the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Rev. Luke Hartung and Deacon Paul Germain, both of whom accompanied the teens throughout their week of travels. The group continued on their way Monday to points in the San Francisco area.



*Concert in the park.*



## ***A VISIT FROM THE McPHERSONS***



We recently had the joy of a visit from our good friends, the newly-ordained Rev. Moses McPherson, his wife Ruth and baby Isidore. Father Moses was ordained to the diaconate and then the priesthood shortly after his graduation this past spring from St. Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

While visiting family and friends in Southern California, Father Moses served the Divine Liturgy in the monastery chapel on Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup>. He has been assigned by His Eminence Archbishop BENJAMIN to pastor the flock at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Chico, CA, as well as the nearby mission in Susanville.

As he completes his move back to the West Coast and takes up his new life in Chico, we wish Father Moses a long and fruitful ministry and look forward to many more visits from him and his family. **MANY YEARS!**