

St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery
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*There will be no
St. Barbara Monastery
Friends' Gathering
in February 2023*





Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Somewhere in the reminiscences of pilgrims who visited St. Seraphim of Sarov, there is the following not only wise but “revolutionary” word of advice from the Saint—a rare treasure and gift to us especially now as we begin Great Lent.

A gentleman stopped at Sarov to see the Saint and, confessing he was given to anger no matter how hard he tried to control himself, asked for help.

This is St. Seraphim’s reply: When you sense anger arising within yourself, immediately PAUSE, STOP, and ask yourself: ‘What is the Lord trying to show me? What is He trying to teach me?’

With these inward thoughts, at once, everything changes! Your anger subsides. Calling to mind that the Lord is at work for your salvation, which He always is, and asking His help to understand what has just happened, where anger was rising within you, it is now miraculously reversing, giving way instead to thanksgiving to God, Who is always doing all He can to bring you to your senses and to salvation. (Try this and see for yourself!)

The even more encouraging fact of the matter is that this teaching of St. Seraphim about anger can be extended to all the passions, i.e., all the sinful tendencies that assail us. The moment one catches oneself tempted by whatever it might be, PAUSE, STOP and ask inwardly: ‘WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON HERE? What is the Lord trying to show me about myself? What is He trying to teach me?’ Instantly, what is going on is seen in a new light—the light of salvation.

During the Great and Holy Fast before us, the Church will sing daily “GOD IS WITH US!” May we, one and all, be acutely aware of this in the midst of our efforts throughout the Forty Days!

The Sisters
of St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery

As stated on the cover, there will be no Friends’ Gathering in February. Most of our friends will be in their home parishes for Forgiveness Vespers which falls on the last Sunday of this month when we would normally hold the gathering.

Please join us on the last Sunday of March as we welcome Rev. Symeon Halsell from Santa Barbara who will give us a presentation.

A LIBRARY INHERITED

One year ago, following a stroke, ryassaphor nun, patristic scholar and professor, Sr. Nonna (Harrison), reposed in the Lord and came to rest in our little cemetery.

Now a large portion of her theological library has come to us as well. As she sorted through Sr. Nonna's possessions, her cousin Dr. Cary Harrison, generously offered the monastery her extensive library. The sisters rented a 15-ft U-Haul to pick up fifty boxes containing several thousand books, as well as a few bookcases. Our good friends, Jerry Reich and Aristotle Rivera, helped unload the contents, and our monastery librarian, Sr. Photini, has begun the process of sorting through the boxes—finding treasures along the way.



Although we shelve our library in the living rooms of both monastery houses, there will certainly not be enough space to keep everything! Keep an eye out; we will be making a number of books available to interested readers soon. May Sr. Nonna's memory be eternal!



A WELCOMED VISIT



Cody and Leyla reunited with their former owner.

When the monastery was blessed to acquire the residence next door over a year ago, it was clear that its former owner, Steve Kakavand (pictured left), had invested much love and care into the design of the house and its grounds. He was an enthusiastic, energetic, and helpful neighbor back then and those qualities have certainly not diminished with his move away from California.

How fortunate for us that Steve still visits us from Idaho every few months. When he's in town, he stops by to say hello, play with the dogs, and to work to improve the systems he set up when he lived here.

Thank you, Steve, for the long hours you donated this month in beautifying and updating this blessed property.

HOMELESS MINISTRY UPDATE

Sister Ioanna is continuing her ministry to homeless men and women in Santa Paula and in Los Angeles as part of her life as a lay sister here at the monastery.

Locally, she is the case manager for five people she met at Spirit of Santa Paula, a nonprofit with a homeless shelter, a street outreach ministry and a Drop-In Center for people who live on the streets of our town. Case management involves gaining a person's trust and helping them connect to funding and services that will help them move out of homelessness. She has been able to help three of them receive an income and find temporary housing while they wait for permanent housing. The other two men still live on the streets. One is schizophrenic and not able to cooperate with medical and mental health services. The other man, Philip, was connecting with medical specialists when, unfortunately, he was struck by a car in January. He suffered broken bones and a brain injury and is still hospitalized. Thanks be to God, he is now conscious and able to communicate. Please pray for him.



Visitina with friends on the street

After a two-year hiatus due to Covid restrictions, Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral in Los Angeles has begun anew the St. Xenia Outreach Ministry to their homeless neighbors. Bringing much needed items such as blankets and socks, each month Claudia Funke (chairperson) and Sister Ioanna lead a small team of parishioners to minister to those living on the streets in the Silver Lake area of Los Angeles. They look forward to building relationships there that will, God willing, lead to healing.



LENTEN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Weekdays (Except for Wednesday)

Matins: 7:00 am *
6th Hour & Memorial Service: Noon
Vespers: 4:00 pm
Great Compline: 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Matins: 7:00 am *
6th Hour & Memorial Service: Noon
Presanctified Liturgy 4:00 pm **

Saturday

Matins: 7:00 am
6th Hour & Memorial Service: Noon
Vigil: 6:00 pm

Sunday

Hours: 9:30 am
Divine Liturgy:*** 10:00 am
Vespers: 5:00 pm

*1st Week Mon, Tues, Wed: Matins @ 8 am. ** This is subject to change from week to week. **In general, before attending a service, check the schedule on our website or call the monastery for possible schedule changes.** *** March 5 & April 23: No Liturgy at monastery; Sisters will be at St. Herman Church in Oxnard.