

The July Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, July 28th, 2019

4:00 pm Presentation:

*The Orthodox Moment:
The Decline of Secularism and the
Opportunity of an Orthodox Education*

Speaker: JOHN MARK REYNOLDS

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 Santa Paula - 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.

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,

In this space in last month's Newsletter, we noted—what we all actually realize—that the wider society in which we live is fast losing its Christian underpinnings and is influencing especially young people to reject religious affiliation altogether. We went on to say that we Orthodox Christians ought to respond to this state of affairs, especially in our own Church, not merely with complaints and laments, but positively by “doing something.”

How providential it appears that, just as we have been considering all this, Dr. John Mark Reynolds should turn up to tell us what he is doing through Orthodox Christian education, especially at St. Constantine School in Houston where he is president. We hope he will also share with us his larger vision of how the present state of affairs in our society can effectively be addressed.

We mentioned education in a small way last month when we remarked that our Orthodox church school material could do with some serious improvement. Indeed, church schools are a particularly important and key area, where we do well to direct serious effort if we are to stem the tide of attrition in our parish churches. But, while our church schools are critical for the early formation of our youth, the possibilities to build on this foundation with advanced, in depth study of our Orthodox Christian heritage are, well, endless.

We actually stand on a mountain of experience and learning, having the Scriptures as its foundation and built up by our holy fathers and mothers through the centuries. Many, many of the most important patristic texts have been translated into English and other modern languages and are—for the first time in history!—readily accessible. Moreover, contemporary Orthodox authors (like the professors at our theological schools) have produced valuable studies elucidating Orthodox Tradition itself as well as the invaluable texts that have been passed down to us in the Church. The same is true of our liturgical texts, almost all of which are available in translation. We *hear* the latter at our church services, but this is not enough. They are worthy of careful study and elucidation in their own right.

In short, Orthodox Christians are keepers of a vast treasure, handed down to us in the Church through the centuries by our holy fathers and mothers. Let us not neglect it! Let us not neglect to give it to our children! And let us not neglect to share it with the famished, thirsty world around us.

Abbess Victoria
and the community
of St. Barbara Monastery

A WORD ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

We are honored to have as our speaker for the July Friends' Gathering Dr. John Mark Reynolds, president of The Saint Constantine School in Houston, Texas. The St. Constantine School offers a classical curriculum for grades K through 12 and is in the process of developing a Bachelor of Arts college degree program as well.



Formerly, Dr. Reynolds was the founder and director of the prestigious Torrey Honors Institute, the Socratic, Great Books centered honors program at Biola University. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Rochester and is the author of numerous books, including *When Athens Met Jerusalem: an Introduction to Classical and Christian Thought*. He is a frequent blogger and lecturer on a wide range of topics including ancient philosophy, classical and home education, politics, faith, and virtue.

MOTHER ANNA: MEMORY ETERNAL



Mother Anna (Kassler), a member of the monastic community at Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, CA, fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, July 13th, at the age of 93. Her funeral was held at the monastery on July 15th and she was buried in the cemetery at St. Helena, where over the seventy or so years since the monastery's founding the departed nuns of Holy Assumption Monastery have been laid to rest.

Many of you will remember Mother Anna from her days at St. Barbara Monastery. She had been a nun in the Episcopal Church for many years, and she arrived here in 2007 as "Sister Helena," from Santa Fe, NM, where she had been received into the Orthodox Church. She was professed as a stavrophor nun with the name of Mother Anna by His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN on Feb. 4, 2008 at St. Barbara Monastery.

Mother Anna was a member of the group of ten nuns from St. Barbara Monastery, who relocated to Holy Assumption Monastery in 2009, when the County of Ventura refused permission for the use of RVs and trailers as temporary housing on the St. Barbara Monastery property. Ever ready for new adventures, Mother Anna unhesitatingly accepted her new assignment.

MAY GOD GRANT HER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!

OJAI LAVENDER FESTIVAL

Because our fields have not fully recovered from the Thomas Fire of December, 2017, we had no fresh lavender for sale this year. All the same, our monastery participated in the annual Ojai Lavender Festival, selling the monastery's lavender products: essential oil, sachets, lip balm and salve. The booth was a popular stop for Festival visitors, who asked questions not only about lavender but also about the monastery and Orthodox Christianity. We are more grateful than we can say to Diana Cerritos (pictured above with M. Nina and M. Paraskeva), Laurie Baker and Diana Cage, who volunteered as "store clerks."



FEAST OF ST. HERMAN

On August 4th, our close friend Christopher Dillon will be ordained to the priesthood at St. Barnabas Church in Costa Mesa. Chris grew up at St. Athanasius Church in Goleta, worked for several years as a high school history teacher in Orange County during which time he attended St. Barnabas Church, and then went on his way with his wife and small child to St. Vladimir's Seminary, where he has now completed two years of the three-year Master of Divinity program.

On Friday, August 9th, five days after his ordination, on the Feast of St. Herman of Alaska, the newly-ordained Father Christopher will celebrate Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara Monastery at 10:00 AM, preceded by the Hours at 9:30. Everyone is welcome. Following the Divine Liturgy, the monastery will serve a luncheon to honor Father Christopher, his wife Claire and their children.

ST. INNOCENT CHURCH WORK PARTY



On Saturday, July 13th, parishioners from St. Innocent Church in Tarzana spent the whole day at the monastery helping us with many tasks. The women, led by Laura Bochnak, provided a delicious lunch, polished the candlestands and weeded the field. Of particular importance, however, was the "gang of five chainsaw operators" pictured at left. They spent the entire time trimming trees and sawing down blackened skeletons of trees burned in the Thomas Fire a year and a half ago. Our wonderful day together ended with Vespers served by Fr. Yousuf Rassam, pastor of St. Innocent's. We look forward to having them all with us again next year.