



***THE OCTOBER GATHERING OF THE
FRIENDS OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY***

Sunday, October 29th, 2017

4:00 pm Presentation:

***EVANGELISM IN A
POST-CHRISTIAN SOCIETY***

***Speaker: V. Rev. John Finley
of the Department of Missions and Evangelism
of the Antiochian Orthodox Church***

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.

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 Santa Paula-Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Continue as directed above.



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Father John Finley has entitled his talk for next Sunday *Evangelism in a Post-Christian Society*. The title has already sparked some interesting discussion at the monastery.

‘Post-Christian’ in itself is an interesting word. It would appear to be not simply descriptive and factual but to carry unique and rather alarming overtones. (Just consider: Did the people of Asia Minor, after they were vanquished by Moslem Turks, call their society ‘post-Christian’? Or half a millennium later, when the Russian people were being forced to espouse atheistic Communism, did it even occur to them to call their society ‘post-Christian’?)

However, those who use the word ‘post-Christian’ in connection with American--or more generally Western--society, would seem to be implying that the Christian era is effectively over, never mind some provincial exceptions. Usually statistical studies are referenced showing rather steady decline in churchgoing and church membership over the past fifty years or so, largely right along with the disappearance of a general Christian belief system. More seriously, the erosion of our society’s Christian underpinnings—i.e., its values and principles—is spotlighted. Then comes the questionable, implied conclusion that these trends are not only ongoing but irreversible!

The question for Fr. John, then, might be: Should the program of the Dept. of Missions and Evangelism continue? And for us, it would seem to be: How should we handle living in this society? And should we be alarmed? Should we withdraw or perhaps even hide? Should we engage? Should we adjust? And does ‘adjusting’ imply ‘compromise’?

Let us not imagine these are new questions. We stand far along a historical road that passes through all sorts of circumstances. In other words, we have examples to guide us. Above all, let us not forget that this historical road reaches back to pre-Christian times, to an itinerant Preacher (Who was handed over by his own people to be put to death by representatives of a powerful society which, while generally hostile, had just about zero interest in His mission) and His tiny band of frightened followers. Not a very promising scenario! But soon after the Lord’s Resurrection, which changed everything, we already have the Apostle Peter’s example and written instruction:

“. . . submit yourselves in every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him. . .” (I.Peter 2:13).

This early stretch of the road oriented our holy fathers and mothers in the right direction, guiding them through times of hostility and outright persecution as well as times of appreciation and plenty, through unimaginable threats and dangers, through snares and temptations. These saints are with us now, whether our society is rightly deemed ‘post-Christian’ or not. They serve not as mere examples to us, but—if we call upon them—as our companions on the same path, as our ready helpers and guides, and as our champions in every circumstance. Whatever the next turn in the road may bring, be it a new blossoming of Christian Faith or a new decline, a growth spurt or a persecution, the Lord is with us “now and ever and unto the ages of ages.”

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters of St. Barbara Monastery

ST. ATHANASIUS CHURCH AND ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH TEENS CAMP AT THE MONASTERY

The youth group from St. Athanasius Church in Goleta together with teens from St. Timothy Church in Lompoc gathered at the monastery on Friday and Saturday, October 20th and 21st, for an overnight campout and retreat. Shortly after they arrived, the campers joined the sisters for Vespers followed by supper, and then spent the evening around a campfire in one of the clearings along the creek on the grounds of the monastery.



discussion. There was time for a little work on the grounds as well as the sisters' ongoing lavender production (pictured at right) before heading over to the beautiful ponds at Thomas Aquinas College nearby for some recreation.

Following the 6th Hour service in the chapel back at the monastery, everyone enjoyed a "South of the Border" lunch before saying their goodbyes to the sisters and each other and heading home. Everyone is already looking forward to repeating this wonderful weekend next year—or maybe sooner!

Bright and early Saturday morning everyone joined the sisters in the chapel for a Memorial Service for the departed (this being the Saturday preceding the Feast of St. Demetrius, which the Church dedicates to commemoration of "those fallen asleep"). After a "campers-size" breakfast, Father Nicholas Speier of St. Athanasius Church presented a teaching and led the group in



As is our custom, there will be no Newsletter or Friends' Gathering in November. Instead, expect to receive your invitation to the Monastery's patronal Feast of St. Barbara, which we will celebrate on the evening of Sunday, December 3rd. with a Vigil and the morning of Monday, December 4th, with a Divine Liturgy.

SAVE THE DATE AND PLAN TO CELEBRATE THE FEAST WITH US!

BELFRY CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Patrick Gilbert, builder of the beautiful iconostas in our new chapel, in consultation with Mitch Denny our Project Manager, has drawn the design for a small free standing belfry to be located just beyond the north entrance to our chapel. With help from three young friends of the monastery, Wyatt and Morgan West of Bakersfield and Joseph Ballew of Goleta (pictured at right), Mitch began preparing the ground for the concrete foundation in mid-October. We are hoping the structure can be completed and the five bronze bells we imported from Russia last spring duly installed in time to ring them on our feast day, December 4th.



... AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW "SHED"



That's Richard Ballew on the ladder in the picture at left. In his spare time, over the course of the past several weeks, Richard has constructed a new shed for the monastery "fit for a king." Using lumber and other materials he found discarded at a number of construction sites nearby and his own considerable construction skills, he has provided protected space much needed by the monastery for any number of purposes such as storing caskets produced in the monastery's woodshop and drying lavender harvested from the monastery's fields, not to mention hiding a guest occasionally in need of a secluded spot.