

The September Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, September 27th, 2015

4:00 pm Presentation:

***IF GOD IS FOR US,
WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?***

Speaker: V. Rev. Nicholas Speier

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, Goleta, 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 5 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,

We have had a busy month! But two events stand out above all the rest that has been happening: (1) the canonization of SS. Sebastian and Mardarius, which took place at St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Alhambra with Patriarch Irinej of Serbia presiding, and (2) the fires in California and the West, which are still raging as we write this.

The services and all the festivities at St. Stephen's Cathedral on September 4th, 5th, and 6th were glorious. Some of us attended, and the images of Patriarch Irinej radiating the love of God in his preaching from the ambon and the endless queue of people, singing spontaneously while waiting to venerate the relics and icons of the newly proclaimed saints, will be lodged in our memories forever. With two new names added to the list of our American saints and with some glimmer of what this implies regarding the quality of Orthodox life on this continent, the vast riches of our Faith are becoming, as it were, ever more tangible. Yes, the fullness of our Faith, like the Holy Spirit Himself, is "everywhere present," but somehow, despite our failures and unworthiness, Heaven would seem to be opening wider right in front of us!

Then came the fires! On September 8th, we learned of the evacuation of the Holy Monastery of the Life-Giving Spring (Greek) near Fresno in the Rough Fire (which, incidentally, threatened the giant sequoias near Yosemite). And on September 12th, the fast-moving Valley Fire broke out in a forested area about thirty miles from our sister monastery in Calistoga. Over a thousand persons fleeing this fire arrived at the Napa County Fairgrounds in Calistoga—just a few blocks from Holy Assumption Monastery—seeking refuge. The nuns there were able to join the relief efforts, distributing food and supplies and simply talking with the distraught folks who for the most part did not yet know if they had lost their homes or not. As we write this, these fires, while considerably contained, are still burning!

We cannot help but remember vividly the fires of 2006 when we were ourselves twice evacuated from our property here near Santa Paula. By the grace of God, the fire turned away from our side of the mountain, but the experience was a demonstration of what we constantly repeat in the texts of the liturgical services: Earthly life is deceptive—seemingly so solid, but indeed as fragile as a shadow. And when it is destroyed and disappears, what remains is only the treasure we have stored up in Heaven. The saints, like the newly glorified Venerable Sebastian and the Holy Hierarch Mardarius, witness to this truth.

Abbess Victoria
and the Community
of St. Barbara Monastery

WOMEN OF HOLY CROSS COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH, SAN DIEGO, VISIT THE MONASTERY

A group of sixteen parishioners—young women, their mothers, and a few small children as well—all from the newly founded Holy Cross Coptic Orthodox Church in the Sorrento Valley in San Diego County, visited the monastery for the day on Saturday, Sept. 19th. The visit, organized by Presbytera Maryann Shenouda, was something of a pilgrimage and the first such visit to a monastery for many of the women.



After a welcome from the sisters in the monastery chapel, Mother Victoria introduced the visitors to some of the relics in the chapel, notably the relic of St. Barbara and the relic of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross. Then, before the reading of the Sixth Hour, there was time for a tour of the chapel under construction and the monastery grounds (with a stop, of course, at “the best tire swing in Ventura County”).

Father Lawrence put on his chef’s apron for the occasion and provided a memorable luncheon before everyone settled down to a talk on monasticism given by Mother Paraskeva. The lively Q and A that followed branched out to a wide range of topics—everything from the origin of the special garb of monastics and the relations of the various Eastern Churches to the nurturing of prayer in children—discussions that lasted through the rest of the afternoon as the women worked away helping the sisters with practical tasks (washing dishes, labeling envelopes, and preparing lavender sachets for forthcoming sales). Vespers followed and then supper before the ladies had to go on their way.

We thank them for coming, for their generous offerings of gifts and labor to the monastery in the name of Christ, and for simply sharing with us their lives of Christian dedication. We look forward to welcoming them to St. Barbara Monastery again.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER, MITCH DENNY



This past month, our construction crew has been hard at work framing the inside of the chapel. It has been really exciting for us to see the "shape" of the interior come to life.

Anyone who attends our September Friends' Gathering is invited to take a peek inside at the dramatic changes.

Next on the list of jobs is the electrical work. We hope to have our volunteer electricians here in

the next couple of weeks doing the rough electrical installation inside the chapel as well as in the restrooms being built onto the garage on the opposite side of the driveway.

END OF LAVENDER SEASON

Just a few second growth flowers remain in the lavender fields now, and Mother Nina has officially declared the harvesting for this year finished. But this doesn't mean the end of all the field work. Now comes the all-important pruning of the bushes to encourage next year's growth. As always, field workers are welcome! As a matter of fact, so are the helpers who sort the dried lavender florets and turn them into sachets. Besides this, a lot of lavender oil produced this summer remains to be bottled—hopefully in time for our last big sale of the year at the **Riverside Greek Festival sponsored by St. Andrew Orthodox Church during the first weekend in October.**

There will be a Divine Liturgy at the monastery on Wednesday, October 14th, the Feast of St. Paraskeva at 10:00 AM celebrated by Hieromonk Dionisie of Holy Resurrection Monastery in Temecula. The Liturgy will be preceded by the 3rd and 6th Hours at 9:30 AM and followed by a luncheon. All are welcome.