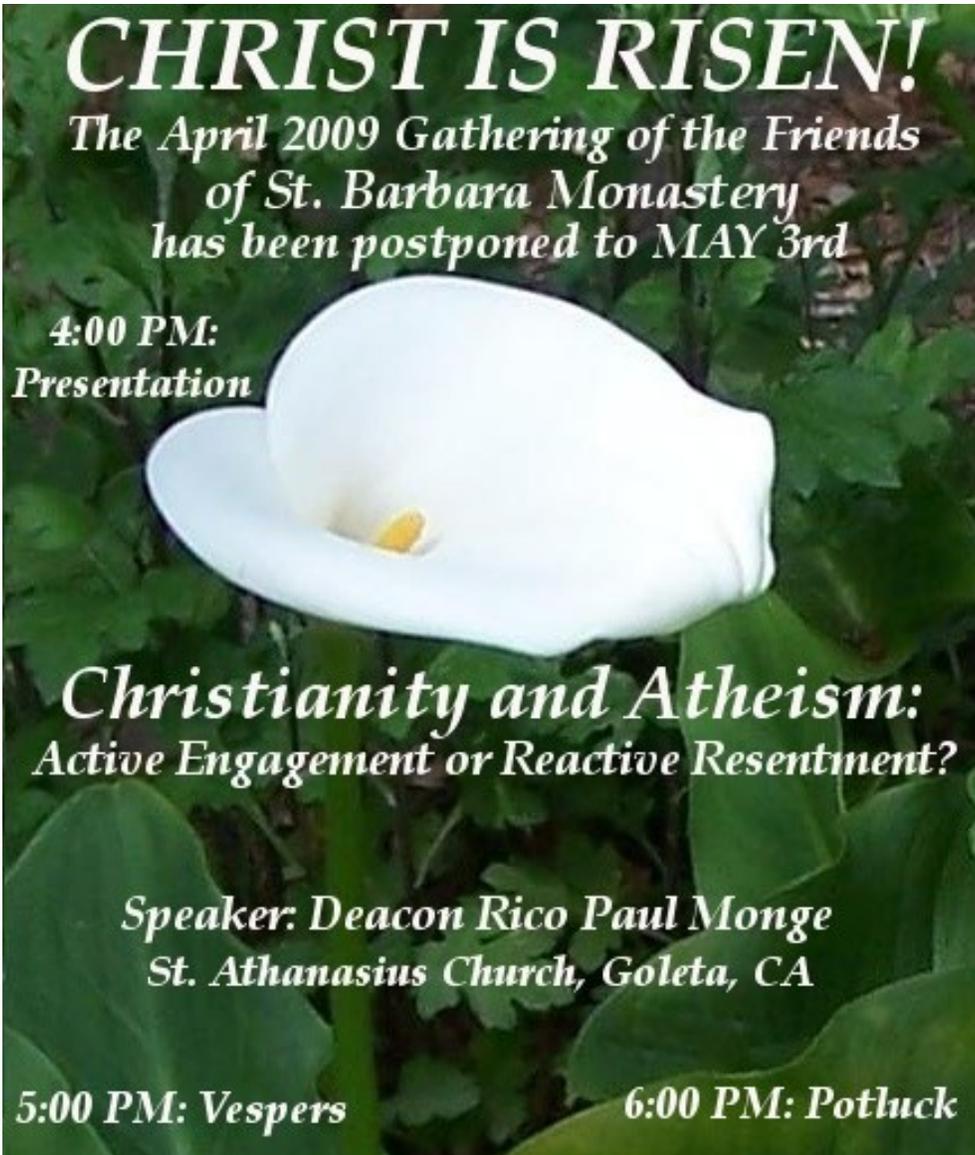


St. Barbara Monastery - 15799 Ojai Road - Santa Paula, CA 93060 - (805) 921-1563



CHRIST IS RISEN!
*The April 2009 Gathering of the Friends
of St. Barbara Monastery
has been postponed to MAY 3rd*

4:00 PM:
Presentation

Christianity and Atheism:
Active Engagement or Reactive Resentment?

Speaker: Deacon Rico Paul Monge
St. Athanasius Church, Goleta, CA

5:00 PM: Vespers **6:00 PM: Potluck**

Directions to the Monastery

From Highway 101 - Exit Hwy 126 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.



Christ is risen!

Indeed He is risen!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Having just experienced the paschal celebration, doesn't the whole world look rather different? The sky, the trees, the buildings, even the cars on the highway and the people walking on the street—all look. . . . *Precious*—that's the word! The whole world looks very, very precious. What has happened? Have scales fallen from our eyes? Everything, down to the smallest and most inconsequential, appears bright and alive—and precious—and sacred.

'Precious' and 'sacred' are, of course, among the words that modernity has stripped from our vocabulary relating to the natural and material world. They represent "subjective" categories that impede the purposes of industry and commerce, science and technology, and we are trained not to think about the world in terms of such qualities. In fact, we are taught that such qualities are superimposed on nature by us and do not belong to the world itself.

Then, just when we have begun to view the world routinely in this "objective" way, an icon begins to weep, or someone, whose x-rays or scans reveal cancer beyond hope of recovery, receives the Sacrament of Holy Unction and is healed, or someone dies and his body remains incorrupt and even streams with myrrh. We rightly call such occurrences miracles; in them the order of nature is overruled. But naming them "miracles" does not entirely take care of the matter and put it to rest for us. Do we not find ourselves thinking: "Things made of wood and paint do not weep; olive oil does not heal cancer; and bodies decay. If such things are unaccountably happening, what is going on? And how much more is there that I do not notice because my eyes have been taught not to see?"

Dear Friends, we and you, who are baptized, who have experienced the paschal celebration, "who have beheld the Resurrection," are called to live on a different plane, a plane where the Kingdom of God is breaking through into this world and rendering it the grace-filled meeting place between God and man that it was meant to be. When we live on this plane, we not only understand but experience the world and everything in it to be precious and sacred and a means of communion with God—objectively so. On this plane it is not incomprehensible when we encounter in created things the marks of the Kingdom which is to come—in an icon, in oil, in the holy relics of the saints and, indeed, in our fellow human beings as well as in the natural world. And, by the same token, it is not mere poetic license when the hymnographer writes: "The whole creation was changed by fear, when it saw Thee, O Christ, hanging on the Cross. The sun was darkened and the foundations of the earth were shaken; all things suffered with the Creator of all. Of Thine own will Thou hast endured this for our sakes: O Lord, glory to Thee."

Abbess Victoria
and the Community
of St. Barbara Monastery

LAZARUS SATURDAY WITH BISHOP BENJAMIN

Having His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, with us to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday has become an annual tradition at the monastery. This year he was accompanied by his assistant, Reader Barry Migyanko, who surprised us by taking numerous photos which he then posted on the diocesan website. You can see them at www.ocadow.org. The day was a special one for Sister Brigid, who received the apostolnik (wimple) just prior to the Liturgy.



His Grace censuring during Liturgy

His Grace preached to us about prayer, reminding us that prayer is our main job at the monastery and that we need to pray for the people out in the world who may not be able to pray for themselves. He also told us that, as we go through our spiritual dustbins in Lent, we must not lose sight of the all-conquering Love of God. This season is all about Christ's great love for fallen Adam (and the rest of us), His friend whom He seeks even in Hades. Christ has literally "loved us to death" to give us His Life.

Following the Divine Liturgy, at breakfast, the Bishop visited with us and had an opportunity to meet two of the kittens recently born at the monastery. They are about to become barn cats at a neighbor's farm, and we were pleased that they could receive the Bishop's blessing before commencing such dangerous careers.



His Grace with one of the soon-to-be barn cats



His Grace regales the community with one of his many stories



His Grace with Novice Brigid

COME ONE! COME ALL!

If you're wondering why the April Friends gathering has been postponed until May 3rd, the reason is:

An oratorio entitled *Resurrection*, composed by Subdeacon Stephen Butler, our close Friend and music professor at Westmont College, will be performed in concert for the first time at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 26th, at the First Presbyterian Church, 21 East Constance Avenue, in Santa Barbara. Admission is free. The Oratorio, proclaiming *Christ is risen!*, is a setting of the eleven Gospel readings used in rotation at Matins on Sunday mornings and will be performed by the Westmont College Choir and the Westmont College Orchestra.

MARCH FRIENDS PRESENTATION

Many of you have asked whether Fr. Josiah Trenham's talk at the March Friends gathering, *Christians Under Islamic Law in History and the Rise of Sharia Courts in the West Today*, was recorded. You will be pleased to know that it was and that the CDs are now available. To obtain a copy, please email us at sbmonastery@gmail.com or phone at (805) 921-1563.



Fr. Josiah Trenham

IN MEMORIAM: CARRIE DEEB SKAFF

Our dear Friend and benefactor, Carrie Skaff of St. Michael Church in Van Nuys, fell asleep in the Lord on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation. We send her husband Emile and all her family as well as her church family our heartfelt condolences. May the Lord receive Carrie into His Kingdom.



We will always remember Carrie. She became our friend the very first time we set foot in St. Michael's Church. Before long, she organized a Lenten retreat at the monastery (then located in Goleta), for fellow St. Michael parishioners. This became an annual event, which continued at our new location outside Santa Paula until a couple of years ago, when Carrie fell ill and was no longer able to organize the trips.

Along with those retreats, etched in our memory because of their liveliness and spirited discussions, we have a particularly happy memory of a visit to the Getty Museum, which she organized for us and a few of her friends from St. Michael's to view the "iconography" in the Museum's permanent collection. Her chagrin was enormous when the "iconography" turned out to consist of mostly renaissance religious paintings from Western Europe and not one icon. But, never mind, she made the best of it, and a great time was had by all! Another memorable occasion was a visit to her home for Arabic coffee one Sunday after attending the Liturgy at St. Michael's. Not all of us are coffee drinkers, but all of us who were there drank coffee that day, no ifs, ands or buts about it.

Carrie was a psychologist by profession who, for many years, worked for the LA Unified School District. With her husband, Emile, she raised a family. And she was a founder and pillar of St. Michael's Church. Indeed, the last time we saw her in Church, she gave an impassioned address to the congregation about the need for a new church building for St. Michael's - a project that is well underway.

Carrie will be missed by many, many people in many, many different walks of life, and not least by us at St. Barbara Monastery.



OUR NEW FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE GETS TO WORK

Our new fund raising committee met for the first time on April 9th at the monastery. After reviewing the current financial status of the monastery and the projected routine and special expenses over the next several years, the committee decided to direct its initial effort toward expanding the "Friends of St. Barbara Monastery" at least to the point of covering the monthly mortgage payment of approximately \$5000.00. For this purpose, Mother Victoria was asked to write a letter outlining the growth of the monastery and its current and projected needs that could be distributed widely throughout local parishes and to the current members of "The Friends" in the weeks ahead. Meanwhile, various plans for future fund raising in addition to this were listed and are being explored by the committee members, who plan to meet again in two months.

From Left to Right – Mother Victoria, Mother Melania, Mary Lapadat, Fr. Michael Laffoon, Fr. Nicholas Speier, Fr. Dn. Howard Shannon, and Fr. Josiah Trenham.

Liviu Constantinescu also attended, but left before the picture was taken

