

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 921-1563 – [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org)

# *The August Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery*

*Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011*



*4:00 pm Presentation*

*Meditation on the Prayers Before Holy Communion*

*Speaker – Rev. Paul Olson of St. Nicholas Cathedral  
in Los Angeles*

*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 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.

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,

These days we have been reading at table a wonderful little book entitled *Kindling the Divine Spark*. It is a collection of short teachings from St. Theophan the Recluse (St. Xenia Press, 1994), many of which were sermons delivered at various women's monasteries in Russia. The title is captivating. Does it not express what we all long for—that the divine spark that every one of us has within would burst into flame?

One of these sermons, entitled *Erecting the Inner Cross*, is something we will want to read repeatedly as we prepare for the approaching great feast of the new liturgical year, The Elevation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Every one of us, says St. Theophan, has his or her own cross. And just as the Cross of the Lord was thrown away and covered with rubbish following the Crucifixion, we can throw our cross away and cover it by our negligence. But, just as St. Helen searched for the true Cross, discovered it, and raised it up, we can and, indeed, must search the Golgotha of our heart to find our cross there and discover there what our cross is in order to raise it up. Although the cross of each one of us will be somewhat different, its basic form is the same. Its base, which breaks into the ground of our heart, is denial of self, says St. Theophan. And he goes on to explain in one unforgettable sentence what this means: "Denial of oneself means treating oneself the way others treat those whom they reject." (This might be enough spiritual teaching to last the rest of our lives!) The rest of the upright post of the cross, he goes on to say, represents patience upheld by hope, explaining that this means "a firmness to stand in your intention so that no obstacles, discontentment or labors can make you waver." The horizontal beam, he says, represents obedience. The monastic obedience promised at profession is, of course, something of a different order and magnitude than the obedience proper to all Christians. The latter type of obedience, which is fundamental to all Christian life, is the obedience animated by love that is ready to sacrifice, ready to respond willingly and joyfully at any time.

To some all this may seem onerous, but St. Theophan immediately goes on to tell us this is not so and to speak of the joy of the cross: "through the Cross joy has come into the world" we sing at every Sunday Matins. If we do not have this joy yet, then it is time that we begin to uncover our inner cross, clean it up by repentance, and raise it up in our heart.

St. Theophan had the gift of speaking and writing very simply and getting straight to the core of things. Thanks be to God, a century and a half later, his words do the same for us, helping us to "kindle the divine spark" in ourselves.

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery



*A Closed Casket*

## **A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE AT ST. BARBARA MONASTERY**

A few years back, the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco started a small business making wooden coffins adorned with Orthodox crosses on the covers. Their promising venture would have met with success had they been located closer to urban areas. As things turned out, shipping from their remote location outside Mantion, CA, was problematical, not to mention costly. So the monks decided not to continue with this particular means of producing income for their monastery.

Now, the Church of St. Timothy in Lompoc wants to restart the coffin-making project. Father John Sommer, pastor of the Church (who happens to love building things) and a close friend of St. Barbara Monastery, has come to us with a business proposal that we are very interested in pursuing: he and a couple of men from St. Timothy's would construct the caskets and then send them down to St. Barbara Monastery (a two-hour road trip) to finish the insides with fabric and add the crosses to the covers. Our monastery would then be the "distribution center." Since we are located only a little over an hour away from the greater Los Angeles area, getting the coffins to any of the numerous Orthodox Churches in the region should not be difficult. (We might deliver them, or buyers might want to save the shipping costs by picking them up at the monastery.)



*Sister Paraskeva cutting fabric  
for the lining of the casket*



*An Open Casket*

Beginning in September, we will have several of these simple, beautifully crafted, redwood caskets on hand for \$1,400.00 each. For further information, please visit our website at [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org). If you have questions, please email us at [sbmonasterystore@gmail.com](mailto:sbmonasterystore@gmail.com) or telephone us at 805-921-1563.





*Archpriest Paul Waisanen and Matushka Judith  
with nuns and parishioners*

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

Although things are slowly moving forward, we currently have no real news to share of our adventures with Ventura County and our efforts to build the new chapel and no real news of our lavender project. We thought, however, that our Friends might like to read something more about the day-to-day life of St. Barbara Monastery.

Archpriest Paul Waisanen, pastor of St. Herman Church in Oxnard—the parish church that is geographically closest to us—is a key figure in this routine life of our monastery. We attend most all feast day Divine Liturgies at St. Herman Church and occasional Sunday ones, too. In the absence of any assigned priest to the monastery, Fr. Paul is *de facto* our chaplain. With few exceptions, every Thursday finds him here, often accompanied by his wife, Matushka Judith. Fr. Paul comes to provide Holy Confession for the sisters, to speak with us about many matters of interest, and sometimes to bring along one or another of his parishioners or catechumens to visit the monastery (and perhaps pick up some spiritually nourishing literature from the monastery bookstore).

Fr. Paul is a true philosopher at heart—a lover of Christian wisdom. He usually comes through the door of the monastery already turning something of this nature over in his mind and ready to share it with us over a cup of coffee. He often arranges his visits so that he is with us for the Sixth Hour and Memorial Service, and then remains so that we have the mid-day meal all together—always an occasion for beneficial and instructive conversation (something, by the way, that St. Theophan the Recluse admonishes his readers to practice always). We have come to look forward to “Thursdays with Fr. Paul” very much.

Father Paul is on hand for virtually all the Friends gatherings as well. He often serves the Vespers on these occasions and is the speaker for at least one, if not two, of these gatherings every year. His presentations never grow old because he always has something important to impart to us. Just about any of you who have visited the monastery to attend even one of these monthly events have probably met him, but you may not have realized until now how significant he is in the ongoing life of the monastery.