

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

The February Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Thine Own of Thine Own We Offer unto Thee

*Speaker: V. Rev. Lawrence Russell - Pastor of Holy
Annunciation Orthodox Church in Santa Maria*

4:00 pm Presentation

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,

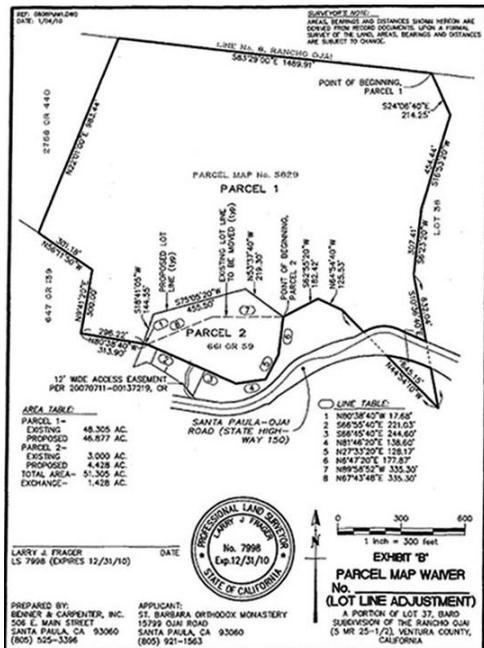
This newsletter's cover photo brings to mind a familiar Psalm verse: *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord our God round about His people from this time forth and forevermore!* All of us know this verse well from the Kathisma of the Presanctified Liturgy. The photo, of course, is of *our* mountain, that is, Santa Paula Mountain, the one we see constantly to the East from the tall windows of our house. Some people might feel hemmed in by the mountains, but we feel embraced by them. They are to us a symbol of God's presence, protection, and love, just as the mountains surrounding Jerusalem were for David.

Our mountain has its *mighty* aspect, too. California is, after all, a geologically active area. Sometimes it seems as if God might still be finishing up a little of His work of Creation in these parts. Our mountain doesn't "smoke," but it does ever so slightly rumble and shake, reminding us frequently that the San Andreas Fault is just a few miles away. Here and there we can see the bare earth of landslides and fallen rock loosened by the torrents of water washing down the mountainsides from the winter rains. And the hot springs, for which this spot was famous just a hundred years ago, have since disappeared, slipping far down into the earth.

St. Barbara, our patron saint, came to believe in the one, true God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, by contemplating the natural world from her tower window. As for us, our faith is surely strengthened as we contemplate daily the natural world that surrounds us. When we took the photo on our cover, the words of David from another Psalm were our own words: *The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth forth His handiwork.*

As most of you well know, we hope to build a chapel here soon, God willing. It has a simple design—an octagon crowned by a single cupola, meant to fit *quietly* into this setting. The chapel will symbolize and portray—as do all Orthodox Churches—the personal and the cosmic dimensions of God's work of salvation. We imagine it nestled in the darkness of the mountains shown on our cover at the time of Vespers, as the sky is illuminated by the light of the refracted sun. May all who come to worship God in it likewise reflect the Light of the One Who set in the earth so that we might rise eternally with Him.

Abbess Victoria
and the Community
of St. Barbara Monastery



ONE LAST APPEAL FOR HELP WITH THE SENECA LAND PURCHASE

Two years ago we sent out an appeal to all of our Friends for donations to help us purchase two acres of land adjacent to our own property from the Seneca Oil Co. Without these two acres, we explained, we would be unable to build the residence wing we so desperately need to accommodate additional sisters. Your response was wonderful. To date we have received \$32,125.00 earmarked for the Seneca land, which is \$7,135.00 over the more than fair purchase price of \$25,000.00 Seneca Oil is asking.

What we never imagined was that the associated costs from the County, the title company, and the engineering company drawing the new parcel map would come to over \$70,000.00 beyond the price of the land! Most of this sum has been paid little by little as certain phases of the work were completed (surveys, biological study, placement of new corner markers, etc.), but about \$10,000.00 in associated costs remain to be paid before escrow closes.

So, we are making this one last appeal for contributions.

These are difficult economic times. But, truly, no contribution is too small. If everyone who reads this newsletter were to contribute just \$10.00, we would have enough to cover all the final bills connected with purchase of this land.

The Lot Line Adjustment is filed at the county

LENTEN WORK PARTY

The rains have been heavy this winter, and everything is growing--and overgrowing!--at St. Barbara Monastery. It's time for a work party!

We have weeds to whack and trees to trim, not to mention dead wood piled up on the creek banks in various places where the rushing water carried and left it. Our Friend Joseph Mellein has spent days cutting up the large oak that fell near the parking area last October, and so there is a lot of firewood to stack. In the chapel we have brass to polish and windows to wash. These are just some of the tasks on our long list!



Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them. ~ A.A. Milne (Eeyore)



What do you mean we cut the wrong tree?



Do they have a blessing to do that?

If you can spare time on Saturday, March 20th, come and spend the day at the monastery—or just a couple of hours, if that's all you have. The work party will begin around 9:00 AM and end at 5:30 PM, when Vespers is scheduled to begin.



Novice Marie and Sister Xenia in the kitchen of the "International House of Blini" of Calistoga

Vespers on the Sunday before Lent, they learned the fine art of making Russian pancakes (blini), the delicacy traditionally served on this day. A wonderful Russian cook, Irene Spiegel, volunteered to supervise preparation of the special meal and make sure all the traditional "fixings" were provided.

LIFE AT HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY

The sisters at Holy Assumption Monastery have been adjusting to their new environment by learning lots of new things.

In preparation for the luncheon served to all guests following the Divine Liturgy and Forgiveness



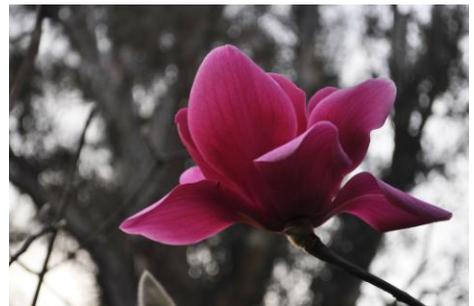
Irene Spiegel: "Eggs, Milk, Butter! Of course it's good!"

Sister Margarete has been making friends with the monastery's African Grey Parrot, Petie and testing his voice.



Choir practice with Sister Margarete and Petie "One more time... In the fourth tone... Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

The many exotic plants that adorn the grounds of the monastery will require special knowledge and skill for their nurture. Not to worry! Sister Mary is on hand!



An Orchid blossoming at Holy Assumption Monastery



LAZARUS SATURDAY AT ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

In keeping with what has become an annual tradition, His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN, will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara Monastery on March 27th, Lazarus Saturday. The Divine Liturgy is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM, preceded by the Hours at 9:40 AM. Afterwards, we will have a pot luck luncheon and opportunity to visit with His Grace. Everyone is welcome!

