

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



*February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012*  
*Friends of St. Barbara Monastery*

*There will be no Friends' Gathering this month*

**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,

Lent is upon us! On the day following this month's Friends gathering, we will begin the Holy Forty Days of preparation for our celebration of the 3-day Pascha—the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Passion and Resurrection of the Lord constitute the core of our Christian Faith. They are the center of the mystery which we live out in our Christian lives “from death to life and from earth to heaven”—from corruption to incorruptibility. We fast and pray, strive mightily to keep the commandments and purify our hearts for no other reason than to enter with our whole being deeply and worthily into this mystery, because there is no other way, no other path to “get to God” (to use St. Ignatius' phrase). Our baptism is a baptism into Christ's death and Resurrection, and these days not only strengthen us for the fulfillment of our baptism, they plunge us—rather abruptly—into the very fray where this fulfillment takes place and from which there is no victorious way out except through the Cross! When we stop shrinking from the Cross and resisting it, when we embrace it, we find ourselves living on another plane—the plane of the Resurrection where we are carried by grace.

The Gospel accounts of the Passion and Resurrection do not whitewash what it was like for the close followers of Jesus who lived through those momentous days of His Passion and Resurrection. We are told that the apostles were progressively fearful, confused, and then simply incredulous. They did not expect Jesus to be put to death nor did they expect Him to rise from the dead! Devastated by the Crucifixion, which utterly crushed their hope that Jesus was the Messiah, they abandoned Him and went into hiding for fear of persecution by the Jews. Indeed, when early on the morning of the third day, the women who visited the sepulchre of Jesus ran back to Jerusalem to tell them that the tomb was empty and that an angel had greeted them there and announced His Resurrection, the little group huddled back in the city couldn't believe it—and continued to disbelieve it. In confusion and incredulity, Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself. In the following days, some of them simply went home to take up their old lives as fishermen. What a (seemingly) inauspicious beginning to the Christian Faith!

What then precipitated the change that not many weeks later made of these same men and women powerful preachers of the Cross and Resurrection? It was the promptings of Jesus Himself, the Resurrected Christ, as He visited them in the days before His Ascension and then the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost reminding them of the prophecies: “thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day” (*Luke 24:46*). In a few short years (about ten) following these events, the Christian Faith was spreading throughout the known world of that day. From Spain to Persia, the new Christians were joyfully sharing their wealth with the poor, living in peace forgiving one another's offenses, and choosing martyrdom rather than to renounce the Lord—none of this perfectly, of course, but with intent. The unusual Christian way of life in the midst of the world that still regards it as foolishness twenty centuries later has never ceased. “But to us who are saved it is the power of God.” (*1 Cor 1:18*)

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***NEW ENSEMBLE TO PERFORM WORLD PREMIERE***

On Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at St. Bede's Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, the Westmont College Collegium Musicum, a new faculty-student musical ensemble, will perform a new work by Subdeacon Stephen Butler, Westmont professor of music. The performance is open to the public and free with a free-will offering taken during the program.

Subdeacon Stephen's new composition, "Hymns of Divine Love," is a cantata based on poetry from St. Symeon the New Theologian, a 10th century Orthodox monk and poet.

The ensemble consists of a string quartet, oboe, flute, keyboard (organ, piano and harpsichord), soprano soloist and baritone soloist. Besides the cantata, the repertoire includes works by German composers Franz Tunder, Dietrich Buxtehude, Georg Philipp Telemann and J.S. Bach.

A colleague writes of Stephen Butler's work as follows: "Butler's compositions for voice, which are in English, are accessible to modern audiences. His compositional voice is a fresh blend of expanded tonal and minimalist approaches that retain an alluring melodic character while clearly evoking the spiritual qualities of the text."

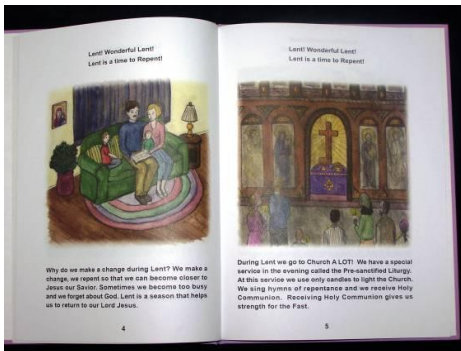
We congratulate Stephen and thank him for this and his other musical contributions to the glory of God through the years.



*Abbot Matthew and Pilgrims enjoying tea.*

## ***PILGRIMS FROM RUSSIA***

On the afternoon of Saturday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, just as some of the nuns were about to leave the monastery property, they saw an elderly priest-monk leading a group of pilgrims across the bridge on their way up to the monastery! It turned out this was Abbot Matthew of the Transfiguration Monastery in the Tomsk region of Siberia together with a group of Russians—men and women from various locations in Russia—who had come to visit the holy places of America. Having planned and organized the pilgrimage themselves, no one had previously contacted the monastery to announce their proposed visit. Mother Victoria welcomed them, provided some background information concerning St. Barbara Monastery and, of course, pointed out to them the various relics in the monastery chapel. After the traditional "cup of tea" provided by the nuns at a moment's notice, Father Matthew and his group of pilgrims went on their way, planning to fly from Los Angeles to New York in order to visit various holy places on the East Coast. A message from Mother Melania of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga later that evening brought the news that this same group of pilgrims had visited there the previous evening.



## **“LENT! WONDERFUL LENT!”**

Deborah Sancer, a long time friend of St. Barbara Monastery, has written a special children’s book—just in time for Lent. *Lent, Wonderful Lent!*, written in response to questions asked by her own children as they were growing up, is intended for families with young children to read together throughout the season of Lent. It discusses each event commemorated in Lent so that parents can prepare their children for the Church services of each week. Sale of the book, available through the St. Barbara Monastery Bookstore, benefits both the monastery and the building fund of St. Maximus Orthodox Church in Denton, TX, Deborah’s home parish.

### **THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY WEEKEND IN LOS ANGELES**

#### ***Pan-Orthodox Youth Rally***

Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

St. Steven’s Cathedral  
1621 W. Garvey Ave.  
Alhambra, CA 91803

Vespers with a Homily\*, Refreshments & Conversation to follow

More information at [www.ststevens.org](http://www.ststevens.org)

*\*Come and listen to His Grace Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey (OCA) speak!*

#### ***Hierarchical Liturgy Sunday of Orthodoxy***

Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM

St. Sophia Cathedral  
1324 South Normandie Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA

with His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, His Eminence Archbishop Joseph,  
His Grace Bishop Maxim & His Grace Bishop Benjamin

More information at [www.stsophia.org](http://www.stsophia.org)