

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

The July Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, July 31st, 2011

4:00 pm Presentation

*The Proclamation of the Gospel:
Orthodox Biblical Evangelism*

*Speaker – Rev. Yousuf Rassam
Pastor of St. Innocent Church in Tarzana*

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,

While our nation and, indeed, the whole world finds itself reeling as our debt-financed economy unravels, we Christians--while caught up in this disaster like everybody else--are acutely aware of the infinitely more serious debt hanging over the heads of the human race. Praying with the words given to us by the Lord Jesus Himself, we cry any number of times each day: "Forgive us our debts!"

The version of the Lord's Prayer we use most often uses the word "trespasses" rather than "debts." Our trespasses, that is, our sins comprise what is the truly serious debt that we carry—and it is huge. It is weightier than the national debt, weightier than the global debt.

The politicians come up with clever versions of our standard options for dealing with fiscal debt: Camouflaging the debt by labeling it an asset is one of the really inventive ones. Raising the debt ceiling is another. More taxes is yet another. (Well, this one is hardly clever.) Cutting down on spending--not a popular one--only reduces the rate at which the debt is growing. Notice that paying off the debt is not on the list. There is no point in even thinking about this option. The debt is too enormous. There is no way it can be done.

While the world focuses on the struggle to save the failing economy, the Church is not neglecting what is our service as Christians to this very world: dealing with the more weighty debt of mankind. The astonishing news that the Church preaches is that God in His infinite mercy and love for us has provided us a way out of debt. Our part is called 'repentance.' And God's part is called 'redemption.' Together they form the dynamic of forgiveness by which our debt is obliterated.

This dynamic could wipe out our fiscal debt, too, although we know full well it will never be so much as tried by the powers-that-be. This is because, while the world may mock the Gospel teaching, the truth is that the two debts are intimately connected. After all, what is our national debt financing? Large segments of it openly finance our sins and passions: greed, pride, vainglory, anger. In a society keeping the Gospel teaching to forgive the sins of others just as the Lord forgives us, would we be facing either the current fiscal or spiritual debt crisis? (There is not enough space here to spell the idea out, but it's worth some reflection.)

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

THE MONASTERY LAVENDER PROJECT IS LAUNCHED!



On July 8th, in the course of less than a single day, the large meadow behind our house was transformed into a field for lavender. Using his enormous state-of-the-art tractor, John Hall, a local rancher, plowed and disked the field as his gift to the monastery.



Three days later, a large group of teens from St. Andrew Church in Riverside and St. Athanasius Church in Goleta, along with their chaperones, arrived as “spiritual laborers” at the monastery (true *podvizhniki*—to use that nearly untranslatable Russian word) and worked together to dig and hoe the newly turned earth into long furrows for planting. This

was combined with attendance at the monastery’s midday chapel service as well as a teaching presented by Father Nicholas Speier of St. Athanasius Church.



Five days later still, some of their elders from St. Athanasius Church formed another work party of such “spiritual laborers” and turned up to finish the job.



As a final touch, monk Lawrence is presently at work, one week later, troubleshooting our irrigation system and plowing the small areas that the huge tractor couldn’t reach.





This is a peregrine falcon...

then placed in large cages on a table in an open air tent and introduced to the interested crowd one by one. While telling the story of each bird and how it came to be placed in rehabilitation as it perched on the protected arm of an attendant, information



Father Nicholas gives the children a lesson in the chapel.

OJAI RAPTOR CENTER PRESENTS PROGRAM AT THE MONASTERY

On June 23rd, students and teachers from the St. Athanasius Church Summer School in Goleta were joined by children and their parents from St. Herman Church in Oxnard for a presentation at the monastery by the Ojai Raptor Center. A number of raptors—including several owls and a peregrine falcon currently in rehabilitation at the Ojai facility—were brought by their attendants in the

Center's large van and

then placed in large cages on a table in an open air tent and introduced to the interested crowd one by one. While telling the story of each bird and how it came to be placed in rehabilitation as it perched on the protected arm of an attendant, information

was presented about the life and habitat of each species as well as the rehabilitation process. There were

so many questions from the enthusiastic children and adults alike that the attendants had difficulty concluding their presentation! This was followed by a hands-on opportunity to examine the wings and talons of many different raptors. Everyone agreed that the monastery absolutely has to invite the Ojai Raptor Center to present their program again next year.



...and here is an endangered spotted owl

We don't know how to begin to thank you, our generous friends and benefactors, who responded to our S.O.S. for financial help in the June newsletter. The monastery found itself in serious straits with unusually high expenses — some expected (like our property insurance bill)—and some not (like our bill for a new well pump). Thanks to you, we have managed to meet most all our expenses this summer, including the up front costs associated with our lavender project. Our gratitude knows no bounds. May God richly bless each and every one of you!