

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

*There Will Be No Friends Gathering At The Monastery On
March 28th, 2010*

LAZARUS SATURDAY - MARCH 27th

DIVINE LITURGY at 10:00 am

*preceded by the
3rd and 6th HOURS at 9:40 am*

*His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN presiding
Potluck luncheon to follow*

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,

Instead of our usual “letter” in this spot, we are sharing with you the following reminiscence of a child's Pascha:

My earliest memories of Pascha are among my most special ones. The preparations stretched out over weeks of anticipation, when everyone in the family got new clothes and shoes and went to Holy Confession. The whole house was cleaned top to bottom. Mother made a special cheese from scratch, baked big round loaves of bread with braided, golden-cruled crosses on top, and brought home a turkey that stayed, gobbling away, in our basement until it was time to prepare it on Holy Saturday for the roasting pan. We children dyed eggs, adorning them with swirls and stars drawn with hot wax using a straight pin stuck in the eraser of a pencil. I was put to bed at the usual time, but roused in the middle of the night to walk with my family in the chilly night air to the nearby church. My father carried our Easter basket, filled with all the wonderful things my mother had made and covered with a snowy white embroidered cloth. He placed it together with the baskets of many others on a long table set up on the lawn in front of the church in readiness for the blessing that would be read over them all by the priest when the services had ended.

Entering the church, we found the interior bathed in darkness, the atmosphere redolent with flowers and somehow “electric” as ghostly persons filed in quietly and approached the tomb of Christ in the center. Kneeling and bowing low to the ground like them, we whispered our fervent prayers to God lying lifeless and silent before us. Then my father and my siblings went up to the choir, while I remained with my mother, my hand securely locked in hers, lest I become separated from her in the darkness.

In that darkness a procession formed, led by the older boys who were altar servers, carrying the Holy Cross and tall lighted candles. Four men solemnly lifted the holy shroud depicting Christ in the tomb, holding it high above the priest's head. Softly, slowly, the priest and then the choir began the joyful chanting of the Resurrection troparion, leading us all back out into the night to circle the church three times to the pealing of bells. Now the singing was louder and more robust, and I was singing too. Where were we exactly? I was with my mother, holding on to her gloved hand as we processed around the church. But we were somehow also in Jerusalem, approaching the empty tomb with the disciples. And we were in heaven in the midst of angels singing and rustling their wings. All the while, I was very aware of my new shoes, my new hat and clothes, and the flower pinned on my shoulder.

Entering the Church, this time to the pealing of bells, we found it radiant and bright with white flowers and white cloths. The tomb of Christ was gone, and in its place stood an analogion with the icon of the Resurrection. The choir was singing loudly and triumphantly. And the priest, moving so quickly that he seemed to be flying in and out of the altar, censer in hand, was exclaiming over and over again, ***Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!*** we shouted back.

Despite the excitement, the singing, and the loud exclamations, my eyes grew heavy and before long I was stretched out on a bench in deep sleep, my new dress and the flower on my shoulder crumpled up. But I was in heaven, and I liked sleeping there.

Abbess Victoria
and the Community
of St. Barbara Monastery

REPORT ON THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR BUILDING OF OUR CHAPEL

Please keep the monastery in your prayers. The Feast of Annunciation, March 25th, is the day the County of Ventura has designated for a public hearing concerning our building plans for the chapel. We will all be there at the County Government Center at 10:30 AM along with a few friends to find out if the neighbors or the County have any objections. (Fortunately, the hearing will not constitute our total observance of Annunciation! We will still be able to celebrate the Vigil for the Feast on the evening beforehand and the Vespers Liturgy on the Feast itself.) We will let you know the outcome of this critical hearing in our next newsletter.



Alexander Sammons takes the Billy Goat mower by the horns

A GREAT TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

About twenty people from five different parishes showed up for the monastery work party on March 20th. The heaviest work was mowing the meadow (by the Sammons from St. Andrew Church, Riverside) and running branches and other wood collected on the



Fr. Michael Laffoon and crew feed the beast

monastery property through a chipper (by the group from St. Mark Church, Irvine and St. Luke Church, Anaheim). But more was accomplished. Subdeacon Stephen Butler and his two boys, John and Nicholas (St. Athanasius Church, Goleta) cleaned out the gutters and swept the garage roof clean of accumulated leaves

and acorns—after a morning of polishing brass and preparing bay leaves picked on the grounds for use on Holy Saturday. Boxes that had been pinned under a fallen oak were duly extricated. Oil pipes discarded years ago, old fencing, old hoses, and various other useless, heavy items were collected and sent off to the local dump. Meanwhile, David Jones from St. Luke Church was fixing all the little things on the sisters' list of "small repair jobs." Phoebe Lenhart of St. Athanasius Church was labeling envelopes for this newsletter. And Mary



Why are these guys so happy?

Lapadat of St. Luke Church and her daughter Diane Cerritos (St. Innocent Church, Tarzana) were helping prepare the food for the work party. Time was even carved out for the important task of testing the tire swing. As everyone knows, the monastery has the best tire swing in the county. And, aware that a lot of children are likely to use it over the course of the summer, the men from St. Luke's and St. Mark's did not shirk the responsible job of making sure it is in good working order.



Kent Sammons applies the final touches to his masterpiece



Mother Nina practices her penmanship addressing the many thank you cards

REPORT ON OUR “LAST SENECA APPEAL”

The results of our appeal in the February newsletter for help with our final costs for purchase of the Seneca land have been overwhelming. In less than a month, we have received \$5000.00 from you, our good friends, and donations are still arriving—most of them for \$10.00, the sum we mentioned in our appeal as what would get us over this hurdle if everyone responded. We hardly know how to express our thanks. Were it not for the arrival of these funds at the 11th hour, we would not be able to meet the closing costs and the Seneca land would slip through our fingers. As things stand, however, the two years of hard work, trying to jump through all the hoops set before us by the County of Ventura to create the new parcel map and lot line adjustment, will shortly come to fruition. May God bless each

and every one of you who responded. Your names have been duly entered on our long list of benefactors—which is to say, our prayer list.

HOLY ASSUMPTION MONASTERY UPDATE

“Bless the Lord, all ye monsters of the sea and all things that move in the waters”

Several sisters at Holy Assumption Monastery have been busy with a special project this Lent. They have been working



Sr. Pearl and Mother Anna: Have you flossed?

hard to restore the koi pond on the monastery grounds. A year or two ago, the

magnificent, large, varicolored Japanese carp that inhabited the pond had to be rescued and relocated to a neighbor’s property, when the walls of the pond cracked, allowing water to seep out and threatening the lives of these exquisite creatures. Until then, the koi had been the focal point of the fine monastery gardens, which are rich with exotic, flowering

trees and shrubs and other unusual vegetation. The goal is to bring the koi home by Pascha to resume their role in making the monastery gardens a small, secluded paradise.



The nuns and novices acting coy

HONEY FOR SALE

A few months ago, we started selling local honey under our own St. Barbara Monastery label. Sales have been brisk, with avocado honey being far and away the best seller. You can find descriptions of our complete line of honeys on our website at www.stbarbaramonastery.org. These honeys can be purchased from us in individual jars or by the case for resale as a fund raiser for your own church organizations. If you are interested, please contact Sister Paraskeva here at the monastery.