

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

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

*Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

*4:00 pm Presentation*

*Holy Places and Holy Spaces: A Pilgrimage to the  
Holy Land*

*Speaker – Sheryl Agape Martello – A Close Friend  
of St. Barbara Monastery*

*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.



## *Christ is Risen! Χριστος Βοσκησε! Χριστός Ανέστη!*

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

We hesitate to tell you the latest news about our chapel building project, because it is so discouraging. The Ventura County Building and Safety Department has decreed (on the basis of the newest State building code) that we must add public restrooms to our building plans. To make the news extra bitter, we were told that, had we submitted our architectural plans before the new code went into effect, this would not have been a requirement—never mind that we duly obtained “pre-approval” of our design plans (without restrooms) from the Planning and Development Department last year. There is no way to add any rooms to the architectural design without spoiling its symmetry. So the County has at least been gracious enough to concede that we can build the restrooms elsewhere on the property. But build them we must. This means additional work for the architects and navigating another County approval process, all of which, of course, translates into delays and additional costs. If we were not confident that the Lord intends for St. Barbara Monastery to grow and that this setback is but another test of our faith and resolve, I suppose we would be tempted to lose heart. Indeed, just the unsteady feeling one gets from encountering a world where the rules can change and be interpreted this way and that (something like in Alice’s Wonderland) is disturbing and disheartening. For those of you who have followed the slow growth of St. Barbara Monastery through the years, this kind of news from us probably seems almost routine. Our concern is that those of you who have befriended the monastery more recently not be overly dismayed.

Who would have thought that Providence would choose to test our faith and resolve through the Ventura County Building and Safety Department! But this is precisely how God works. We recently read at table a reminder of this truth that put all the obstacles we have been meeting into perspective--the wonderful Homily 63 of St. Gregory Palamas, *On Bearing Difficulties*. The Saint said: “Sometimes He exposes the valiant to attacks by afflictions which are not essentially evil, as a challenge.” We will not claim to qualify as valiant, but we well recognize that in these matters valor is certainly needed. Moreover, simply as Christians, are we not called upon to meet these challenges with *thanksgiving*? We are, after all, a Eucharistic people. We are building a building. God is building His Church.

So, we hope you will all continue to uphold the monastery with your prayers, good will, and confidence that God is at work here. May we all rejoice together—in God’s good time, whether it is sooner or later—at the consecration of the new monastery chapel!

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery



*The assembly of pilgrims and monastics*

was still located in a house on Milpas St. in Santa Barbara. The weather cooperated and, despite overcast days of drizzle both



*Down at the creek cooling their heels*

## **A VISIT FROM THE LADIES OF ST. TIMOTHY'S**

On Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, the women of St. Timothy Church in Lompoc spent the day at the monastery. Their visit was a reminder of “old times,” when our own Mother Juliana, at that time a member of St. Timothy’s, organized annual trips to the monastery for the ladies of the parish, when the monastery



*Elaine Martin with Mother Juliana – old friends*

for an outing in the mountains: sunny and temperate. Along with services in the chapel and an afternoon talk by Mother Victoria out under the oak tree, everyone was able to enjoy walking the paths down to the creek. Some even ventured into the water to wade and tried out the monastery’s famous tire swing. Of course, there was a wonderful luncheon, this time brought by the ladies, and lots of pleasant conversation. Everyone is looking forward to their next visit.

## **AN UPDATE ON PUNKIN**

Some of you have inquired after Punkin’s health, especially seeing him once again wearing his “lampshade” (or is it a mini satellite dish?). We are happy to report that, under Sister Paraskeva’s solicitous nursing care, his recovery from a wound on one of his legs is progressing nicely, although the process is agonizingly slow.



*Punkin in recovery*

Despite his condition, which would make any cat’s daily work difficult, Punkin is very much “on duty,” patrolling the monastery property and greeting visitors. When Bishop Benjamin came for the ground-breaking of our chapel last month, Punkin was successful in catching a mouse, which he duly presented to the bishop. His Grace, who understands cats, was deeply honored by the welcome.

Father Deacon Gregory Roeber, Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies at Penn State University, gave the Friends an exceptional talk last month. It was of such interest to many who attended, that we are including a summary here. The talk is available on CD from the monastery.

**“BEHOLD! I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!”**

The aim of this talk was to point out some of the limitations and obstacles encountered in interfaith dialogue due to variant meanings of certain key theological words, especially between Eastern and Western Christians. As a principal example, Fr. Deacon Gregory offered the word “recapitulation.” Tracing the use of this word, he explained that the early Church Fathers, beginning with St. Irenaeus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, understood that all human history is *recapitulated* in Christ. They had little interest in the conditions of man before the Fall, but focused on the effect of the Incarnation on fallen man—that is, on God’s action in human history. Two or three centuries later, we see a change in the use of this term in the Church of North Africa with Tertullian and later St. Augustine—a change which came to extend throughout Western Christendom. Adam and Eve were understood to have lived in a frozen state of perfection before the Fall, and the Incarnation together with Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection, (the “Christ-event” of modern theologians), likewise came to be regarded as a one-time event frozen in history, meant to give man the possibility of restoration to that perfection, but trivializing human history and the role of God in it. However, the action of God in history is the very basis for our understanding of the process of salvation, that is, of what we call *theosis*—which is a call to change and growth. The Western view of recapitulation together with the unfortunate notion of inherited guilt (whereas it is mortality which has been inherited rather than Adam’s sin and guilt) radically change the understanding of the dynamic of Christian life.



*Fr. Deacon Gregory Roeber*

Where recapitulation is understood to go hand in hand with *theosis*, man is understood to participate actively in a boundless relationship with God, both before the Fall, when it was interrupted by sin and death, and after the Incarnation when the gates of growth were opened again. (We Orthodox also tend to fall prey to this same type of temptation when we see perfection in some past historical period and come to fear change. In a balanced view, the struggle to be fully human takes on many forms, which change with different historical contexts.)

This acutely affects our understanding of worship. The Roman Catholic theologian Fr. Robert Taft, S.J., explores the significant difference between the worship of pagans and Jews, on the one hand, and Christian worship, on the other. The last is understood not to be a search for God but a celebration of and participation in salvific events and daily engagement with Christ. This differing view is a constant problem in interfaith discussions.

A most lively question and answer session followed in which various topics were briefly explored, among them the condition of man after death, the problematic key term “fallen nature,” the meaning of *theosis*, in what sense death is what we have inherited from Adam and in what sense the fear of death is what drives us.