

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

The October Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, October 30th, 2011

4:00 pm Presentation

A Vision of Orthodox Higher Education
Speaker – Dr. Eve Tibbs, Dean and Professor of
Theology, St. Katherine College, San Diego

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,

We have outsmarted the deer! Pictured on the cover are several members of the herd that lives on the mountainside above us grazing between the rows of newly-planted lavender in what used to be our meadow. Of course, in their view, it was *their* meadow. So, although displaced while we tilled and transformed it into a lavender field, they have found their way back. *But* they are not eating the lavender! They hate it! They are *helping us* with the weeding around the tiny lavender plants! Isn't this great! The former marauders have become our assistants!

What crosses our minds is that this general strategy is one of the ways recommended by the holy fathers to fight the passions, that is, fight the passions with passions. It's what the Lord was talking about in the parable of the unjust steward and when He said we should "Make friends of mammon" (Luke 16). Love of wealth is a passion, a dangerous one. But love of wealth can be transformed into a virtue when it is driven by love for helping the needy, for example. (Of course, there are boundaries. The Lord was not recommending we emulate Robinhood!) Likewise, we might temper gluttony with pride—or pride with gluttony--this last being a favorite "teaching method" of certain fools-for-Christ. The paths of spiritual life are many and can be quite convoluted!

Speaking of fools-for-Christ and convoluted paths of spiritual life, we love this story that St. Paisy Velichkovsky used for instructing his monks:

There was a monk in the monastery who was so lazy that his brothers despaired of his salvation. He didn't attend the services regularly or reliably perform any obediences at all. After numerous tries to bring this monk to his senses, the abbot gave up and left him to his own devices. One day, however, the monks came to their abbot to say that the lazy monk, was on his deathbed. They begged the abbot to speak to him one more time. The abbot went to him and asked him whether he wasn't afraid of death and the coming judgment. To the abbot's utter astonishment, he replied "No." "Are you not a believer?" asked the abbot in distress. "Oh, yes, indeed I am!" the lazy monk replied. "And with all my heart I believe the words of my Lord, who said that He will not judge those who do not themselves judge others (Mt. 7:1). Yes, I'm lazy, and I know it. And because of this, I can't judge anyone." The abbot and the monks of the monastery understood, of course, that their lazy brother was a saint and buried him with great honor.

Well, we have wandered far from deer and lavender. But, before closing, we want to mention that, at least somewhat in the spirit of the monk who judged not and of the unjust steward, we now have to figure out a way to outsmart our gophers. We hear that, like deer, they dislike lavender. But, unlike deer, they still do eat it when there isn't much else around. Of course, the little critters are not without their use to our community—laboring to teach us virtues like patience and perseverance.

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL VISITS



Now this is...

The Sunday School of The Protection of the Holy Virgin (ROCOR) in Los Angeles, along with several of their teachers and parents, spent Saturday, October 22nd, at the monastery.

Their visit began with a nature walk around the monastery property led by Mother Nina. The children gathered plant specimens, which they preserved in little booklets containing printed information about the various plants they were collecting. Mother Nina provided them with additional information about the botanical identity and practical medicinal use of the various plants.



The beginning of Sixth Hour

On completing the nature walk, everyone joined the sisters in the chapel to pray the Sixth Hour. This was followed by a lunch of homemade Sicilian pizza prepared by the monastery's *pizzaiolo*, Monk Lawrence. Then "real work" began. The students, their teachers, and parents all bent their shoulders to the hard work of clearing dead wood from the banks of Sisar Creek.



Time for Lunch

The branches then had to be hauled up to the huge wood pile, which will eventually be turned into wood chips and mulch for the monastery gardens. The afternoon

concluded with an impromptu "hay ride" in a wagon pulled by the monastery's lawn tractor, ending back at the chapel where everyone gathered for a short talk by Mother Victoria about the monastery's relics. This wonderful day was crowned with Vespers. And for those who needed a bite to eat before the drive back to Los Angeles, there was warmed-over pizza followed by even warmer farewells and promises to visit again. The sisters look forward to welcoming this special group of pilgrims to the monastery again.



Clearing by the creek



All aboard!



Father Paul blesses the lavender

LAVENDER FIELD BLESSED

On Saturday, October 1st, following the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, Father Paul Waisanen blessed our recently planted lavender field. *May God grant an abundant crop!* This day marked the sixth anniversary of the relocation of St. Barbara Monastery from Goleta to the Santa Paula property.

DR. STEPHEN LLOYD-MOFFETT'S SEPTEMBER PRESENTATION

At the September Friends gathering, Dr. Stephen Lloyd-Moffett, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, spoke to us on the topic of *The First Days of Christianity*. Pointing out to us that, just because the Gospel narratives are so familiar to us, we miss much of what is being said. He called our attention to 1) the disappointment and despair of the disciples in the face of the crucifixion, demonstrating that their initial reaction was to understand it as the dashing of their hopes in Jesus as the Messiah, and 2) their utter surprise at the news of Jesus' resurrection. It took them time—and the descent of the Holy Spirit—to realize just what had happened and its significance. Indeed, even as Jesus was about to ascend into Heaven, the last question of one of the disciples to Him was whether He would now send his angels to restore the Kingdom of Israel! A talented teacher, Dr. Stephen Lloyd-Moffett gave us a stirring and memorable presentation, whetting our appetite for more explanation of a topic already of first interest to most of us. We are already looking forward to the day when he will be able to take the time to visit the monastery and speak to us again.



Dr. Stephen Lloyd-Moffett leading a vibrant discussion



REMINDER:

There will be no Friends gathering at the end of November, because of the proximity of the Feast of St. Barbara on December 4th.