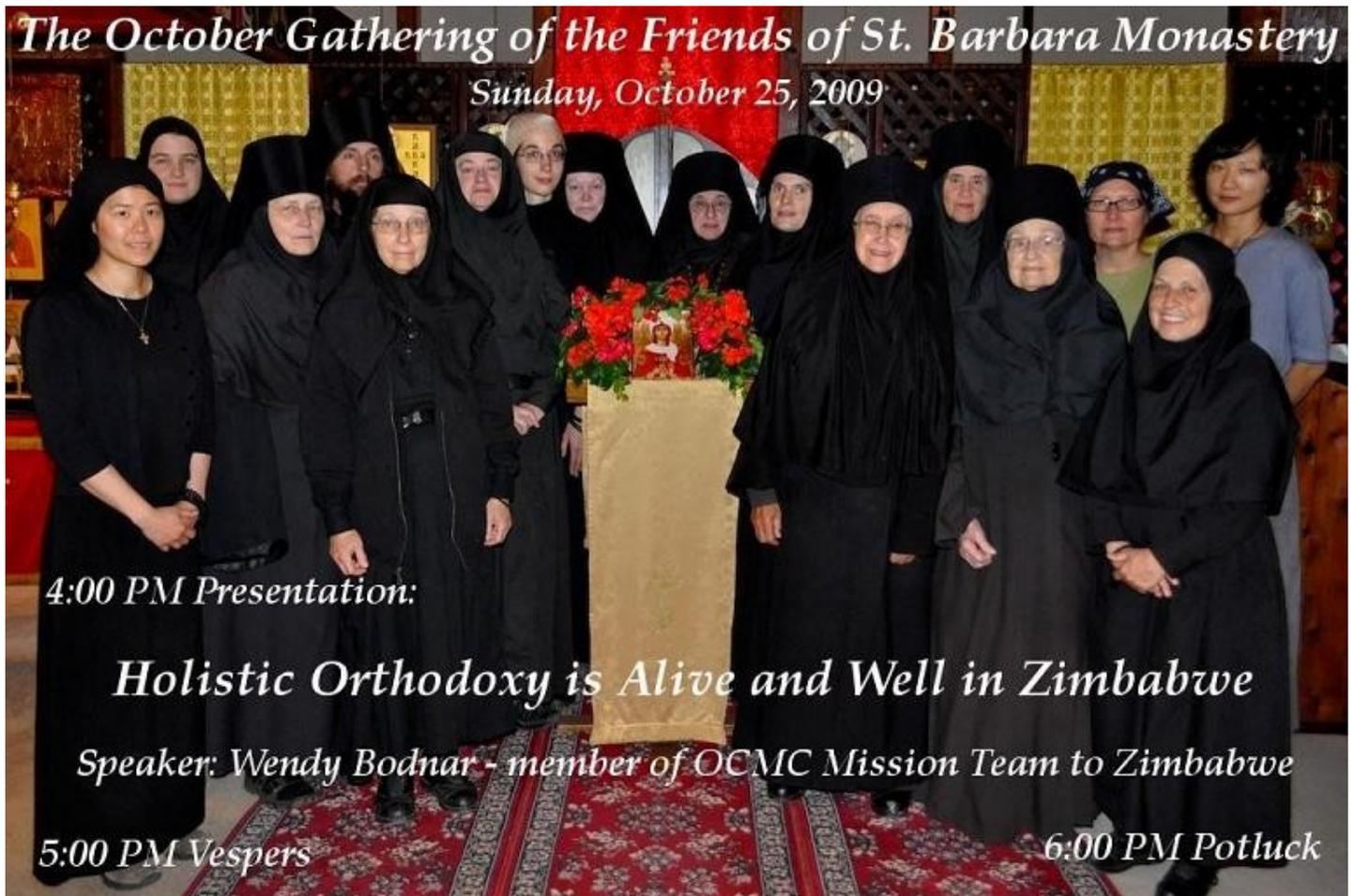


St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060 – (805) 921-1563



The Community of St. Barbara Monastery

Directions to the Monastery

From Highway 101 - Exit Hwy 126 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,

We have astounding news!

On October 8th, during a visit from a Ventura County Planning Dept. agent to check the building site for our new chapel, we were told we have thirty days to remove all the RVs and trailers from our property. The Planning Dept., having thus far chosen to overlook the presence of these vehicles—being used as temporary living and guest quarters by our community until our new residence wing might be completed—is unable to pretend they don't know about them any more. To be fair, they are legitimately concerned with fire safety and protection of the environment.

Of course, we informed His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN at once. And we asked if it were true that Holy Assumption Monastery at Calistoga in the Napa Valley is still virtually empty and available. His response was to tell us that it is and to add: *“This is from God. Sometimes when we cannot do something for ourselves, God does it for us.”* (He had offered us Calistoga before, you see; and we had declined it, because we did not consider it wise to divide our community.) So, there we are. Because our funds are low, we certainly are not in a position to rent or buy housing. But in less than twelve hours, alternative housing was found for our sisters—tailor made housing, we might add. Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga boasts an exquisite church—a jewel, and a main house that has been entirely renovated in preparation for a small, unknown group of nuns who, it was hoped, would come to live there in the future. (Does this sound like a fairy tale?) Thus, the Lord has dramatically reset the course of our ship, so to speak. We suspect that, while *we* thought He was building St. Barbara Monastery, *He* was actually developing two communities. Time will tell.

This is our current plan: Ten of our sisters under the leadership of Mother Melania will move to Holy Assumption Monastery on October 22nd. Mother Victoria and four sisters (Mother Olga, Mother Juliana, Mother Nina, and the novice Paraskeva) plus Father Lawrence (the monk who is our building project manager) will remain at St. Barbara Monastery to “hold the fort” and oversee the forthcoming construction projects—first the new chapel, and then the new residential wing to be built onto the house. At that time, that is—in two or three or four years!—the sisters could in theory return from Calistoga to St. Barbara Monastery. The more likely scenario is that, by then, we will have more than enough sisters to fill monasteries, new wing and all.

(Some of you may be thinking: “What about us? Will there be guest space at either monastery?” We will be seeking a variance here at St. Barbara Monastery to allow us two or three trailers or other temporary housing for guests. Holy Assumption Monastery will have no guest space, but Calistoga is a tourist town with many motels, bed and breakfasts, etc.)

Were we stunned by this unexpected turn of events? Definitely! Is all this change difficult? Definitely! Are we stressed out? Yes!—but we're okay. Are we dismayed? No! We believe like Bishop BENJAMIN that this is from God—and a great spiritual adventure. To Him be glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages! Amen.

We will keep you posted. Please check our website (www.stbarbaramonastery.org) for updates on our adventures. And please do pray for us!

Abness Victoria
and the community
of St. Barbara Monastery

RVS AND TRAILERS

After October 22nd, when the ten sisters moving to Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga will be on their way, we will begin the arduous job of moving all but one of our RVs and trailers (which the County code allows us) off our property. Some are in beautiful shape. Some are useless, and will be crushed. And we have vehicles in all conditions in between. If you are interested in acquiring one of these RVs or trailers, please call the monastery and ask to speak with Father Lawrence. We will not be selling these RVs and trailers, but a donation to the monastery would be appreciated.

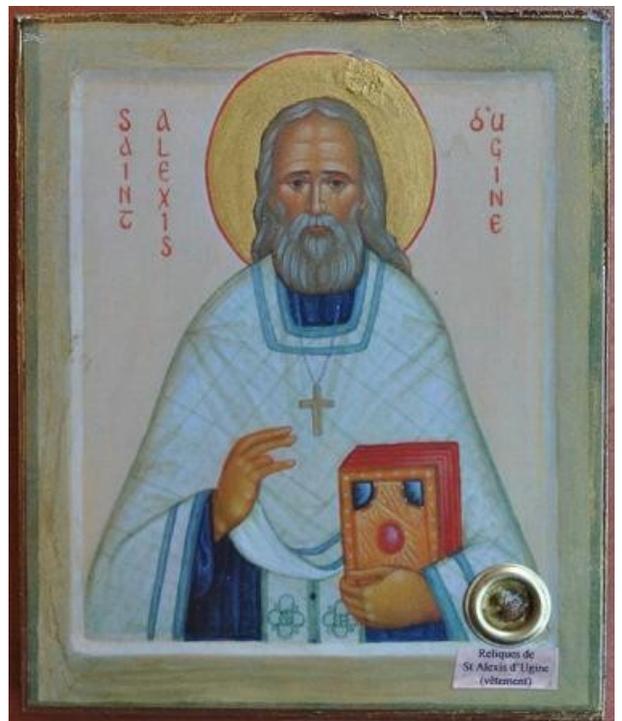


NEW RELICS RECEIVED

In September, Sister Mary had the opportunity to spend two weeks at the Monastery of the Veil (Pokrovsky Obitel') in France, the monastery where Abbess Victoria started her monastic life many years ago. The sisters of the monastery didn't allow her to leave without accepting many gifts to bring back to St. Barbara Monastery.

Right – St. Alexis of Ugine

Below – St. Luke the Surgeon



Notable among these were secondary relics of St. Alexis of Ugine, whose incorrupt body is kept in a large reliquary in the monastery church (and whose life was published in booklet form by the monastery) and St. Luke the Surgeon (whose life was published by St. John of Shanghai Monastery in Manton a few years ago). Both publications are available through the bookstore at St. Barbara Monastery.

CATECHESIS RETREAT

Our October retreat for adults, devoted to *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* and led by Seraphima Butler and her team of church school teachers from St. Athanasius Church in Goleta, was attended by about twenty people. Everyone agreed it was a valuable and maybe even a life-changing experience, which not only deepened their understanding of how to introduce children to the Orthodox Christian Faith, but deepened their own faith as well. It is the extraordinary *quality* of teaching that this program provides which impresses everyone who hears about it. We will have to ask Seraphima to present this retreat at the monastery again next year. Meanwhile, she is available for presentations on *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* to local churches. You may contact her at sbutler@westmont.edu.



Seraphima Butler opens the retreat – Shall we dance?



Retreat participants: Why didn't we get to do this when WE were being catechized!



In the kids' area, Asher Qualls gives Sr. Pearl expert tips on which toys are the best.



WENDY BODNAR AND HER FRIENDS' PRESENTATION



Wendy Bodnar and some of her new friends from Zimbabwe

As announced on the cover of this newsletter, at the October 25th “Friends” gathering, Wendy Bodnar will share her experience of her recent mission trip sponsored by OCMC to Zimbabwe. In a country torn with war, racial tension, militant leadership, AIDS/HIV, and a huge orphan population, Wendy and her team witnessed God’s great love and grace. Each mission plant that His Eminence George of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis in Zimbabwe started had a church, a medical facility, and a school.

This form of Orthodox outreach is surely the future of Zimbabwe’s spiritual healing, physical healing and education. Hence, the title of her talk: *Holistic Orthodoxy is Alive and Well in Zimbabwe*. Come and join us for stories, pictures, and most of all the witness of God’s plan in the world through His Church.