

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

The June Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

The Book of Revelation Revealed in Church Architecture

June 27th, 2010

*Speaker: V. Rev. John Finley – of the Department of Missions
and Evangelism of the Antiochian Archdiocese*

4:00 pm Presentation

6:00 pm Potluck

5:00 pm Vespers

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,

In keeping with monastic custom, we usually listen to a reading at mealtime so that, while our bodies are being nourished, our souls may also be fed. Of late, we have been slowly working our way through a wonderful book published just last year by the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood: *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives, the Life and Sayings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*. We cannot recommend this book to you enough, so much have we profited by the disarmingly simple but profound teaching of this holy man.

In one example of his fresh approach to age-old themes, Elder Thaddeus describes “the world” as an enormous net of thoughts—not just our own thoughts, but the existent thoughts of all humankind—many of them demon-inspired—taken together. He is not talking about the World Wide Web, which pretty closely answers to this definition. Indeed, he is not talking about waves of any length. Probably, because it is intangible and not detectable by means of any device (i.e. it does not belong to the world of physics), the world of thoughts is an aspect of reality we rarely consider. Yet we live immersed in it, contribute to it, and are constantly affected by it. It is, moreover, a layer of reality that the Lord Himself pointed out to be critical to our salvation. He taught, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. . . . These are the things which defile a man.” (Mark 7:21)

Near the beginning of this book, we find the following words of Elder Thaddeus:

Everything both good and evil comes from our thoughts. Our thoughts become reality . . . all of creation, everything that exists on the earth and in the cosmos, is nothing but Divine thought made material in time and space. We humans were created in the image of God. . . . We greatly influence others with our thoughts.

If our thoughts are kind, peaceful, and quiet, turned only toward good, then we also influence ourselves and radiate peace all around us—in our family, in the whole country, everywhere. . . . When there is evil in us, we radiate it among our family members and wherever we go.

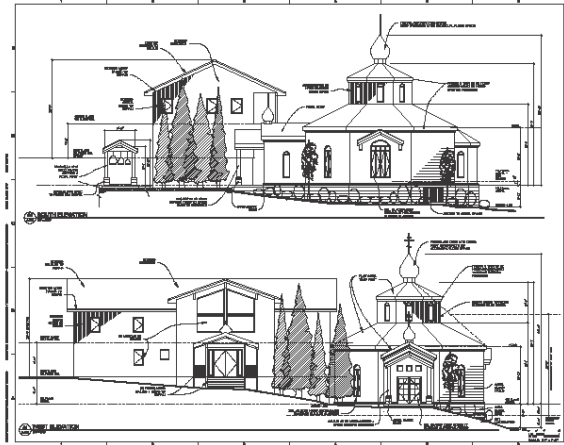
Our holy fathers and mothers knew all this and they lived it. They explored every inch of the world of thoughts and left us the written record of their findings. In volumes such as *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St. John Climacus and *The Philokalia*, they teach us how to contend against the tyranny of thoughts. This treasury of teachings is part of our inalienable inheritance as Orthodox Christians. Elder Thaddeus clearly read and studied these texts and made them his own. Thus, this small, recently published volume about his life and teachings shows us how we, too, in contemporary times can live and find salvation by taking heed to the thoughts of our hearts and the world of thoughts surrounding us in the very same manner as our Christian forbears have all through the centuries.

Mother Victoria
and the Community
of St. Barbara Monastery

Mother Melania
and the Community
of Holy Assumption Monastery

CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT

As many of you know, we are presently focusing on construction of our new chapel, which God-willing should be accomplished within the next year. Having received approval of our design plans from the County of Ventura, our architects are now engaged in preparing the construction drawings for the building. Once these are completed, we will once again be at the mercy of the County Planning and Development Department, which can take a long and unpredictable amount of time to do its work of approving the drawings and issuing the building permits. We have good hope, however, based on our architects' time estimate, the required permits will be in our hands within six months.



The architectural drawings of the existing house with the new chapel

THE ACTIVITY OF OUR FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

Side by side with the architects' labors, our fund raising committee has been meeting to review costs and do all possible to keep our chapel construction within budget. At a recent meeting the committee agreed to take on the supervision of the bidding process for choosing a contractor, thus saving the monastery a considerable expense, even though this task is normally outside the purview of a fund raising committee. These dedicated Friends of the monastery travel as much as two or three hours one way to attend the meetings! It is impossible to come close to thanking them adequately for their remarkable and loving care and concern for the growth and well-being of St. Barbara Monastery.

USED BOOK SALE

The Friends of St. Barbara Monastery have come up with a new fund raising project. Modeled on the used books sales held by public libraries, a used book sale featuring Orthodox publications will be held at future Friends gatherings.

Here's how it will work: When you plan to attend a Friends gathering or otherwise visit the monastery, check your bookshelves for Orthodox titles you no longer expect to read or reference. Bring these used books with you to the monastery. The sisters will set them out on a display table at the monthly Friends gatherings, where everyone will be able to browse through the books and purchase them for a nominal amount. The proceeds will go to the monastery.



If you are someone with expertise in some phase of construction or skill in a building trade and who would like to offer this expertise or skill to the glory of God in helping with the construction of the St. Barbara Monastery chapel, please contact Father Lawrence at the monastery (by phone at 805-921-1563, or by email at sbmonastery@gmail.com). He will be compiling and coordinating a list of people who would like to participate in any and every phase of the project.

GOOD NEIGHBORS, TRUE FRIENDS, AND HALOS



Tales from Duck Pond

A whimsical series of animal tales that teach family values and community, authored by Mother Melania, illustrated by Cayce Grace Kruse.

This fall (if all goes well), in a co-venture with 21-year-old children's publisher The Benefactory, we at Holy Assumption and St. Barbara Monasteries are launching a new series of children's books called Good Neighbors. These stories feature Fearless the Fire Duck, a stalwart and consistently conscientious fellow, who constantly saves his friends at the Duck Pond from one scrape or another, one vanity after another.

Fearless the Fire Duck got his start when the sisters' new home was threatened with fire. Then, again, perhaps he really got his start at St. John of Damascus Academy in Goleta, CA. When the monastery was still located in Goleta, several of the sisters used to help at

the Academy in one capacity or another. The sisters and the teachers often spoke of the need for more books that teach strong morals without preaching at the children. Then, the sisters moved fifty miles southeast to Santa Paula where, some time later, they were evacuated when one of the many Southern California wildfires got much too close. When the evacuation warning was lifted, the sisters stopped *en route* home to buy some children's toys for an upcoming event. Among the new items was a rubber duckie sporting a fire hat. One of the sisters said jokingly, "There's an idea – Fearless the Fire Duck saving his friends from their faults!" In a moment, her joking words led to the vision of a community of animals living near the Duck Pond.



True Stories about Real Animals

Inspiring stories about pets, farm animals and wild animals encourage animal protection and conservation. Award-winning authors and illustrators.

These books as well as The Benefactory's True Friends series (featuring true stories about real animals) will not be available in bookstores (other than the monasteries' own). Instead, they will be sold at storytelling events where children will have an opportunity to hear a story while their parents browse through a display of the various children's books and items published by The Benefactory. Mother Melania's other children's books previously published by Conciliar Press—now collectively rechristened Halo Stories—will also be sold through these storytelling events, but will continue to be available in bookstores.

For information about hosting a storytelling event, or becoming a storyteller, or simply about the titles available and how the program works, just navigate to thebenefactory.com or stbarbaramonastery.org on the web. Those without internet access are welcome to phone either monastery (707-916-6244 in Calistoga or 805-921-1563 in Santa Paula) and we will send you a brochure.



Christian Stories in the Orthodox Tradition

Stories by Mother Melania, illustrated by Bonnie Gillis. From the Old Testament, the Great Feasts and Pascha.

DIVINE LITURGY FOR THE FEAST OF SS. PETER AND PAUL

There will be a Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, June 29th, for the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul at St. Barbara Monastery, at 10 am preceded by the Hours at 9:40 am. Everyone is invited. A luncheon in honor of the Feast will follow.