

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 31st, 2010

*4:00 pm Presentation – The Apostolic Way: Concrete
and Experiential*

*Speaker – V. Rev. Paul Waisanen – Pastor of St. Herman
Orthodox Church in Oxnard*

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 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,

As many of you know, because we presently have no priest at the monastery, we routinely make do with reader's services and travel to neighboring churches for the Divine Liturgy. Every Sunday morning and whenever a Great Feast comes around, we pile into the monastery van and head for one of the parish churches in our area—sometimes OCA, sometimes Antiochian, and sometimes Greek. (These are all that we find within a radius of an hour or hour-and-a-half drive.) While from a monastic perspective this is a less than ideal arrangement, we are thankful—*very* thankful—for the wonderful parish churches surrounding us which have truly become “family” to us—our extended ecclesial family. What is more, the experience of worshiping with a number of diverse Orthodox Church communities provides for us an education unobtainable in any other manner about what is “Orthodoxy in America.” And, yes, on the basis of this experience we are ready to go a step further and witness to a broader reality: we have encountered something which we unhesitatingly call “American Orthodoxy.”

In saying this, we do not have in mind merely language, that is, the services in English translation and pronounced with an American accent. The point is that, while it is true that the churches we attend, even the most ethnic, are using words belonging to foreign languages less and less, this in itself is not enough to qualify what we have met as “American Orthodoxy.” No, we have in mind something deeper. One might call it the unique *spirit* of these church communities—all of them.

To take a significant example, the Orthodox Church is hierarchical. Everyone knows this. But American society is democratic. Without articulating this as a problem to be solved, the communities we visit, comprised of members raised (if not born) in this society, have figured out—organically, one might say—(yes, sometimes by bumping heads) how to blend the two. Have they made the Church into a democracy? By no means. But where democratic components fit, they incorporate them. The result for parish life is something different, different in spirit, than one finds anywhere else. Yes, the Orthodox Faith is identical the world over. The world over, one finds the same dogmas confessed and defended. But the people live differently, and the life of church communities is not the same. What you find in America by way of church community you will never find in a Russian town, nor a Greek town, nor a Lebanese town. Just ask people who have lived in those places.

This is not to say that what we have in American Orthodoxy is all good. One of the current temptations arises from corporate America—the drive to adopt a business model for church life. The idea originates in good intentions: to facilitate accounting or church ministries, for example. What succeeds as efficient in the marketplace, however, fails as the model for life in Christ. In the Church, the widow's mite will always carry the most value, the good deed done in secret will be the most blessed, and the hours devoted to seeking out one lost sheep, will be considered wisely spent. May we all attain to this mind of Christ!

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

KIDS' DAY AT THE MONASTERY



Mother Nina sharing a story with the children and those young at heart

one enjoyed hearing Mother Nina read to them the recently published story about *Mimi the Mynah Bird: It's all Mine!* Then, the nature walk began right near the spot where the storytelling had been: under the oak (with lots of lore about California oak) and proceeded down the path and into the woods. Everyone was given a journal where leaf specimens could be collected (bay laurel, lemon balm, wild horehound, etc.) and information concerning the various plants and trees could be recorded. Following this special walk, there was still plenty of time to enjoy the swings and play in the creek and wide meadow before the afternoon came to a close. Those who wished stayed for Great Vespers with the sisters, while others set out on the (sometimes quite long) drive home.



The children gather around after the nature hike for the second storytelling

October 16th turned out to be a perfect day in the mountains. The rain (the first of the season) was over, the sun came back out, and the first blades of green grass were starting to sprout. Families making the trip to the monastery, whether inland or up the coast, had a beautiful morning drive. Our afternoon of picnicking, storytelling, exploring nature, and outdoor play followed the daily 6th Hour chapel service. The picnic was for everyone, of course. But the storytelling was meant for the children. Nevertheless, parents and,

yes, the sisters too, couldn't stay away. Everyone enjoyed hearing Mother Nina read to them the recently published story about *Mimi the Mynah Bird: It's all Mine!* Then, the nature walk began right near the spot where the storytelling had been: under the oak (with lots of lore about California oak) and proceeded down the path and into the woods. Everyone was given a journal where leaf specimens could be collected (bay laurel, lemon balm, wild horehound, etc.) and information concerning the various plants and trees could be recorded. Following this special walk, there was still plenty of time to enjoy the swings and play in the creek and wide meadow before the afternoon came to a close. Those who wished stayed for Great Vespers with the sisters, while others set out on the (sometimes quite long) drive home.



Mother Nina shows the children a snake skin found on the monastery grounds

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We are already planning another Kids' Day for the spring.

MYRRH-STREAMING COPIES OF THE HAWAII ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Many of you will remember Irene Garcia, formerly a novice at St. Barbara Monastery. About a year ago, following a prayer service before the Myrrh-Streaming icon of the Mother of God from Hawaii held at Holy Resurrection Church in Santa Barbara, Irene was given four small icon prints of the icon by Reader Nectarios Yangson, the keeper of the Hawaii icon. Returning to her home in San Diego, she placed the small plastic bag containing her icon prints in a drawer for safe keeping. Hearing that the Hawaii Myrrh-Streaming icon was to be in Orange County a couple of months ago, she was prompted to look at her prints. To her astonishment, she found them exuding myrrh themselves.



Taking the prints along with her, she traveled to the Serbian Orthodox Church in Irvine for the service before the Hawaii icon. Before she could tell Reader Nectarios what had happened, he asked her if her prints were likewise streaming myrrh. Of a batch of one thousand prints which he himself had made up on a color printer, he was aware of over a hundred which had themselves begun to stream!

If bishops hesitate to say what all this means, we likewise refrain from comment. What is obvious, however, is that Heaven has gotten our attention



Elder Pavlos with Mother Melania during the festal trapeza

Following the services and the subsequent meal, Elder Pavlos answered many questions about life on Mt. Sinai. Then he spoke a little about the monastic life in general. When asked what he thought was the most important lesson he'd learned as a monastic, he answered "Do not judge" and told the story of a monk who after one judgmental exclamation had a vision in which he was denied entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven for that remark. Coming back to himself, he spent seven years repenting. A most sobering thought and well worth remembering.

ELDER PAVLOS OF MT. SINAI VISITS CALISTOGA

On Monday, October 18th, the sisters of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga had the great blessing of a visit from Archimandrite Pavlos of St. Catherine Monastery on Mt. Sinai. The elder, who—along with Sister Ionna, his spiritual child an interpreter—has been on a speaking tour of Orthodox churches throughout California, graciously agreed to serve the Midnight Office, Matins, and Divine Liturgy for them. The services presented quite a challenge because of language barriers, but all was glorious nonetheless. The sisters were pleased that many of the regular "parishioners" of the monastery were able to come for the occasion.



Elder Pavlos with the Sisterhood

There will be no gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery at the end of November because of the proximity of the Feast of St. Barbara on December 4th. If you customarily receive this newsletter, you can expect to receive information concerning the celebration of the Feast of St. Barbara. Otherwise, please check for the schedule of services at www.stbarbaramonastery.org.