

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

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

*Sunday, January 29, 2012*

*The Eve of the Feast of the Three Hierarchs  
Basil the Great, John Chrysostom  
and Gregory the Theologian*

*4:00 pm*

*Speaker: V. Rev. Lawrence Russell  
Pastor of Holy Annunciation Church, Santa Maria*

*Topic: Human Rights: An Orthodox Perspective*

*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,*

*This year of our Lord, 2012, marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Barbara Monastery. Rather than wait for the feast day of St. Barbara in December, we have decided to celebrate our anniversary all year long, beginning now by printing a thumbnail history of the monastery in this first newsletter of the year.*

*Mother Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery*

### ***A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY***

The idea of founding St. Barbara Monastery originated with His Grace, TIKHON, then Bishop of San Francisco and the West of the Orthodox Church in America. Following the funeral of Elder Dimitry (Egoroff) of blessed memory, the founder of the Kazan Skete in Santa Rosa, the Bishop proposed his idea to Mother Victoria. The project hardly seemed viable; there was no property for a monastery and no funding. But one fine day, what should arrive in the mailbox but a large check—\$3,400.00, to be exact—from the IRS! Unable to track down what the check represented despite repeated calls to the IRS, Mother Victoria concluded it must have something to do with the estate of her late mother. Whatever its origin, funding had been providentially provided—enough to rent a small cottage with something left for other expenses. In short order, the cottage was rented, Mother Victoria was joined by a novice from the Kazan Skete, and the daily round of monastic life began.



*The arrival of the relic of the Great Martyr Barbara:  
Fr. Josiah Trenham, Fr. Paul Waisanen  
and acolyte Chad Trenham*

The first years were difficult. With no other source of income, Mother Victoria was obliged to accept full time employment outside the monastery. After a year, the novice left for an established monastery where a church, a priest, and a full liturgical schedule were in place. Nonetheless, the monastery slowly put down deeper roots. A somewhat larger house was rented and the “Friends of St. Barbara Monastery” was founded with the help of Bishop BASIL of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese and Father Josiah Trenham, then attached to St. Athanasius Church in Goleta. Most significant of all, relics of St. Barbara unexpectedly arrived—having been obtained

for the monastery by His Grace, Bishop BASIL. Now it was clear that the Great Martyr herself was

blessing the monastery with her presence and, come what may, meant it to continue. About the same time, a sizeable monetary gift earmarked for the purchase of property was given to the monastery by generous benefactors. At last, in 1998, a property with rooms for more sisters was purchased in Goleta near Santa Barbara and two novices arrived to begin their monastic life. The community grew so that in five years a second house was needed. When that was soon filled, close friends of the monastery strongly advised relocation to a place outside the Santa Barbara area, where real estate would be less expensive and the monastery could hope to build what it needed. Thus, in 2005 the monastery relocated to the mountains outside of Santa Paula, one hour away from Santa Barbara.

The sisters quickly reestablished their usual way of life at the new location. A temporary chapel was arranged in the large common area of the house and, because the main house could accommodate only five persons, RVs and trailers were obtained for the remaining sisters and any newcomers. Moreover, plans for building a proper chapel and residence wing were designed and, somewhat later, monk Lawrence of St. John of Shanghai Monastery in Manton came to the Santa Paula property to oversee the permitting process and construction. The community expanded so that by the middle of 2009 it numbered sixteen.

In October of that year, however, a dramatic change occurred. During a routine visit from County officials, who were dismayed at seeing the large number of trailers and RVs on the property, the monastery was given notice that these vehicles would have to be removed. Fortunately, a call that very day to His Grace Bishop BENJAMIN of San Francisco provided a happy solution to the problem. Two weeks later ten sisters were packed and ready to move to the then empty Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, north of San Francisco. Under the able leadership of one of the ten, Mother Melania, the sisters quickly reestablished the monastic life at Holy Assumption Monastery, and it is now recognized as a separate monastic community.



*The children and Fr. Paul Waisanen are captivated by the life of St. Barbara told by Fr. Nicholas Spoer*



*A new point of growth for the monastery*

The sisters remaining in Santa Paula have continued their efforts to build St. Barbara Monastery. This past year saw the planting of the monastery's fields with lavender. And as of this writing, it is expected that the new chapel will be completed in this calendar year, and efforts to build the new residence wing can commence.

We are acutely conscious that none of this could have developed without the help of our merciful God, Who delights in "creating something out of nothing," as well as that of our many God-pleasing "Friends" and benefactors. Glory be to God!



## **CANDLE DECORATING WORKSHOP**

Many of you have admired the beautiful decorated candles sold in our bookstore as well as at several area churches for use especially at the paschal procession and for weddings and baptisms. Anastasia Song will be holding a workshop at the monastery on Saturday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM to teach the fine craft of creating such decorated beeswax candles. Their bright colors and elaborate designs are signs of the joyous celebration of Christ's Resurrection and His sacrifice for us.

The cost for the workshop is \$50.00 per person, including all materials and lunch. The workshop has limited seating, so please register early by contacting the monastery either by email [sbmonastery@gmail.com](mailto:sbmonastery@gmail.com) or by phone 805-921-1563.



## **THE ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE MONASTERY AT THEOPHANY**



*Blessing the parking lot and cars*

Once again this year, a few days after the Feast of Theophany, Father Paul Waisanen of St. Herman Church in Oxnard was with us for the joyous occasion of blessing the monastery property and buildings with the Holy Water of the Jordan.



*Blessing the chapel site*



## **CHAPEL UPDATE**

*On Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, we--once again--resubmitted our architectural plans for the new chapel to the County of Ventura for approval. We hope and pray that this was the final submittal, the amended plans will be expeditiously approved, and construction can commence soon. We ask all of you for your prayers.*