

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

*The March Gathering of the Friends of  
St. Barbara Monastery  
Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019*

*4:00 pm Presentation:*

*Humility: The Divine Garment*

*Speaker:*

*V. Rev. Lawrence Russell*

*Pastor of Holy Annunciation Church, Santa Maria, CA*

*5:00 pm Vespers*

*6:00 pm Lenten 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,

Reading once again this Lent the Life of St. Seraphim, we came upon his wonderful advice to a pilgrim seeking counsel about how to overcome the passions and find peace of heart. In essence, St. Seraphim told him the following: When you are tempted, deliberately pause, stop, and ask yourself the question: “What is God trying to show me?” And pray to God Himself, asking “What is it You are trying to teach me?” If you make the effort to focus on this question, the temptation (whatever it is) evaporates.

What a shrewd maneuver the Saint recommended! The assailing temptation itself becomes the impetus for turning to God—and for turning to Him in humility!

For the sake of clarity, let us look at an example. Imagine that you overhear something that arouses your anger—perhaps even to the point of violence. Force yourself to pause! Stop. Look within yourself and ask: “Why am I so angry? What is God trying to show me (about myself)?” And pray: “Lord, what are you trying to teach me?” The anger will immediately dissipate—perhaps completely, but at least to a level where you can control it. Later, when you are quite calm, review in your mind what happened. What God is trying to show you may be obvious. Then again it might take prayer and reflection before you fully learn the answer—all in God’s good time.

Taking it as a revealed principle of our Christian Faith that God loves us and is constantly seeking our salvation, we can be confident that whatever happens to us is meant for our good! Thus, the question “What is God trying to show me?” makes good sense *every time*.

Has someone hurt you? Disappointed you? Betrayed you? Your thoughts could easily spiral downward and drag you into anger or depression. Have you suffered some heavy loss—a loved one, your wealth, your reputation? Have you become ill or had an accident and been injured, perhaps even to the point of lasting disability? In such circumstances, even faithful Christians find themselves losing what one might call their ‘spiritual balance,’ mistakenly asking: “How could God do this to me?” or “Why is God punishing me?” But once the question is altered and one asks instead “What is God trying to show me?” and asks God Himself in prayer “What are you trying to teach me?” balance is restored. Chances are, what He is trying to show us is our weakness, our shortcomings, our sins and the strength of the passions that—sometimes without our knowledge—enslave us. It may (or may not) take time, but we come to realize that, through all the experiences that befall us, God is doing all He can to bring us to our senses and set us firmly on the path to salvation—the joyful path of repentance leading us to the peace of heart St. Seraphim loved to talk about.

Giving thanks for St. Seraphim and his teachings, and wishing each and every one a fruitful and blessed remainder of Great and Holy Lent!

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***THE EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT IS COMPLETED!***



On Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Elijah Dickens and his Boy Scout Troop, spent a second day at the monastery putting together the new play set for children. The project included taking away the old, rickety play set (no small job) as well as building the new one. The beautiful new play set, which includes monkey bars and a climbing wall, as well as the standard swings and slide, now stands erect and fully

grounded, ready to be inspected and tested by the children who will undoubtedly be present at the Friends' Gathering on Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

We heartily congratulate and thank Elijah, who came up with the idea and then organized and supervised the operation, and his fellow scouts, who labored on two weekends to complete the project. We also wish to express our appreciation to David Dickens (Elijah's father) and the other parents of the scouts, who provided transportation and support, and to the generous donors, who helped fund this project. We expect that the new play set will be used for years to come by the many children who will visit the monastery.

## ***LAZARUS SATURDAY WITH ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN***

As has been the custom for many years now, Archbishop BENJAMIN will visit St. Barbara Monastery for Lazarus Saturday. On Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 PM, we will have the Vigil for the Feast, and on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM preceded by the Hours at 9:30 AM. Following the Liturgy, everyone is invited to stay for a luncheon with His Eminence.

## ***BAY LEAVES FOR GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY***

Because of all the rain we have had this winter, we have an abundant supply of beautiful bay leaves. If your parish wants to order bay leaves for Holy Saturday from

St. Barbara Monastery, please do so as soon as possible. Phone in your order at 805-921-1563 or email us at [sbmonastery@gmail.com](mailto:sbmonastery@gmail.com).

## ***YOUNG ADULTS GROUPS SPEND A DAY AT THE MONASTERY***

Members of the Young Adults groups from St. Mark Church in Irvine and St. Michael Church in Van Nuys, led by Rev. Deacon Nicholas Mamey (St. Mark's) and Subdeacon Richard Ajalat (St. Michael's) devoted Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, to visiting St. Barbara Monastery. After a short orientation and tour of the monastery grounds, everyone



gathered with the sisters in the chapel for the 6<sup>th</sup> Hour. Then, following lunch, everyone energetically set to work for the afternoon: weeding and cultivating the monastery's main lavender field, cutting tall grass, preparing bay leaves for Holy Saturday, and generally helping out wherever needed—while striving to connect prayer with all the activity. The afternoon ended with a chance to relax, receive a short teaching from Mother Victoria, and spend some time in discussion before the bells rang for Vespers. Afterwards, everyone sat down to a light supper and avid conversation before setting out on the long journey home. Tired, but in good spirits, all agreed this should be more than a once-a-year event.



***The Presanctified Liturgy is scheduled at St. Barbara Monastery  
On Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Weeks in Lent at 4:00 PM  
celebrated by V. Rev. Paul Waisanen of St. Herman Church in Oxnard.  
On Friday of the 6<sup>th</sup> Week (April 19<sup>th</sup>) at 4:00 PM,  
the Vigil for Lazarus Saturday (Vespers, Matins and 1<sup>st</sup> Hour)  
will be celebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN.***