

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060
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CHRIST IS RISEN!

*There will be no April Gathering
of the Friends
of St. Barbara Monastery.
(Our next gathering will be on May 29th.)*

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.



Christ is risen!

Indeed, He is risen!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

We greet you in anticipation of the Feast of Feasts, because as we compose this Newsletter Holy Week is just beginning.

Everyone grasps what the Church relives during the final days of Holy Week: the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, the Crucifixion on Holy Friday, and the mysterious Descent into Hell on Holy Saturday as Jesus lies in the tomb. But what about the first three days? The Gospel tells us that, after his triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus returned to Bethany, but it remains silent about what exactly happened during the next three days.

What the Church does liturgically during these first three days of Holy Week is to read—in the course of the round of services—all four Gospels in their entirety. Moreover, she gives these days themes: the barren fig tree, the Parable of the Talents, and the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

What is the Church doing when she directs our focus to the Gospels and to these Gospel passages in particular, drawing out their deep meaning in the stichera and troparia appointed to be sung with unusual repetition? Is this material simply “filler” for otherwise “empty” days?

In a word, no! During these first three days of Holy Week, the Church is reviewing with us *who she is* and *what the Christian life is*. In this manner, she is encouraging us to review our own understanding and grasp of our Faith as well as our practice of it. Unfortunately, we—at least we of the present generation—are slow learners, even when it comes to liturgical texts composed expressly to spell out Her teaching.

It turns out that our beloved St. Seraphim of Sarov near the end of his life provided a wonderful key to understanding and appreciating what the Church is giving us during the first three days of Holy Week. In his *Conversation With Motovilov*—which he stresses contains the most important teaching he has to impart—it is clear that this master of the spiritual life is drawing out with great exactitude nothing less than the meaning of the particular Gospel texts and the hymnography belonging to the first three days of Holy Week!

(*The Conversation of St. Seraphim With Motovilov* can be found in every one of the several biographies of St. Seraphim which are available as well as in pamphlet form.)

We wish each and every one of you a blessed Holy Week and a glorious Pascha!

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

Until this issue, all of our Newsletter cover photos over the years have been taken on the monastery property. On the cover of this issue we are making an exception and using a photo too lovely not to print but taken on Sulphur Mountain, the mountain on the opposite side of Highway 150 from the monastery.

ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN VISITS FOR LAZARUS SATURDAY



Archbishop BENJAMIN once again this year came to celebrate Lazarus Saturday with us. At left he is pictured touring the new chapel under construction. Likewise, V. Rev. John Finley of the Department of Missions and Evangelism of the Antiochian Orthodox Church was with us once again and concelebrated the Liturgy with His Eminence. Heaven blessed us with a perfect spring day, and following the Liturgy everyone who attended enjoyed a luncheon with His Eminence in the great outdoors.

Following the luncheon, there was time for a preliminary discussion regarding the forthcoming consecration of the new chapel, which is slated for Saturday, December 3rd. With input from His Eminence, the many necessary preparations for this event were

listed and outlined. The actual work of preparation must begin soon. Look for information and opportunities to participate in forthcoming newsletters.

V. REV. JOSEPH BUTTS AND FAMILY COME CAMPING

We were delighted to host V. Rev. Joseph Butts and his family (pictured at right with M. Paraskeva, M. Nina and Mitchell Denny), who visited the monastery for a weekend camping trip. Father Joseph is a Navy chaplain stationed at Camp Pendleton—about a three-hour drive from us. He celebrated Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy in the monastery chapel for the 5th Sunday of Lent.



LADIES' GROUP VISITS FROM ST. SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Ladies from the Philoptochos Chapter at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles spent the day at the monastery on April 13th. They came with a much-appreciated gift for the monastery: an electric hedge trimmer for pruning the many lavender bushes in our two fields. Our field-workers can hardly wait to use this new tool, which will make the work of pruning ten times more efficient.



Following the usual mid-day service of the Sixth Hour followed by a lenten style luncheon, the ladies helped with the on-going processing of bay leaves grown on our property and used liturgically in certain parishes where the custom of scattering them throughout the church on Great and Holy Saturday is observed.

A WORD FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER: CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Much has been accomplished since we last updated you on our chapel construction. The windows are now fully installed as well as half the doors. The most visible additions are on the exterior: rain gutters and 3-foot block "seater" walls, which outline the future patio areas outside the two main entrances on the north and west sides of the building. Currently, we have a crew here installing fire sprinklers and we look forward to

Jim Morrison from Santa Barbara and his crew coming out this month to finish the rough electrical work. At that point, we will be nearly ready to plaster the interior walls. Also, our two gold domes have been manufactured and, as this Newsletter goes to press, are being prepared for shipment.