

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



***THERE WILL BE NO GATHERING
OF THE FRIENDS***

***ON PENTECOST
SUNDAY, MAY 31st, 2015***

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,

On April 22nd, our Armenian brothers and sisters in Christ commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. His Beatitude, TIKHON, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America, made the journey to Armenia, to attend the glorification of the martyrs who were the victims of this atrocity and the Global Forum on Armenian Genocide. While there, he gave a powerful and profound address, which deeply touched not only those in attendance but many who have had the opportunity to read it, including all of us at St. Barbara Monastery. We call your attention, in particular, to the last several paragraphs.

“On behalf of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the clergy and the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, I wish to thank His Holiness, Patriarch Karekin II, for his kind invitation to participate in today’s Global Forum and tomorrow’s Canonization of the Victims of the Armenian Genocide. It is a blessing to be with so many brothers and sisters from diverse Churches and organizations for this important commemoration, which touches the hearts of all who would consider themselves human beings.

I would like to preface my brief words in order to mention that I represent a Church whose geographical territory includes the United States and Canada, one of whose governments has formally acknowledged the Armenian Genocide and the other who has not, to date, done so. This is a further illustration of the geopolitical tensions surrounding this issue that were spoken of in this morning’s Global Forum session. Nevertheless, I bring to you the support and prayers of the many North American faithful who have roots in Armenia and all other regions of the world where persecution and other acts of violence against humanity have been, and continue to be perpetrated.

The Holy Apostle Paul reminds us of one of the foundations of the Christian life when he writes to Timothy: *Everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* (II Timothy 3:12). Our Lord offered the only response a Christian can make in the face of persecution: You have heard that it was said, *‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you* (Matthew 5:43-44).

We are not here today to lament the suffering and pain inflicted by others. Instead, we proclaim the power of a godly life in Christ that enables us to endure great tribulation for His sake. Hence, today we honor the lives of those Armenian martyrs who so glorified God through their sufferings.

And we are not here today merely to speak about justice but to bear witness to the truth that there can be no peace without justice. We are adamant that the suffering of the victims and descendants of the Armenian Genocide should be recognized. At the same time, we share the profound conviction that the Kingdom of heaven is not attained through war, mass murder, genocide or holocaust, but by living

the difficult and sacrificial way of the Cross—by delighting in the resurrection and the love that renders all adversaries powerless.

How can we contribute to this?

Some inspiration might be drawn from Saint Gregor Narekatsi, the tenth century Armenian saint who lived at the Monastery on Lake Van in what is today Southeastern Turkey—where 100 years ago 55,000 Armenians were massacred. In an article written in 1916 by a member of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, we read how fish drawn from that lake could not be eaten because of the multitude of floating corpses. This, certainly, is inhuman. But Saint Gregory reminds us that we are all inhuman. He writes:

We are all inhuman.
How can I call myself human,
When I have earned a place among the inhuman?
How can I be named a thinking being,
When I indulge in brutish ways?
How can I be called a seeing being,
When I have snuffed out my inner light?
How can I be known as cognizant
When I have slammed the door on wisdom?
How can I aspire to incorruptible grace,
When with my own hand I have slain my soul?

As Christians, we can begin reconciliation by recognizing—even in our enemies—our common humanity and inhumanity. By recognizing our own inhumanity, as Saint Gregory does, we may provoke the humanity of our enemies by the grace of God. Truly, this is a hard saying and a heavy cross. No one can pick up someone else's cross. Yet, 100 years after the genocide, it is this cross of reconciliation that the descendants of the new martyrs can indeed pick up and carry, as yet another sign of resurrection and, ultimately, divine love.

Your Holiness, may the risen Savior give you and us the courage to accomplish this.”

THE RAPTORS ARE COMING BACK!

On Tuesday, June 23rd, at 10:30 AM, the Ojai Raptor Center will bring a number of birds to the monastery for what has become an annual presentation for summer school children, home schoolers, their teachers and parents. We expect to see and hear all about owls, hawks, and perhaps even a vulture. A picnic lunch will be served. Everyone is welcome to stay as long as they like to play on the swings and in the creek.



EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Many of you have mentioned how difficult it is to spot the entrance to the monastery from Highway 150. Now we have a new sign, which makes the monastery easy to find—even on a dark night! Our unbounded thanks go to Alex Poulos and the other scouts from his troop at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Camarillo, who provided this beautiful, new entrance sign. Alex is the fourth member of his troop to qualify for his Eagle Scout badge by choosing to complete a helpful project at St. Barbara monastery. We are more grateful than we know how to express!



Alex Poulos and his mother Martha with nuns of St. Barbara Monastery.

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF TSI GE-ROMAN GOBEZIE IN ETHIOPIA

“I don’t need anything for reminds us. Her main concern Ethiopia, has been the welfare men, as well as children ages 3 families. At present, the and 938 children. Meanwhile, impoverished elderly and material and financial help



myself,” our longtime friend Tsigie for the last twelve years in Adwa, of elderly, ill and destitute women and through 6 from the poorest local persons supported number 186 elderly Tsigie has long waiting lists of families with small children seeking

The dry season in 2014 unusually cold, with freezing nighttime temperatures in Adwa. The repercussions were widespread: many unprotected elderly people died in the streets, or in their unheated homes. And this year, Tsigie’s “Home for the Indigent Aged” has almost nothing to harvest from its orchards and gardens. However, in the face of such adversity Tsigie’s dedication to her people – young and old – and her deep desire to help as many as possible, have only increased.

Many kind donors, including Friends of St. Barbara Monastery who have met her and heard her speak at former Friends gatherings, have given generously over the years. Each dollar is greatly appreciated and spent wisely. Nothing goes for administrative or overhead costs.

Can each one of us spread the word now and encourage friends, family, colleagues and acquaintances to contribute? For one thing, the amount collected by the end of June will determine how many children can attend kindergarten beginning in September! (It costs only \$50 per child per academic year). A generous donation of \$360 per year—or \$30 individually per month—provides bedding, clothing, toiletries, and basic medical care for one elderly person. Your donation can be sent to St. Barbara Monastery (with Ethiopia in the memo line) or to: Gobezie Goshu Home, P. O. Box 7533, Santa Maria, CA 93456-7533.