

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



CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

***There will be no April Gathering
of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery***

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.



Christ is risen!

Indeed, He is risen!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

We have been noticing the colorful Easter baskets on display in stores these days. Filled with chocolate bunnies, crème eggs, jelly beans and even small toys, they stir up happy childhood memories. They will surely delight the children who receive them just as we delighted in them once upon a time.

Then the thought crosses our minds: Wouldn't it be wonderful if those same children could have the experience of 'real' Easter baskets as well—like the one we bring with us when we go to church for Pascha! After all, that's where the idea of the Easter basket filled with good things to eat comes from—except the good things to eat in a 'real' Easter basket are not just candy but all the things we have been setting aside during Lent: chocolate certainly, perhaps a bottle of wine, but also meat and cheese and eggs—real eggs. While we well understand that even early Christians regarded eggs as symbols of the Resurrection, the eggs in a 'real' Easter basket, although dyed or decorated, are meant nonetheless to break the long Lenten fast and be eaten. Finally, a 'real' Easter basket has a candle to be lit when the food in it is blessed by the priest.

Should one do a little research about the origin of the Easter basket, one finds mention of pagan fertility cults and the Christian adoption of the custom of giving baskets of eggs, etc. as gifts in Spring (which practice we have never heard of before). One will even find advice on how to “make your Easter basket Christian” by including written Scripture verses in plastic eggs! (Our holy fathers and mothers, who treated Scripture with such profound reverence, would blanche.) But you will find just about no mention of the practice of breaking the fast of Great Lent with an Easter basket filled with the foods that have not been on our tables for weeks!

What a difference, then, between the Easter baskets on display in our stores and the 'real' ones we prepare for Pascha! If one thinks about it, the Easter basket filled with sweets (innocent and fun, but at best only a passing delight) spotlights the world's deep and tragic emptiness. One can almost hear the soul crying out: “Is this all there is to life?” Thanks be to God, no, this is not all there is! Christ is risen! And the emptiness is destroyed!

Abdess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

TEENS FROM ST. LUKE'S AND ST. MARK'S CHURCHES HAVE A WORKDAY AT THE MONASTERY



On Saturday, April 13th, under the able leadership of Anna Nasser, about thirty-five teens and their chaperones from both St. Luke Church in Garden Grove and St. Mark Church in Irvine,



accompanied by the V. Rev. Michael Tasso pastor of St. Luke Church, arrived at the monastery to spend a Lenten workday. Their major contribution of field work as well as labor at various smaller but important projects—like preparation of bay leaves for Great and Holy Saturday (pictured at left)—were all an enormous help for the sisters. There was time in the morning to get a great start on the main task of the day—preparing

the fields for a replanting of lavender (photo below)—before it was time for the Sixth Hour.

After the prayers, everyone enjoyed the Lenten luncheon provided by the group from St. Luke's before getting back to work. Besides the task in the monastery's two lavender fields, the teens, led by Mitchell Denny, also worked at clearing debris from the creek—a major undertaking yet to be completed. The afternoon ended with a talk by



Mother Victoria and then Vespers served by Father Michael. The hardest part was concluding the day, because it seemed no one wanted to leave!

OUR NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECT TEAM IS ASSEMBLED!

We are excited to have identified a core group of people that will be responsible for helping us design and build our new construction project -- the annex that will increase living space for more sisters. Alongside Mitchell Denny, our project manager, we are blessed to have had Richard Ballew offer his services. Richard Ballew of St. Athanasius Church in Santa Barbara is a senior project manager for Allen Construction, Inc., the premier green builder in Santa Barbara County, and will be offering technical advice and expertise regarding the project and its management. Our architect will be Laura Dunbar, a local and respected architect in Ventura. And the same contractor, Anderson Construction, Inc. of Camarillo, who did such a fine job of building our chapel, is at the ready to begin construction of the annex as soon as the County issues our building permit. Stay tuned for exciting updates, timelines, and ways you can help.

VISIT FROM THE SENIORS OF ST. MATTHEW CHURCH, TORRANCE, CA

Once again this year, on April 8th, the seniors of St. Matthew Church in Torrance, led by their priest Rev. John Mahfouz, made a Lenten pilgrimage to St. Barbara Monastery. Arriving in the late morning after their long journey, they joined the sisters for the Sixth Hour in the chapel and then sat down to a Lenten luncheon before taking some time to enjoy the beautiful Spring scenery and fresh mountain air of the monastery grounds. After a talk from



Mother Victoria and a lively discussion, all gathered once again in the chapel where Father John served Vespers. The afternoon was over all too soon, but concern over contending with L.A. commuter traffic made an early departure important. Although the pilgrimage seemed like a whirlwind, all agreed it was a worthwhile Lenten effort.

The next Friends' Gathering is scheduled for May 26th.