

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

THE AUGUST GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

Sunday, August 26th, 2012

4:00 pm Presentation

THE CROSS: THE CENTER OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Speaker: Rev. Deacon Rico Monge

PhD Candidate at UC Santa Barbara

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 of St. Barbara Monastery,

In addition to those of you who have come to the monastery for the Friends gatherings, this summer has brought us many visitors: individuals, families, church groups (far too many to mention by name in this small newsletter). Some have come for the services, some to spend at least a few hours in “retreat,” some—braving our less than perfect accommodations—for a few days. All this has been a joy to us. Increasing this joy has been the realization that many visitors came for the purpose of “spiritual labor.”

You may have come across the special word Russians have for this sort of activity—*podvig*. There is no English equivalent. (We dare say that even the concept seems foreign to many English speakers!) It’s the word from Scripture translated as “race” in the passage from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians where he speaks of running “the race” (I Cor. 9:24).

Prominent in our memory among the *podvizhniki*—that is, the “runners” or practitioners of *podvig*—who showed up here this summer were two Romanian gentlemen (unknown to each other, by the way). Each arrived on a different day explaining that he had grown up in a family accustomed to using the occasional holiday from work to make a small pilgrimage to a monastery or church, where they would attend the services and offer to do something to help out in the name of the Lord. Here at St. Barbara Monastery, each quickly found the necessary equipment and proceeded to work on the removal of a huge oak that had fallen into our creek bed (a job for more than one person and for quite a number of days). It was the perfect task for the men and, beyond a doubt, a God-sent help to us! Each duly brought his day of work and personal prayer to a close by attending the monastery’s Vespers service.

There is probably nothing of greater benefit (other than repentance itself) than such labor—made to be spiritual labor by virtue of being accomplished *in the Name of the Lord*. *Podvig* can take many particular forms great and small: for example, the fulfillment of a vow of prayer, the building of a church, good deeds done in secret, a visit to someone who is ill, helping out with tasks at church (especially those no one else seems to want to do!), even household tasks. Indeed, the most ordinary tasks accomplished in the spirit of *podvig* can become channels of God’s grace; a drive to the grocery store can allow us to touch heaven! The critical ingredient is that the labor be done *for the Lord*, that is, *in the Name of the Lord*.”

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

THE LADIES FROM ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH, LOMPOC, SPEND A DAY AT THE MONASTERY

Observing what has become an annual tradition, on August 11th the women of St. Timothy's Church in Lompoc once again spent a day with the sisters at St. Barbara Monastery. These special days are anticipated by both sisters and guests as a mix of retreat and fellowship. Part of the afternoon was devoted to a short teaching by Mother Victoria followed by a women joined the Hour and for Vespers. with the work of the began preparation of harvest of dried first sachets. Having home cooked treated the sisters to a lovely luncheon as well as to supper at the end of the day.



lively discussion, and the sisters for both the Sixth Wishing to be of help monastery, the ladies the monastery's first lavender and made the brought along their specialties, the women

FIRST MONASTERY LAVENDER HARVEST!

One variety of the lavender (called Buena Vista) planted a year ago at the monastery was ready for harvest earlier this month. Mother Nina picked and dried the fragrant flowers and a number of helpers who visited us painstakingly removed the small florets from the stems. This variety of lavender is best used for sachets, and as of this writing quite a few such sachets are ready for sale in the monastery bookstore.

In a short time, the other main variety of lavender that we have planted here (called Grosso) should be ready. This variety is best for oil. Our plan is to take what we harvest this year to another lavender farm nearby where the oil can be distilled for us. In the future, if the project is successful, we will invest in our own equipment for distilling the oil.



MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN OF SAN FRANCISCO NARROWLY ESCAPES PONDEROSA FIRE

As this Newsletter goes to press, we have learned that our sister monastery, the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco outside Manton, CA, has been spared in the Ponderosa Fire. This devastating blaze was ignited by lightning on Saturday, August 18th, and quickly reached the monastery property. However, numerous firemen, making a special effort to save the monastery buildings, successfully fought off the inferno and, to quote a news report, “the fire pushed through behind the monastery.” The monks successfully evacuated first to the Red Cross shelter in the town of Manton. Later in the evening, when it became evident that there was no question of returning the same day, the monks scattered to the homes of family and friends in Sacramento and the Bay Area. At the moment, the fire, which has charred some 20,000 acres, is still raging, although it is said to be 35% contained. There is no telling when the monks will be permitted to return. We ask your prayers on behalf of Archimandrite Meletios and the brotherhood. May they return soon to find their entire property unharmed.



Chapel at the Monastery of St. John

Look for an update on our chapel construction in next month's newsletter. Meanwhile, you can find photos and announcements of developments as they occur on our St. Barbara Monastery website: www.stbarbaramonastery.org