

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Santa Paula - Ojai Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060-9516  
(805) 921-1563 – [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org)

*The January Gathering of the Friends  
of St. Barbara Monastery  
Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

*Presentation: 4:00 pm*

**AN ORTHODOX THEORY  
OF KNOWLEDGE**

*Speaker: Rev. Deacon Dr. Ananias Sorem*

*St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church, Anaheim, CA*

*Professor of Philosophy, Fullerton College*

**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 Santa Paula - 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 Santa Paula - Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.*

*Continue as directed above.*



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

We are not only at the beginning of a new calendar year, but at the outset of a decade! Here at St. Barbara Monastery, the feeling is that we are on the brink of an adventure. In the past few months, with the arrival of our priest Fr. Jude, the life of our monastery, you might say, has been ‘normalized’ because of the Divine Liturgies celebrated in our chapel on Sundays and Great Feasts. It is only now, when we are having these Liturgies regularly, that we are coming to realize what a huge lack this was in our life as a monastic community. While we loved visiting, making friends and worshiping God with the parishes in our area, this change in our life is surely the foundation and preparation by Providence for developments yet to reveal themselves! We could be wrong, but our expectation is that the monastery will flourish. This may well take the form of growth in numbers, but more importantly it feels as if heaven may be coming closer and, indeed, asking more of us.

Immediately ahead is the very practical project of building the new addition to our house to accommodate more sisters and guests. We are not blind to the fact that this will be a BIG undertaking. But neither are we daunted at the prospect. Rather we are approaching it confident that the Lord will be our helper; that by constructing a building, the Lord is asking us to join Him in building up the Kingdom of Heaven in the hearts of ourselves and all who come here. Having completed the construction of our chapel just two and a half years ago, we are acutely aware of what this new project can and probably will demand of us: our focus, our patience, our dedication, more patience, our sacrifice, more patience, and then—more patience. Will there be obstacles? Of course! Will there be temptations? Yes, indeed! Will it take longer than planned? No doubt! Will it require more funds than estimated? We ask ourselves: When was the last time a building project was completed according to budget—especially in California! Will we be able to complete the project? Yes, most assuredly, the Lord being our Helper!

Scripture tells us that “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” We know clearly that we sisters cannot build this house ourselves (that is, neither the house addition nor the monastery itself). We have neither the strength, nor the know-how, nor the means. So, it must be the Lord who is the real Project Manager building this house! He will find the laborers, the contractors, the funding for His house. After all, He delights in creating out of nothing—as He did with our chapel! Knowing this, we are confidently going forward. Let us watch with anticipation what the Lord will accomplish in the years ahead. We ask you to join your prayers to ours.

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***A WORD ABOUT OUR SPEAKER, FR. DEACON ANANIAS***

We first met Father Deacon Ananias Sorem quite a few years ago, when he stopped by the monastery while visiting his alma mater, Thomas Aquinas College (only a quarter mile down the road from us). At that time, he was just discovering the Orthodox Church. It was a great joy to us to learn that the young inquirer who had stopped by years ago is now an Orthodox deacon serving a parish church in Anaheim, St. Mary's (Holy Dormition) Romanian Orthodox Church, and teaching philosophy at the college level. It turns out that in the interim between first meeting him and our recent reunion he has earned a PhD from the University of Dublin, is married, and has held several important teaching positions in Ireland and in the U.S. He served as a deacon here on the Feast of St. Barbara (along with Deacon George Berni from St. George Church in Hesperia/Victorville) and now returns to share some of the fruit of his academic labors with us. He has a lot to teach us, and we hope this will be the first of many occasions when he speaks at our Friends' Gatherings.



## ***A RECENT VISITOR FROM CALISTOGA***



Mother Ioanna from Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga visited us for a few days in January. Many of you will remember her as Sister Ann, who came to us from St. Luke Church in Garden Grove, and then moved to the Calistoga monastery along with our other sisters who transferred there in 2009 (when the County of Ventura refused to allow us to continue using trailers for temporary housing). She was professed as a stavrophor nun by Archbishop BENJAMIN last year. While visiting, she spent a day sharing her expertise at prosphora baking with Sister Photini in between enjoying this beautiful place where she used to live.





## ***WEDDING BELLS ARE RINGING!***

Life will be changing significantly this year for Mitch Denny, our faithful Project Manager. Just before Christmas, he proposed to Miss Mary Gish of Santa Barbara.

We were privy to Mitch's proposal plans because he could keep it a secret from us no longer. His obvious preoccupation with other things besides monastery business made him come clean regarding his industrious labor in our wood shop crafting a glider swing for his lady love. The beautiful glider was dutifully carried by faithful friends to a craggy bluff overlooking the ocean, where Mitch hoped to propose at sunset. Mitch got down on one knee, and, thankfully, she said "Yes!" The wedding will be held at the couple's home church, St. Athanasius in Santa Barbara.

Mitch and Mary have known each other for twelve years, dating off and on during that time. It is a blessing to see that God's perfect will is done in His timing, not ours, to His glory.

Lest you fear that we will be without a Project Manager, Mitch has committed to fulfill that role even after the wedding. We are delighted that we will have his continued expertise with us to build our new addition to the house.

## ***THE BLESSING OF WATER ON THEOPHANY***

On the Great Feast of Theophany, we blessed the water of Sisar Creek, the stream running through our property. Led by the Cross and our chapel banners, we processed with Father Jude down the path in the woods to the place, pictured on the cover of this Newsletter, where it meets the creek at water level. Here we held the service of blessing, singing the Troparion "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan. . . ," reading the prayers and the Gospel, and plunging the Holy Cross three times into the clear, cold, swiftly flowing water. Afterwards, we duly walked the whole property, singing the Troparion, blessing all the structures starting with the chapel, then the gardens, vehicles, etc. May "God protect this Holy Monastery—from fire, flood, earthquake. . . ."—all of which we have experienced here since our arrival in 2005!