

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

The April Gathering of the Friends’ of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, April 29th, 2012

CHRIST IS RISEN!

4:00 pm Presentation

“Peace Be To All!”

The Peace That Passes All Understanding

Speaker: V. Rev. Nicholas Speier

Pastor of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, Goleta, CA

5:00 pm Vespers

6:00pm 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.



CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

This month's Friends gathering on April 29th falls on the evening of the Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women. The icon for this Sunday—which is regarded as an icon of the Resurrection and remains in the middle of the church throughout the week—has as its focus the tomb of Christ, empty of the body of Jesus, but still containing the graveclothes.

Faithful to the gospel narratives, the graveclothes have the aspect of an empty shell. Calling attention to this critical fact, which renders them evidence for the Resurrection, St. Gregory Palamas writes of the “great miracle of the graveclothes.” Although visibly empty of the body, they were still held together like a cocoon with the thick and viscous myrrh and aloes that had been poured over the Lord's body when He was hastily buried on Friday before sundown by Joseph, Nicodemus, and the women.

On one side of the empty grave in the icon, stand two, three, or more of the women who were myrrhbearers; and on the other is the angel who said to them: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” What often goes unnoticed is that one of the women depicted—usually the first—is the Mother of God (identified by the three stars on her mantle, if not by her usual monogram). Clearly, the iconographers understood what the Gospel narratives say only in the most veiled way: the Theotokos was the first to learn of the Resurrection.

Once again, it is St. Gregory who provides us with an explanation of the variant gospel narratives as well as how we can conclude from the narratives that the Mother of God was with the myrrhbearers. He tells us there were many myrrhbearers who came at slightly different times, generally “in groups, but not always the same women.” The Mother of God, however, was the first to come—before dawn with Mary Magdalene. She is “the other Mary” of whom St. Matthew speaks (Mt. 28:1), identified clearly by him in another place as the mother of James and Joses (Jesus' half brothers - Mt. 13:55). These were the two Marys who were present when the earthquake occurred (while the temple guards were still there), the stone rolled back from the door of the tomb revealing it to be empty, and the angel (none other than the Archangel Gabriel, St. Gregory demonstrates) announced Jesus' resurrection.

St. John of Damascus, of course, realized all this when, composing the Paschal Canon, he wrote: “The Angel cried to the Lady full of grace: ‘Rejoice, O Pure Virgin, again I say Rejoice! Thy Son is risen from His three days in the tomb.’”

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

A NEW WRINKLE

In last month's newsletter, we announced with joy that the County of Ventura had at long last approved our building plans for the chapel. As you know, the process took several years and met with daunting (and quite costly!) obstacles along the way. With the help of God and much perseverance as well as a lot of hard work on the part of our architects, these obstacles were all effectively overcome. Now, however, a new one has surfaced from quite another quarter.

Despite their positive response to our plans earlier, our nearest neighbors have decided to oppose the project. In the hope of settling the matter amicably, we will not at this time print the details of their objections. However, we **fervently ask for your prayers** that they may come to change their minds and that the project may go forward to the Glory of God. We will keep you posted!



BAY LEAVES FROM ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

Both the Greek and Antiochian Churches keep the custom of scattering bay leaves throughout the church during the Matins of Great and Holy Saturday. So it is not surprising that more than one visitor to the monastery has made note of the fact that the woods along Sisar Creek on the monastery property are filled with beautiful California bay laurel trees. Over the years, a number of churches have begun to order bay leaves from the monastery for their Holy Saturday services. Preparation of the leaves turns out to be unexpectedly time consuming, however. So, if you are interested in placing an order for bay leaves next year, we recommend that you place your order early in Lent.



In celebration of our 20th year

A DAY WITH HIS GRACE

BENJAMIN

*Bishop of San Francisco and the West
Of the Orthodox Church in America*

At St. Barbara Monastery

*15799 Ojai Rd.
Santa Paula, CA 93060*

May 12th, 2012

The Jewish Roots of Christianity

Bishop Benjamin will give two presentations:

10:00 AM: The Church and the Synagogue

2:00 PM: The Church and the Temple

Bishop Benjamin often points out in his teaching and preaching that the Orthodox Church does not read the Book of Revelation as part of the liturgical lectionary. Instead, she DOES the Book of Revelation. Come and hear how the imagery and symbolism of the Apocalypse is incorporated in the liturgy, hymnody, and architecture of the Church.

Great Vespers at 4:30 PM

Lunch and a light supper will be served.

Free will donations accepted.

***For reservations, please call the monastery at 805-921-1563 or email
sbmonastery@gmail.com***