

St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery
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*St. Barbara Monastery
Friends' Gathering
Sunday, May 29th, 2022*

4:00 pm Presentation:

*What are the Rulers of this Age
Teaching Our Youth?*

Speaker: V. Rev. Lawrence Russell

*Holy Annunciation Church
Santa Maria, CA*

5:00 pm Vespers

6:00 pm Potluck



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

The Apostle Thomas and his doubt, emphasized on the Sunday following Pascha, is the first thing the Church highlights for us after the joyful message of Christ's resurrection celebrated the week before. Why is the doubt of Thomas in the resurrection of Christ called good, and why is it so important that it is emphasized? It is because the human mind can scarcely accept the fact of Christ's resurrection without solid proof, and the human heart finds its implications of God's relationship with man too good to be true, though it yearns for this connection.

This yearning doubt that says, "That's too good to be true, but I hope so" was the good doubt of Thomas. In the service for Thomas, we hear: "Yearning for the joyous sight of Thee, Thomas disbelieved at first...With fear, Thomas placed his hand in Thy life-bearing side, O Christ, and trembling, he felt the two-fold power of the two natures united unmingled in Thee, O Savior..."

And what was Christ's response to Thomas' yearning doubt? "Thou didst rejoice when Thou wast examined. Wherefore, O Friend of man, Thou didst encourage Thomas in this, and didst show Thy side unto the disbelieving one, thereby assuring the world of Thine arising on the third day, O Christ."

The result of Thomas' disbelief was to assure him, and to show us, the reality of Who Christ is and what He has done for us. We have illustrated in Thomas' yearning doubt and Christ's gracious, gladsome response an invitation to do likewise. As we seek to know Who God is and to enter into a deep relationship with Him, we will hear Christ say to us, as He did to Thomas, "As thou willest, put thy hand forth; touch and handle Me..." And "With thy hand thou hast searched out my wounds, hence do not disbelieve in Me, Who have been thus wounded for thee."

Let's slow down the scene so we can look at it more carefully. The disciples tell Thomas the Lord is risen, but he finds that hard to believe. He wants to see Christ and confirm what the apostles are saying, so he holds that information loosely until he can prove it for himself. But he is hoping for that confirmation and yearning to see Christ. His heart is longing for Him. Then the Lord comes and shows him His side to handle and the prints of the nails to touch. Thomas does touch and handle His Lord's wounds, thoroughly, exactly, and with trembling. When his mind is convinced and his yearning heart reassured, he exclaims, "Thou are my Lord and God truly!"

Thomas shows us how we can also, with our yearning hope, wait on our resurrected Lord to reveal Himself to us, to allow us, with our noetic hands, to examine His wounds, to reassure us of His reality and love for us, and to confirm our faith. As we see Him for Who He really is, we can exclaim, with Thomas, "Thou art my Lord and God truly!" You are Who my heart has been seeking. Glory to You!

The Sisters
of St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery

RADONITSA!

On Tuesday, May 3rd, the sisters went about to all the graves on the monastery grounds— infant and adult—bearing lit candles, singing the Paschal hymns and proclaiming “Christ is risen!” to all the departed. In keeping with tradition, the sisters carefully placed red eggs which they had dyed for Pascha on the grave crosses. *Radonitsa* (Slavonic for “Day of Re-joicing”) is celebrated by the Church every year on the second Tuesday after Pascha during Thomas Week. In his *Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross*, St. John Chrysostom mentions the joyful commemoration of the dead on this particular day in his time.



Visiting Sister Nonna’s grave



Singing Paschal hymns at the infant graves

ST.. MATTHEW CHURCH VISITS MONASTERY, by Anastasia Josefsson

On a beautiful spring day, 14 parishioners were blessed with a pleasant ride from Torrance to Santa Paula to enjoy a sweet time of prayer, a delicious meal and working fellowship time. Mother Victoria graciously told us stories of the beginning days of the monastery while we filled small bags with aromatic dried lavender buds. Sister Photini led us in a walk through the grounds down to the creek and back by the infant cemetery. We gathered in the church as Fr. John Mahfouz led Sixth Hour prayers and many choruses of “Christ is Risen!” were sung. The nuns were all so kind and even gifted us with a small bag of the lovely lavender to take as a reminder of this sweet visit. Many comments were made on the drive home as to how pleasant and refreshing our time was there. As some said, “We need to come here more often! It was such a good reminder of the need to be more peaceful.”



RECENT PHOTOS...



Censing the epitaphion on Great and Holy Friday



Fr. Jude Lepine on Holy Saturday



Pilgrims Bogdan and Benjamin assemble a chicken coop...or is it a cell for a tiny sister?



...AND ONE FROM BYGONE YEARS:

How's a cat's life at the monastery?

Punkin: Oh, sew very wonderful!

Did you know...

*...that you can see us at the **Ojai Lavender Festival** on Saturday, June 25th?*

*...that we'll also be at the **Ventura Greek Festival**, June 24th – 26th?*

(St. Demetrios is looking for helpers for the festival. Please contact them!)

...that we won't have a Friends Gathering in June because of said Festivals?

...that we're the only monastery ever to be started with an interest-free loan from the IRS?

*...that the realtor of our monastery's main property was really an orange tabby?
(He's pictured above.)*