

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Santa Paula - Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060-9516
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ST. BARBARA MONASTERY FRIENDS' GATHERING

March 27th, 2022

4:00 PM

Presentation:

***“We have a Faith against
which nothing can be done!”***

--St. John Chrysostom

Speaker:

V. Rev. Nicholas Speier

***Pastor Emeritus, St. Athanasius Church,
Santa Barbara, CA***

5:00 PM Vespers

6:00 PM Potluck



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

In light of these things, what ought we to do?

The current situation in the Ukraine is a complex one, with agendas clashing, a back-story that is rarely told, and no obvious end in sight, as of this writing. It is producing suffering, displacement of people, and anguishing times for many; however, it is also producing the fruit of generous almsgiving in the form of funds and material aid for the suffering people of Ukraine—which is the least we can do, as our Holy Fathers tell us. How will this crisis end and how will it affect each one of us? What comes to mind is St. Peter’s question: In light of these things, “what manner of persons ought ye to be...?” (2 Peter 3:11)

Here we are in Great Lent, with a global crisis staring us in the face. Could this be an opportunity to move us to dive deeper this Lent to search our own inner hearts for the wars and clashing agendas within? We have the Lenten services to guide our introspection and repentance. If we are willing, we can use these as an impetus to “hurry up” in our repentance, rather than finding excuses to indulge in our favorite passions. We can’t tackle the many-headed beast all at once, but we certainly can listen for and act on the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our own internal spiritual war.

As we approach the Sunday of the Cross, let us slow down and consider this-- the main symbol of Christianity and all that it means. Let us think about the immeasurable love of our Lord for us and for the world. He certainly went into battle for us, laying down His life for His friends – us! He gave Himself up for us “when we were enemies” of Him. That “enemy” still lurks in our hearts, trying to drag us away from “the only Lover of mankind”. How that sinful inclination to leave the Lord or doubt His love slithers through our being and tries to work in us without being discovered!

We cannot overcome this enemy by ourselves. Now is the time to ask Christ to make firm our trust in Him. The Cross indicates that Christ must do this, and that He came precisely for this purpose. We must desire it, but He must bring it to pass. Let us slow down and pray as fervently as we can for our faith to be strengthened in Him. Let us allow this Reality – of Christ’s love for us and for the entire world – to serve as yet another impetus to lead us to prayer, along with the current global crisis and our ongoing Lenten journey. Amen!

The Sisters
of St. Barbara Monastery

LOMPOC LADIES VISIT

On March 12th, six ladies from St. Timothy Church in Lompoc, whom we have affectionately dubbed “The Lompoc Ladies”, came for a work time and retreat. Led by Kh. Elizabeth Sommer, they brought a generous Lenten lunch to share and ready hands for work. Work they did—carefully cleaning copious amounts of bay leaves for Holy Saturday.



In the afternoon, Mother Victoria spoke to this small but earnest group about the point of a prayer rule. She stated that the goal of one’s prayer rule is not to get to the end of the rule, but to welcome the Holy Spirit and to be open to receiving the grace of God. Based on the teaching of St. Seraphim of Sarov, she reminded us that when one experiences a warmth in the heart or gains a new insight during one’s prayers, one should stop and stay with this for as long as is possible. These are indications that the Holy Spirit has come to visit a person.

experiences a warmth in the heart or gains a new insight during one’s prayers, one should stop and stay with this for as long as is possible. These are indications that the Holy Spirit has come to visit a person.

Mother Victoria also spoke directly to the mothers present commenting that one’s mind does not wander when praying for one’s children. Likewise in our other prayers, we should try to pray with this same intensity, interest, and attention. Read slowly with concentration. Say what we mean and mean what we say. To rush through one’s prayer rule, she said, is to waste one’s time and God’s time. If we reach the end of the time allotted for our rule and have not finished it, that’s OK. The point is to welcome the Holy Spirit, to be open to the visitation of the grace of God, and not simply to finish a prayer rule. She ended by saying that it is simple (conceptually), but also very difficult (practically), since there exists plenty of spiritual opposition to this labor of prayer-- a blessed labor that has the power to transform both us and the world.

The day ended with Vespers and a supper for those ladies who could stay.

N.B. Any parish needing bay leaves for Holy Saturday would do well to submit their order soon.

FUNERAL OF RYASSAPHOR NUN NONNA

On February 16th, the monastery was blessed to provide the final resting place for Sr. Nonna (Harrison), a ryassaphor nun living in the world not far from us, in Northridge, California. Sr. Nonna was a professor of theology (specializing in patristics) who had taught in several seminaries, translated some works of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian, and written several books, including *God's Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation*.



St. Nonna, mother of St. Gregory the Theologian

She died of complications from a stroke on February 7th. Sr. Nonna's funeral was served by two friends of hers: Rev. Anthony Savas of St. Anna Orthodox Church in Sandy, Utah, and Rev. Haralambos Fox of St. Barbara Church, Santa Barbara; as well as our own V. Rev. Jude Lepine. On March 18th, the sisters celebrated her 40th day with a memorial service. As her obituary movingly put it, "May her memory, *dear to many*, be eternal!"



Sr. Ioanna enjoys her new obedience: caring for Australian shepherds, Cody & Leila.



An unexpected visit from Mother Melania, abbess of Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga, CA.



Not bay leaves this time! Mother Nina tinctures hedge nettle.

LAZARUS SATURDAY WITH ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN

On Friday, April 15th, and Saturday, April 16th, Archbishop BENJAMIN will preside over the Vigil and Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday at St. Barbara Monastery.

All are welcome.

Friday: 4 pm Vigil Saturday: 9:30 am 3rd & 6th Hours, 10 am Divine Liturgy