

St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery  
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*St. Barbara Monastery  
July Friends' Gathering*

*Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

*4:00 pm Presentation:*

**VOCATIONS & ORTHODOXY:  
DISCERNING GOD'S CALLING IN OUR LIVES**

*Speaker: Deacon Benjamin Garcia  
Seminarist, St. Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary*

*5:00 pm Vespers*

*6:00 pm Potluck*



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

The phrase “goody two-shoes” is an idiom often used in a negative sense to describe someone who does good in a smug and self-satisfied way so as to draw attention to themselves. While as Christians we are taught to avoid doing good to others out of ego, self-love, or vainglory, it remains true that God calls each of us to actively pursue the doing of good—in a good way! —all the days of our lives.

A priest who is dear to our monastery likes to tell his people: *Live your life in such a way as to go from doing one good deed to the next...to the next...and so forth, until you reach the end of your life.*

As our surrounding Western culture slides ever more rapidly into decadence and depravity, a person can understandably feel overwhelmed and even helpless. The counsel that this priest gives us, however, is an extremely practical and wise way to orient ourselves amid such times:

***Live your life going from one good deed to another!***

What counts as a good deed? Anything that helps meet the need of someone and contributes to their well-being. Depending on the intensity and urgency of the need, a good deed may indeed come in the form of help that is big and practical. (Throughout the years our monastery has gratefully known firsthand such big and practical help from our friends!) However, more often than not, opportunities for small (but sparkling!) deeds present themselves to us all throughout the day.

Perhaps some of us may imagine that we do not possess any particular skill, strength or talent that may help others in practical ways. However, even the very least of us can do the simplest things to edify others. Reaching out to someone who is routinely ignored, listening with attention and understanding, speaking a consoling or encouraging word, giving someone a warm smile, praying in secret with heart-felt pain for the well-being of another...the opportunities to do good abound. Indeed, in the end, these “little cups of cold water” given in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ will not go unnoticed by Him.

As we see, our Faith encourages us to search out and seize such opportunities to “do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10) and even to “do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27). Without a doubt, it is only in synergy with God that we can really do *any* good—whether to friend or foe. But what better way to pass all the days of our lives than, with His divine help and in genuine love, to go from doing one good deed to another?

The Sisters

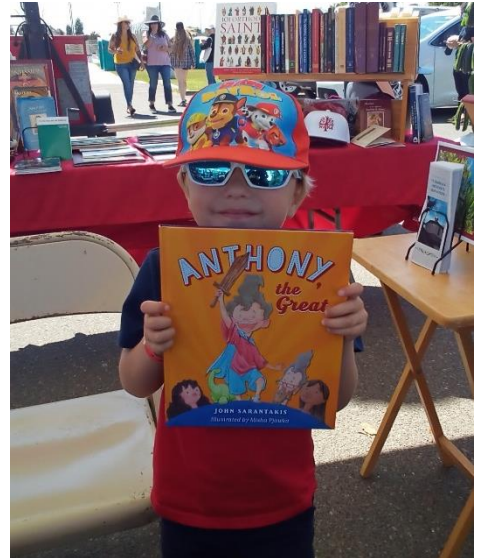
of St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery

## ***FLASH-MOB STRIKES MONASTERY***

On a sizzling Monday in July, the youth of St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Riverside, led by the recently ordained Fr. Jason Covarrubias paid a visit to the monastery to kick off their annual summer camping trip. 46 teens and 10 chaperones (with a few little ones in tow) arrived to pray Sixth Hour with the sisters, followed by a brief orientation from Mother Victoria in which she described them as a working “flash-mob”! With the exhortation to pray the Jesus Prayer as they worked, after a brief power lunch, the youth plunged into flash-mob mode. The teens worked diligently for a few brief but productive hours on more than a dozen tasks. Painting the front porch, picking and processing massive amounts of fruit, polishing church brass items, weeding around the property, washing the monastery’s vehicles, working in the garden, cleaning the church and woodworking were some of the tasks they tackled. Their chaperones—some former campers themselves—did an outstanding job in inspiring their young charges. After their labors, everyone gathered in the chapel for Great Vespers celebrating St. Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles. Immediately following the service, the youth enjoyed a short spiritual talk given by Mother Nina and then it was time to say goodbye. Many good deeds were performed by the teens on this day. May God reward them all!



## RECENT PHOTOS



*Top Left: Ventura Greek Festival booth  
Top Right: Happy little customer  
Left: Mama hen raising 18 peepers  
Bottom Left: Teens listen attentively  
Bottom Right: Let the little children come!*

