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***ST. BARBARA MONASTERY NEWSLETTER***  
***DECEMBER, 2021***



***CHRIST IS BORN!***  
***GLORIFY HIM!***



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Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

As we write this, we imagine that most of you, just like us, are busy preparing for Christmas. We haven't done much decorating at the monastery yet, but we are heavily into the cookie baking—and working on this Christmas newsletter. Meanwhile, the daily round of services in our chapel have begun to focus on the Forefeast of Christmas, directing our hearts and minds to get ready for the coming celebration:

*“Make ready, O Bethlehem! . . .  
For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave.  
Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise,  
Where lieth a divine garden,  
Eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam.  
Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.”*

Most of all, we want our Newsletter this month to convey our best and truly heartfelt wishes that each and every one of you may have a blessed celebration of this Great and Glorious Feast of the Nativity of Christ:

***May we all meet the newborn Christ Child in our hearts!***

This is the key to a “successful” Christmas celebration, isn't it?—that we meet the Christ Child in our hearts. We all know that in the world around us many people are really “missing the mark” rushing about distractedly to buy gifts and run a hundred other supposedly essential errands that will make the celebration in their homes “perfect.” And the popular culture (which doesn't even believe in what this Feast is all about!) pulls on us to do the same—while the Baby in the crib waits for the world—maybe even for many of us!—to notice that God in His merciful love has become man. (Do we dare finish this sentence with the bold words of St. Athanasius? Yes, we are Orthodox Christians and we proclaim! “. . . *God has become man that man might become god.*”)

This is the “big picture” behind Christmas and all the feasts of the Church, great and small. May we be granted to see it!

Abbess Victoria  
and the Sisters  
of St. Barbara Monastery

## Schedule of Christmas Services at the Monastery

<b>Christmas Eve, Friday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Royal Hours: 7:00 am—1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Hours</b>
	<b>12:00 noon—6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Hours, Typica</b>
	<b>Vespers: 3:00 pm</b>
	<b>Vigil: 6:00 pm—Great Compline, Matins</b>
<b>Christmas Day, Saturday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Hours: 9:30 am</b>
	<b>Divine Liturgy: 10:00 am</b>
	<b>Vigil: 6:00 pm</b>
<b>Sunday After Christmas, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Hours: 9:30 am</b>
	<b>Divine Liturgy: 10:00 am</b>

## *THE FEAST OF ST. BARBARA – 2021*



(donated this year by a generous family from Los Angeles).

This year's celebration will long be remembered for the extraordinary sermon preached by Father Yousuf Rassam exhorting us all never to deny Christ in any circumstances.\*

\*Did anyone record this sermon?

After our small, “household” celebration of the Feast of St. Barbara in 2020 (due to the pandemic), we were ready for a BIG celebration this year. And so it was! God blessed the monastery with perfect weather, Archbishop BENJAMIN came and presided over both the Vigil on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Divine Liturgy on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>. Eight priests concelebrated with him: Rev. Lawrence Russell of Holy Annunciation Church in Santa Maria, Rev. Patrick O’Grady of St. Peter Church in Pomona, V. Rev. Nicholas Speier, V. Rev. John Finley, and Rev. Symeon Halsell, all from St. Athanasius Church in Santa Barbara, Rev. John Robinson of St. Herman Church in Oxnard, Rev. Yousuf Rassam of St. Innocent Church in Tarzana, and Rev. Florin Iftode of St. Anne Church in Pomona), assisted by Rev. Deacon George Berni of St. George Church in Victorville. As



Fr. Nicholas Speier telling the story of St. Barbara

## ***PURCHASE OF NEIGHBORING HOUSE***

No doubt, by the time you receive this Newsletter, the neighboring property will be officially ours. Escrow is due to close this week. Meanwhile, we have already begun to care for our two new rambunctious dogs (Australian shepherds Cody and Leila), chickens, songbirds and a cat named Jerry—all which are coming with the property! But to confirm how much we need this extra space, we want you to know that by the middle of January, we expect the house to be fully occupied by sisters!

We are filled with gratitude to God and to each and every one of you who contributed to the purchase. It seems nothing short of miraculous to us that the necessary funds are actually on account and ready for the closing this week.

## ***REVIEW OF TWO RELATED BOOKS***

### ***Slaying the Dragon of Dependency***

Many of our Friends will remember Dr. Bill Black, who gave what became the last Friends presentation before we went into lockdown because of Covid. An OCMC missionary to Kenya, he managed to get to his US-based family before the lockdown and went back to Kenya as soon as flights were available.

His work for the last six years has been focused on higher theological education and on helping churches break out of the cycle of *dependency* — an attitude that means, “I will attend church services as long as there is something in it for me, but I will not give or work to help the mission of the church.”

Dr. Black has written two books setting forth the alternative to this community-killing and soul-killing mentality. He shows us the goal, which is to participate in the Kingdom of God by the good we do as a community, and the means, which is to realize that we are *stewards* (household managers, not free agents) of the wealth given us by God, and to find out how God wants us to use it, to bless His world.

These books were written with an African audience in mind, but they are useful in our context as well.

*Raising Up Good Stewards: God's People Using God's Money for God's Glory.* Paperback, 170 pages. This is the “full version” of Dr. Black’s vision and argument.

*Radical Money Manifesto: What Jesus Taught and We Forgot.* Paperback, 114 pages. A condensed version of the book. Each chapter has a Bible study on the associated Scripture passages, to be worked through in a small group.

These books may be purchased via the monastery website.