

St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Santa Paula-Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060-9516

(805) 921-1563 – www.stbarbaramonastery.org

ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

FRIENDS' GATHERING

July 25th, 2021

4:00 PM: Presentation:

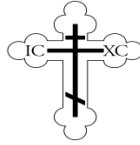
*“Creating a False Utopia:
St. Nikolai’s Words for Us Today”*

Speaker: V. Rev. John Finley

*of the Dept. of Missions and Evangelism,
Antiochian Orthodox Church*

5 :00 PM Vespers

6:00 PM Potluck



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

As this Newsletter's cover announces, we have decided to hold a Friends' Gathering on Sunday, July 25th, our first since the onset of the pandemic. (However, we ask that you check our website before you set out for the monastery to verify that the event has not been cancelled—just in case.)

The chief reason we are going ahead with our Friends' Gathering is that we deem these gatherings to be one of the most important things we do. They are, first of all, gatherings of Orthodox people who come from practically every ethnic background and every Orthodox Church jurisdiction in Southern California. Simply by (a) gathering together, and then (b) going deeper into our Faith by learning from the speakers who are invited to address us, and above all, (c) praying together, we are proclaiming that all of us are *one*! Yes, we have our differences. But it is important to recognize that these do not divide us *in Christ*, do not divide *the Body of Christ*. We are members of the *one* Orthodox Church. *We are one in Christ*. It is important that we ourselves fully understand this, that we live it, that we demonstrate this to our children, and that we proclaim this to the world.

Meanwhile, we all are coming to realize that we are living at a critical time in history, when the values of the society in which we live are undergoing radical change—in regard to morality, to culture, even in regard to what qualifies as truth! It is not too much to say that our very civilization seems to be at risk! What else is the new narrative our children are being taught in public schools about “pronouns” and “inclusion”? It is not too much to say that we are looking at a cultural revolution, nothing less—and one that is particularly threatening to Christians!

We Christians, especially we Orthodox Christians, who have remained steadfast in our Faith through 2,000 years of revolutions (notably the Communist revolution of the 20th century, which was both cultural and political), wars, invasions, immigrations and calamities of every kind, need to raise our voices as *one* and proclaim the Truth of the Gospel to this deluded world.

Will we be criticized for it? Oh, yes! Will we be mocked for it? No doubt! Will we be despised for it? Very likely! Will we be harassed for it? Probably. Will we be persecuted? It may come to that. But did not our Lord Jesus Christ *promise* us these things would happen? (See Mark 10:33.) And what else? He promised us *life—life everlasting in His Kingdom!*

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters
of St. Barbara Monastery

OPENING UP

“To open up or not to open up!” This has been the question on our minds over the past six weeks or so. After all the discussions of pros and cons, the question was decided for us by our friends who began calling or emailing asking to visit the monastery or who simply climbed into their cars and came! To be honest, we find ourselves rusty at hospitality, but the skills seem to be coming back quickly. Thus, we have decided to have our first post-pandemic Friends’ Gathering on July 25th keeping our old, established “last Sunday of the month” schedule.

No sooner had we set the date than our good friend Fr. John Finley happened to phone and enthusiastically tell us about his most recent reading in the works of his hero, St. Nikolai of Zica. “Everyone has to hear this,” was our response. And, presto, we had our speaker booked.

A VISIT FROM ST. SIMEON CHURCH, SANTA CLARITA

On Sunday, June 13, following their Divine Liturgy in Santa Clarita, V. Rev. George Ajalat, pastor of St. Simeon Church, and a group of about twenty-five parishioners drove over to St. Barbara Monastery (a trip of about 45 minutes) to spend the afternoon. Although the day was hot, most everyone wanted to walk about, see the grand view of the mountains and tour the monastery grounds as well as visit informally with the sisters. After an hour or so, everyone gathered for a discussion and lively question and answer session concerning the Theotokos—and many other topics as well. Following an early Vespers served by Father George, the afternoon ended with a light picnic supper. The consensus as the day ended was: “Let’s do this again!”



FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE!



mountain air after the long LA Covid-19 “lockdown.”

They were not the only God-sent helpers to come! Our friend Michael Abi-Farah (to the right in the photo), who happens to be a biologist with a wide knowledge of California native plants, stopped by after working for some weeks in the nearby national forest. After a look at our tangled and overgrown gardens, he set to work digging, planting, trimming and rearranging. A week later he returned with a willing helper, Edward Liaboh.

Just when we were in need of help in our blooming lavender field, our good friend Vitaly Yefimenkov from Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral in LA turned up along with two hale and hearty men ready for work. The big draw was not so much the field of fragrant lavender as the chance to draw some deep breaths of fresh



FRESH LAVENDER AVAILABLE

During the month of July, we are offering fresh lavender for sale by mail order. Our fields are flowering as we write this; so, if you plan to order, let us hear from you as soon as possible. A fresh bouquet, picked the same day as it is sent out via priority mail, sells for \$20.00. The fragrant lavender can be enjoyed fresh as well as dried. Please place your order by email (sbmonasterystore@gmail.com) or by phone (805-921-1563).

Various lavender products made by the nuns are also available as follows:

lavender oil (15 ml)	\$24.00 each
lavender oil (5 ml)	\$14.00 each
sachet filled with fragrant lavender florets (4 oz)	\$ 4.00 each
lavender & calendula lip balm	\$ 5.00 each
calendula salve (for skin irritations)	\$ 5.00 each
hydrosol air freshener	\$ 5.00 each