


St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060
(805) 921-1563 – www.stbarbaramonastery.org



*The March Gathering of the Friends
of St. Barbara Monastery
Sunday, March 30th, 2014*

4:00 pm Presentation:

Suffering: A Debt Bringing Mercy

*Speaker: V. Rev. Lawrence Russell
Pastor of Holy Annunciation Church, Santa Maria*

5:00 pm Vespers

6:00 pm Potluck

DIRECTIONS TO THE MONASTERY

From Highway 101 – Exit Hwy 126 East at Ventura.

Travel 11 miles east along Hwy 126 and exit 10th St/Hwy 150 at Santa Paula.

Turn left from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Travel about five miles (1/4 mile past Thomas Aquinas College) to 15799 Ojai Road.

The monastery driveway is on the right just past our mailbox at Highway Marker 2830.

Drive across the bridge and follow the signs to the parking area.

From Highway 5 – Exit Hwy 126 West at Santa Clarita.

Travel 27 miles to Santa Paula, and exit at 10th St/Hwy 150.

Turn right from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Continue as directed above.



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

The ducks pictured on our cover are enjoying the novelty of water in Sisar Creek, the stream that flows through the monastery property. After months of drought, we suddenly experienced heavy rain over the first weekend in March. All of nature rejoiced in the deluge. A few days later, we began to see our meadow and the grassy mountainsides around us turning a welcome delicate green—some four months late!

Life seemed to be mirroring nature, because Lent felt like it had arrived with the rain, beginning when the downpour ended and while the trees were still dripping. Just as the parched earth drank in the drops of rain, our parched souls drank in the Lenten hymnody, quenching their thirst for heaven. Indeed, the round of ponderous Lenten services, reminding us of the prophecies and great events of old (especially through the successive singing of the Biblical Odes at Matins day by day and the reading of the Old Testament lessons appointed for Vespers and the Sixth Hour), seemed to be functioning something like our creek. Just as the water flowing once again is enlivening the dormant roots and seeds along the creek banks—and, incidentally, allowing us to fill our cisterns again, too!—the stream of lenten services is enlivening the very air of our house chapel with the age old words of Scripture and prayer, allowing us to fill our hearts with them.

Lent is already half over! Sisar Creek is still flowing, thank God, and so is the stream that is Lent, bringing with it the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete and the Akathist Hymn in the 5th Week, and the Sundays of St. John of the Ladder and St. Mary of Egypt, leading us up to Palm Sunday and Holy Week. We (actually Mother Nina) will be filling the cisterns repeatedly with water from the creek to keep their water level from dropping too low. More importantly, God willing, in the midst of all the preparations for the coming Feast of Feasts (liturgical and more mundane), may all of us and all of you together succeed to fill our hearts with the waters of grace that the rushing torrent of Lent offers.

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

As our newsletter goes to the printer, work has commenced on the roof of the new monastery chapel.



As can be seen in the photo to the right, taken earlier this month, the outer walls have been completed and the



steel frame of the building, including the clerestory, is in place, providing a good idea of the pleasing final proportions of the entire building. On March 22nd,

Archbishop Benjamin stopped by to see the building in progress. He is pictured here with Mitchell Denny, Project Manager for the construction, and Mother Victoria.



ST. INNOCENT CHURCH MEN'S GROUP WORK PARTY



The men of St. Innocent Church, Tarzana, along with their priest Rev. Youssuf Rassam spent Saturday, March 1st, at the monastery. Although this was the weekend of the great downpour (when the ducks pictured on the cover had such a great time), they found dry interludes to work on the grounds. They also lent their hands to the casket making and even the painstaking labor of separating lavender florets from their stalks. And, no, they didn't

manage to stay dry the whole time. We especially thank Zac Landrum for organizing the day, and we look forward to the group's next visit.

RETREAT FOR TEENS FROM ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH, LOMPOC

On Saturday, March 22nd, the monastery hosted eight teen girls and their two leaders—



Presbytera Elizabeth Sommer and Brigid Gilmartin—from St. Timothy Church in Lompoc for a day's retreat. The girls attended the monastery chapel services with the nuns, and Mother Paraskeva provided a lively talk on monasticism.

The teens and their advisors brought lunch for everyone. Afterwards,

there was plenty of time to roam the monastery property and enjoy the famous tire swing as well as help with a small project for the monastery—preparing lavender sachets for sale.



MARCH 24TH AT THE MONASTERY. . . .



This was the scene that greeted us when the sun came up on Monday, March 24th. No vehicles could enter or leave the property until a crew from a tree service company arrived and removed the huge oak effectively blocking off the southern end of our bridge. We will miss this beautiful tree that has stood as sentinel here for—who knows?—perhaps a hundred years.

The winners of the “re-raffle” of a trip to Hawaii, benefitting the monastery’s Building Fund, are Mr. and Mrs. Michael Coleman of St. Luke Church in Garden Grove, CA. We wish them a delightful Hawaiian holiday! The raffle plus the “re-raffle” brought the Building Fund \$27,500.00! Our thanks to the V. Rev. Michael Tassos of St. Luke Church and his administrative assistant Anna Nasser for all their hard work organizing this very successful fundraising activity on our behalf.