

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

The April Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, May 1st, 2011

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

4:00 pm Presentation

***“Behold, I Make All Things New!” Reflections on
Image and Likeness***

***Speaker – Rev. Deacon Gregory Roeber – Professor of Early
Modern History and Religious Studies
Pennsylvania State University***

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 5 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.*



Christ is Risen! Χριστος Βοσκησε! Χριστός Ανέστη!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

We are feeling very small these days. The ground-breaking for our new chapel was a small event—at least outwardly. Because it was scheduled for the day before Palm Sunday, only a few Friends could be with us. Of course, we knew ahead of time that this would be so. In fact, these circumstances seemed almost fitting for the commemoration of Lazarus' resurrection, likewise attended by only a few, as the Gospel account tells us. However, the implications of that event were tremendous: As Bishop Benjamin reminded us at the ground-breaking ceremony, Death itself was put “on notice.” As the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated and then as Bishop Benjamin erected a cross on the site where the new altar table will be and blessed the cornerstone of the new building, it was clear that this planting of a new monastery chapel is a thing of no small importance. Effectively, the Evil One has been put “on notice” that we intend to build this monastery in this place and that those who live here – indeed, all who come – will be laboring to make it a place where the Kingdom shines through into this world. We know that many, many of you were with us in spirit, praying that this undertaking may bear good fruit. We ask your continued prayers, because—small though we and our undertaking undoubtedly are—we have already encountered (from a worldly perspective, that is) disproportionately large obstacles. (This is no great surprise, of course! As our holy fathers and mothers teach us, we would have reason to be concerned were this not so!)

Now, in just a few days, we will gather in our churches and shout the proclamation, astonishing to angels and men, that CHRIST IS RISEN! Relative to what is going on in our world—the multiple disasters in Japan, tornadoes and wild fires in the United States, unrest and civil war in the Middle East—our proclamation and our whole celebration will be counted by this world as insignificant and hardly worth mention. But we Christians *know* with unshakable inner knowledge that the Resurrection is no small thing. Indeed, it is the greatest event in the history of the world—the event that has changed everything and changes us. Throughout the centuries, starting with the small group privileged to meet Jesus in the first days after His Resurrection, Christians have lived in (“lived by,” we might better say) the awareness that, however small and seemingly insignificant our actions accomplished in the Name of Christ—like building small monasteries and churches everywhere!—they more than spread the message that Christ is risen. Rather, they *demonstrate* it, bringing the grace of God and the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE. . .

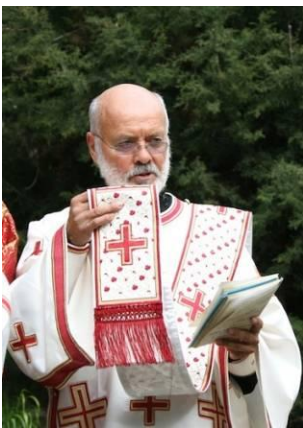
At about this time a couple of years ago, just as we were about to plant our vegetable garden, a small, important-looking volunteer seedling appeared in the space that was planned for a lettuce bed. It looked to us like it might just be an infant cauliflower or maybe broccoli. We decided to let it grow undisturbed and see what it might turn out to be. Grow it did, taller and taller, thicker and thicker. More than a year passed, and we still had not identified it. It blossomed with pretty—but not spectacular—little yellow flowers, and we waited to see what fruit might form. None did. Some people said: “It’s a weed. Chop it down.” An agricultural student came by and said: “It’s a weed. Get rid of it.” But we just couldn’t. The yellow flowers on the lowest branches wilted and fell off, leaving behind unremarkable brown pods filled with what looked like brown dust, as more little yellow flowers appeared on the branches above. The plant grew higher—higher than the deer fencing surrounding our vegetable beds. And the two “stems” grew larger (maybe three inches in diameter), so that they almost qualified to be called ‘trunks.’ A hawk started to spend long hours on a branch near the top, using it as a post to survey the meadow for prey. It was Seraphima Butler (our catechist friend—who else would know!) who with great excitement finally identified our mysterious volunteer. It is the mustard of Jesus’ parable in the Gospel of Matthew:



Our evangelical mustard tree

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed. . . , which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Mt 13:31-32)

Yes, our mustard plant (bush, tree) takes up a lot of room in the garden intended for lettuces. But we’re not chopping it down!



*Father Deacon Michael
intones the Litany*

IN MEMORIAM: REV. DEACON MICHAEL SAVKO

Rev. Deacon Michael Savko, the deacon of St. Herman Church in Oxnard and a close friend for many years of all of us at St. Barbara Monastery, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, April 12th, after a lengthy battle with cancer. Many of you will remember him from our feast day of St. Barbara on December 4th, when he served at the Divine Liturgy wearing the new and very much needed vestments he had donated to the monastery. As recently as the beginning of Lent, Father Deacon Michael, who loved the monastic life, was making plans to spend Holy Week and Pascha this year on the Holy Mountain, where he had visited a number of times in recent years. However, the Lord had something better in mind for his faithful servant, who was laid to rest on the very last day of Lent, that is, Friday in the 6th week—the glorious place of which Mount Athos is but the faintest shadow. Memory eternal to our dear friend and brother, Deacon Michael!



Finishing the weeding of the stairway.

a meadow in itself, was clear of every blade of grass in no time at all. The photos tell the story better than it can be written. We thank their moms and dads for bringing these unsurpassed workers.

LENTEN WORKDAY AT THE MONASTERY

The monastery workday on April 9th turned out differently than any other we have ever had. Along with their moms and dads, a host of children came to participate. No one has ever seen such diligent and enthusiastic weeding of the monastery paths! And the gravel gazebo floor that looked rather like



It's all in a day's work!



The procession to the new chapel site.

GROUND-BREAKING FOR THE CHAPEL—AT LAST!

In last month's newsletter we announced the ground-breaking for our new chapel of St. Barbara and St. Eugene for Lazarus Saturday, the day we knew His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, planned to be with us. Glory be to God, this event duly occurred. We made a beautiful, tall redwood cross, which was planted by His Grace during the ceremony on the spot where the

holy table will stand in the altar of the new chapel. And the soils engineer working on the project, Fred Heathcote, went far out of his way to find and prepare a granite cornerstone, which His Grace blessed and anointed and which will be placed to begin the foundation of the new structure.



His Grace Bishop Benjamin lifts the cross at the site of the new altar.



His Grace Bishop Benjamin anoints the granite cornerstone of the new chapel.

If you are wondering why the chapel is being named for both St. Barbara and St. Eugene, look at the article explaining all this in last month's newsletter, which can be found on our website.