

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



*The January Gathering of the Friends
of St. Barbara Monastery
Sunday, January 31st, 2016*

4:00 pm Presentation

THEOLOGY OF THE ICON

Speaker: Heather MacKean, Master Iconographer

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,

We are seeing more and more news articles about acts of terror committed by ISIS, not only in the Middle East, but in North Africa and Europe and even the Far East. Noting that these terrorist acts target most anyone who does not support ISIS' ideology, whether themselves Muslims of some other stripe, Christians, or simply "Westerners" of any religion or no religion at all, we in America have begun to fear for ourselves. In the aftermath of the San Bernardino attack, our President even deemed it necessary to address the nation in an attempt to calm the burgeoning fear.

In centuries past, the members of ISIS simply would have been called 'barbarians,' 'Hagarenes' or 'Sons of Ishmael'—which is the terminology we meet in our liturgical services. Barbarians, practically by definition, were the pagans from beyond the borders of the Ecumene (or Greco-Roman Empire). They included Goths, Vandals, Huns, Mongols and a host of others regarded as generally hostile to the civilized world. Those referred to as 'Hagarenes' or 'Ishmaelites' were more specifically the tribes from the Arab world to the East of the Empire—Saracens and, after the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Muslim tribes that made repeated incursions into the territory of the Empire.

Not so many years ago, when we would chance across the word 'barbarians' in the liturgical texts, we would falter momentarily. In some places, the word was carefully blocked out and replaced by words like 'enemies' or 'adversaries' (as in the Troparion for the Holy Cross). 'Hagarenes' or 'Ishmaelites' were somewhat less problematical terms—probably because they don't quite register until the reader or singer has moved on to the next sentence! But now, in view of political developments in our 21st century world, these terms are becoming uncomfortably relevant again, and the troparia and stichera that use them increasingly apply to present realities just as written.

Our Orthodox forbears everywhere—Greece, the Balkans, Russia and Ukraine, the Middle East—all knew what it was to live in circumstances where they were overshadowed by threats of terror and unspeakable violence and atrocities. This is an unfamiliar state of affairs for us in America, but just about nowhere else! Indeed, the Menaion abounds with accounts of martyrs and confessors from every century and every place who suffered for their Orthodox Faith at the hands of barbarian "terrorists" and invaders.

These saints, upholding us by their intercessions "for the peace of the world and the salvation of our souls," all have a single, unwavering message for us: Repeating the words of the Lord in the Gospel, they tell us: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Mt 10:28).

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

INTRODUCING HEATHER MacKEAN, ICONOGRAPHER

Heather MacKean, who will speak at this Sunday's Friends' Gathering on *The Theology of the Icon*, is currently working on the wall icons of Holy Annunciation Church in Santa Maria. We are hoping that she will be the iconographer who does the icons for the iconostas and eventually the walls of our own new chapel. She is a student of Helena Nikkanen, founder of the art conservatory in Finland, as well as iconologist Fr. Nicholas Ozolin, professor at St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris. Photos of Heather at work and of her icons can be found on the website of "Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church, Santa Maria" as well as at her own website: www.heathermackean.com.



ST. BONAVENTURE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP OUT

On Saturday, January 23rd, we hosted a small group of students with their teachers from St.



Bonaventure Catholic High School in Ventura. Their aim was to complete a service project in the Ventura area, and we were in need of help in our lavender fields. The students spent their time working in our principal field under Mother Nina's able direction, pruning and cultivating the plants in preparation for spring. They attended the service of the 6th Hour for a taste of Orthodox Christian worship before enjoying

lunch together with the whole community, including other visitors to the monastery. There was plenty of time for discussion as well as a look at the new chapel under construction. Before going on their way, the students took a little time for reflection on their experiences at the monastery that day. We were grateful for their help and grateful to have met these serious young people and their teachers. An identical day at the monastery with another group from St. Bonaventure High School is planned for February.

TEN YEARS OF PUBLISHING OUR NEWSLETTER

In January of 2006, three months after we had moved here to our new home in the mountains above Santa Paula, we finally decided the time had come to give in to the pleas of our Friends and begin publishing a newsletter. We needed a new method of announcing the monthly Friends gatherings and a new method of keeping in touch with everyone. At first, we tried printing the newsletters ourselves on our computer printers, but we soon found a Santa Paula print shop willing to do a much better job than we could and at a reasonable price. Ever since, month after month, except November when we mail out our invitations for the Feast of St. Barbara, Steve Crane of Crane Printing in Santa Paula—printer extraordinaire—has printed the St. Barbara Monastery Newsletter. This adds up to one hundred and ten issues now!

On the Tuesday before every Friends' gathering, we bring the newsletter to him on a flash drive and then, sitting as *his* desk, using *his* computer, make all the last minute changes and corrections, tweaking the photos and colors, etc. (What other printer would let a customer do that!) A couple of hours later, Steve has the finished product ready for us—almost a thousand pieces nowadays—and we begin the laborious, low-tech process of folding the newsletters and stuffing the envelopes. Most months, the newsletter has been dropped off at the post office by 5:00 PM that same day and is on its way to you.



CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

After much time spent, first finding the right company, and then having them design windows to fit our building, we have finally received our beautiful window frames from J. Sussman, Inc out in New York. In order to save big money on shipping costs, they were sent to us without glass in them. Over the next few weeks the glass will be manufactured and then installed in the frames before the final product is installed in the chapel. In the meantime, there is much going on “behind the scenes” as it were, as we prepare for the next phase of finishing up everything that needs to go in behind the walls before they are plastered. Our fire sprinkler company is working up their design, as well as the heating and air conditioning company. We are grateful to have multiple well-qualified electricians from our various churches in the area all working together to come up with the best solution for getting a new electrical service in from the main road. Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers. It is an exciting time as we can finally see light at the end of the tunnel as we believe our “move-in” date will be during this calendar year!