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ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

FRIENDS' GATHERING

January 30th, 2022

4:00 PM Presentation

***THE SEVENTY APOSTLES:
WHO THEY ARE,
HOW WE KNOW,
WHERE THEY WENT.***

Speaker: Mark Kern

St. Athanasius Church, Santa Barbara

5:00 PM Vespers

6:00 PM Potluck



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Lately, we have been rereading yet again the wonderful *Conversation of St. Seraphim With His Disciple Motovilov*.

In brief, what the Saint tells us to do is to go about our individual prayer with great care. He repeats what the various prayer books counsel in preparation for prayer, i.e., while standing before our icons, to begin by quieting our mind and making a few prostrations to help us focus. Then he counsels us to begin reading our prayers unhurriedly, even slowly, and with attention to every word and phrase.

If some word especially grabs one's attention—strikes one, so to speak—pause and dwell on it for as long as one can. Or if some word warms one's heart, stay with it as long as this lasts, for this is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Our tendency is to continue reading at once. We may even be inclined to hurry, supposedly to come to the end of the appointed prayers. This is a BIG MISTAKE, St. Seraphim tells us. When something grabs our attention or warms our heart as we pray, this is the presence of the Holy Spirit. How ridiculous it is to ignore Him, when it is He Who is the object of our prayers!

St. Seraphim gives the amusing example of a visitor arriving at our door. We go to the door and invite him in, saying “Come in! Come in! And then, if once we are sitting together in the living room, for example, we were to keep saying “Come in! Come in!” our visitor would think we are deranged!

This is the same thing as, having been visited by the Holy Spirit—which is the very aim of our prayers—we continue to pray, asking him to “Come in!”

Someone will probably ask: “What should I do if I don't finish my prayers?” The answer is: You have reached the end—the very purpose—of your prayer. The grace of the Holy Spirit is with you!

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters
of St. Barbara Monastery

(*The Conversation of St. Seraphim with Motovilov* is usually included in the books about the life of St. Seraphim and is published separately as a booklet or pamphlet as well.)

MARK KERN: OUR JANUARY FRIENDS' SPEAKER



Our good friend, Mark Kern of St. Athanasius Church in Santa Barbara, was about to give his presentation on the Seventy Apostles at a Friends' Gathering two years ago. The arrival of the Covid pandemic made it necessary to cancel our monthly Friends' Gatherings altogether. We welcome him now and eagerly await hearing what he has to tell us about his fascinating research regarding these key figures from early Church history. They are so important to the spread of Christianity, and so little is widely known about them!

Mark's research was originally written as a thesis for the MTh degree through the Antiochian House of Studies. Currently, he is engaged in further studies toward a PhD. We wish him MANY YEARS to uncover more of the little known story surrounding the first Christians and the earliest years of the Church.



PRAYER RETREAT

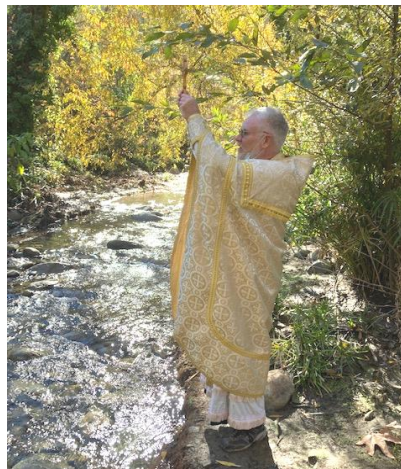
On the weekend of January 20-22, many of the parishioners of St. Athanasius Church in Santa Barbara participated in a retreat entitled "The Practice of Prayer." The retreat was organized by Dorothy Alexander as part of her St. Stephen's Course studies and held partially at The Glen Tavern Inn in Santa Paula and St. Barbara Monastery. Workshops were offered by Fr. Symeon Halsell of St. Athanasius Church (*The Jesus Prayer*), Khouria Cayce-Marie (*Praying With Icons*), and by several long-time parishioners, including Dorothy Alexander (*Intercessory Prayer*), Subdeacon Stephen Butler (*Corporate and Liturgical Prayer*), Jane Meyer (*Ways to Pray*), and Mother Victoria (*The Teaching of St. Seraphim on Prayer*).



THE BLESSING OF WATER AT THEOPHANY



The two huge winter storms that came our way turned our dry creek bed into a raging torrent. But just in time before the Feast of Theophany, it slowed down enough for the Great Blessing of Water to take place. Pictured is our priest Father Jude Lepine with Mother Paraskeva, Sr. Photini and Mother Nina.



PURCHASE OF NEIGHBORING HOUSE

We can still hardly believe it! Escrow closed on the neighboring property on December 30th! Our new house is already occupied by Sister Joanna (our lay sister) and Patty Edwards (our novice). Soon they will be joined by a long-term visitor who is interested in our monastic community. Glory to God! Our deepest thanks to all who assisted in making this miracle happen!



The house came to us largely furnished. Moreover, the property came with a number of wonderful and much appreciated inhabitants: eleven chickens, an aviary filled with songbirds and quail (who were delighted to learn their new owners, being monastics, are vegetarians), a cat and two wonderful Australian shepherds pictured at left. That's Leila on the left and Cody on the right enjoying

Sisar Creek, which divides the original monastery property from the new.