

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

The June Gathering of the Friends of ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

June 24th, 2018

4:00 pm Presentation:

***“WHEN BROTHERS DWELL
TOGETHER IN UNITY”***

*Speaker: Rev. Charalambos Fox
Pastor of St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church
Santa Barbara, CA*

Vespers: 5:00 PM

Potluck 6:00 PM

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,

By Thy Passion, O Christ, have we been freed from passions. . .

By Thy Passion upon the Cross, Thou hast become a well-spring of dispassion for me. . .

These lines and variations of them are from the hymnography of the Church. (See especially Tones I and VIII of the Sunday Octoechos.) But what do they mean? We have heard some persons dismiss them as nothing more than examples of a literary device, a mere poetic play on words with no real meaning. But is anything in the liturgical texts meaningless?

[First of all, let us clear away the rather new popular use of the word ‘passion’ in contemporary English as in “She has a passion for gardening.” This is by no means the sense of the word ‘passion’ we are examining here. By ‘Passion’—with a capital P—we are referring to Christ’s Passion, i.e., His suffering and Crucifixion. And by ‘passions’—with a lower case ‘p’—we are referring to the tendencies in human nature which, if not controlled, lead to sin.]

So the question before us is: ‘How can Christ’s Passion—His suffering and death on the Cross—be said to have freed us from the tendencies in our nature that unchecked lead us to sin and enslave us?’ After all, do we not find ourselves continually struggling to control the passions?

Like most everything in Christian spiritual life, the answer is not really accessible by merely taking thought, by working out the logic. Rather it is by entering into the mystery of Christ’s suffering and death ourselves that we can discover to some limited degree the meaning and reality of what the Church is proclaiming when she says *By Thy Passion, O Christ, have we been freed from passions. . .*

When in Holy Week—and indeed at every Divine Liturgy—the Church invites us to enter and experience the mystery of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ by reliving it liturgically, we are given the possibility of accessing this truth within our hearts and souls, the deepest parts of our being. Do we not then sense the bonds of the passions loosening, dissolving within ourselves? Who can hold on to pride or anger while standing before the Cross and clinging to it?

There is an even “steeper path” by which we may enter into Christ’s Passion and find our passions withered and faded away. This is by humbly embracing the Passion of Christ in our own bodies as well as in our souls as did the martyrs, the confessors, and every person who has suffered *in the Name of Christ*, be it from illness, sorrows, the evil intent of others or even what the world calls “accidents.” Then it is that we come to see that, while we thought we were seeking God, God has in fact been embracing us. In discovering and receiving such love, do we not find our passions “vanishing like smoke”?

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters
of St. Barbara Monastery

ST. SIMEON CHURCH, SANTA CLARITA, HOLDS A MONASTERY WORK PARTY



On Saturday, June 9th, a group of over twenty-five parishioners from St. Simeon Antiochian Church in Santa Clarita came to the monastery to help with projects of all kinds. The event was organized with enthusiasm by Ramona Blanski—a long time friend of the monastery and member of St. Simeon's.

Even before everyone had arrived, the early bird volunteers started in on fieldwork,

the main task of the day. By the end of the afternoon, both lavender fields (which had been destroyed in the Thomas Fire last winter) were completely replanted with lavender seedlings! Also, part of the upper field was fenced in to protect future plantings of fruit trees from deer, the belfry was all but finished, and numerous sachets were filled with lavender for upcoming sales at the Greek Festival in Camarillo and the Ojai Lavender Festival, both scheduled for the end of this month.



The work was punctuated by prayer in the chapel with the sisters (6th Hour at noon and Vespers at the end of the afternoon), hearty Lenten meals prepared ahead of time by the ladies of St. Simeon's, and an hour or so with Father George Ajalat (the priest of St. Simeon Church) and Mother Victoria, discussing the important topic of living the Orthodox Christian life in this increasingly secular society. The photos included here testify to the wonderful and

productive day enjoyed by everyone. There is already talk of having another such enjoyable and profitable day together.

A SPECIAL CHILDREN'S DAY AT THE MONASTERY



On June 19th, the staff of the Ojai Raptor Center once again came to the monastery with their birds to present a fascinating educational program to the children of St. Athanasius Summer School along with children from the Ojai Catholic Homeschooling Group and from St. George Church in Hesperia. About fifty children attended to learn how the Raptor Center rehabilitates injured birds, cares for them and, when possible, returns them to the wild. There was plenty of time to ask a lot of questions and get even more closely acquainted with

the visiting raptors, which included several different owls, a red-tail hawk (pictured above), a peregrine falcon and an American kestrel.

Once the birds had gone on their way back to their home at the Raptor Center, there was time for the children to explore the monastery property, especially the creek, before the bell rang to call everyone to the chapel for the Sixth Hour.



Rev. Michael Rozdilsky of St. George Church served and said a few words reminding everyone how important a part of God's creation these raptors are.

A lovely Lenten lunch prepared by the sisters was enjoyed by all. And then it was time to say "goodbye" as most of the children and their teachers had to go on their way back home. The group from Victorville was able to stay longer and attend Vespers

with the sisters. God willing, the monastery will continue hosting children for this much appreciated wildlife program every year.

On Sunday, July 15th, at 10:00 AM, Rev. Arkadiusz Mironko will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Monastery preceded by the 3rd and 6th Hours at 9:30 AM. Everyone is welcome!