

*St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 921-1563 – [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org)*

# *July Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery*

*Sunday, July 29th, 2018*

*4:00 pm Presentation:*

*The Meaning of Holy Chrismation  
in our Life in Christ*

*Speaker: Very Rev. Michael Laffoon*

*Pastor of St. Mark Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA*

*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.

**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,

A few days ago, we visited some friends who happily introduced us to their new dog—a mix, but mostly a beautiful black lab. Of course, we couldn't resist playing with him and listening to our friends recount his antics. It was obvious the dog had won their hearts and was quickly winning ours as well. At some point, the conversation turned serious as our friends expressed a question troubling them: “Will Rover have a place in the life to come?”

One finds hardly anything at all on this subject in books of theology, although quite a lot of discussion about it is to be found on the internet. What one finds in theological books is the teaching of the Church that could be applied to our subject rather than anything directly addressing our specific question. (Meanwhile, the one sure thing to be concluded from the material on the internet is that the question is not frivolous. It constitutes a *bona fide* and worthy subject for pastoral as well as theological attention.)

We know the opinion of at least one saint in response to the question. He is quoted to have said that, sadly, animals have only this one earthly life. However, we also know of a respected Orthodox professor of theology, who disagreed with this view and forthrightly remarked to his class: “Can you imagine heaven without Rusty (the seminary cat)?” “Or,” someone was quick to add, “can you imagine it with St. Gerasimos but not his lion?”

What teaching of the Church, then, has some bearing on our subject? As the Feast of Transfiguration draws near and our thoughts turn to the meaning of this celebration and its implications, we find that the theology connected with this Feast probably more than anything else speaks to our question.

While we cannot summarize this theology here on one small page of our Newsletter, perhaps the following quotation from St. Maximus the Confessor (6th century) conveys the essential idea sufficiently. He writes:

*Man is not a being isolated from the rest of creation; by his very nature he is bound up with the whole of the universe. . . . In his way to union with God, man in no way leaves creatures aside, but gathers together in his love the whole cosmos disordered by sin, that it may be transfigured by grace.*

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***VISIT OF ST. ANDREW, RIVERSIDE, TEEN SOYO***

On Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, thirty-some teens and their chaperones, carving a day out of their annual summer excursion to points of Orthodox interest in California, arrived at St.



Barbara Monastery from their nearby campsite at Steckel Park. The day began with Divine Liturgy celebrated in the monastery church by Fr. Thomas Hernandez of St. Andrew's. Following a quick breakfast and despite the heat, our guests then set to work at their first task: forming a "chain gang," they succeeded to move a record number of pallets of brick from one end of the monastery property to the other in barely an hour! Afterwards, they divided up into

teams and tackled a multitude of smaller projects: replanting lavender where the recent heat wave had caused a number of seedlings to wither, weeding the fields, polishing brass

(pictured above), raking paths through the woods, sanding weathered window frames, staining the walls of a newly constructed shed, as well as "sit-down work"—filling lavender sachets and preparing prayer cards for this July mailing of the Newsletter. Father Josiah Trenham was able to join the group somewhat later and, after breaking for lunch and a major water balloon battle (pictured at right), it was back to work.



The joyful and productive day concluded with Vespers, served by Father Thomas Hernandez. Our guests then went on their way in high spirits (to the beach!), having accomplished an enormous number of very helpful and even difficult tasks. Everyone at the monastery is most grateful!

## ***SUMMER FESTIVALS***

Despite the lack of a lavender harvest at the monastery this summer due to the December Thomas Fire, the monastery was able to participate in three summer festivals where our lavender products were sold. Many thanks to St. Andrew Church, Riverside, for selling our lavender oil, sachets and hydrosol spray



on our behalf at their “Greek Festival Express’ on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, we were selling these same products simultaneously at the annual Ojai Lavender Festival. The previous week we had a booth at the St. Demetrius Church’s Greek Festival in Camarillo, selling both our lavender products as well as items from our bookstore. We are grateful for these opportunities, which allow us to earn a significant portion of the funds needed to tide the monastery over the summer.



## ***ST. LUKE, GARDEN GROVE, YOUNG ADULT WORK PARTY***

A group of about twenty young adults organized by Elias Deeb together with Father Michael Tassos, pastor of St. Luke Church in Garden Grove, and Rev. Deacon Nicholas



Mamey of St. Mark Church in Irvine, spent Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at the monastery working on a number of important tasks. They transported more brick from the area along Sisar Creek, which we call “the sliver,” to the lower parking lot; worked on repairing the gazebo (pictured at below), which was severely damaged in December’s Thomas Fire, and

stained the window frames prepped earlier by the teens from St. Andrew’s. After the Sixth Hour and Memorial Service in the chapel and a hearty lunch, time was set aside for a lively discussion (pictured above) on the topic of living the Christian life in our increasingly non-Christian society. Plenty of time remained to continue work on the various projects begun earlier, and then the day concluded with Vespers, served by Fr. Michael Tassos and Fr. Deacon Nicholas Mamey, before the group set out on their return trip to Orange County.

