


St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Santa Paula - Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060-9516
(805) 921-1563 – www.stbarbaramonastery.org



***THERE WILL BE NO GATHERING
IN MAY, 2020
OF THE FRIENDS
OF ST. BARBARA MONASTERY***

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.

CHRIST IS RISEN!



INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Due to the pandemic we are announcing for the third time in a row cancellation of our monthly Friends' Gathering. (May we not have to do this yet again! But who can tell?) Meanwhile, we want you to know it truly has meant a lot to us to hear from so many of you during this unusual time, some living nearby and some far away. It makes us realize that you are friends of St. Barbara Monastery not only in name but in very deed. May the Lord bless you for remembering us!

During the past couple of weeks in particular, the word 'friend' has turned up repeatedly in the hymnography of the Pentecostarion, where the reference is to Christ. This has led us to reflect on the exalted meaning of this word, far beyond the way we customarily use it, that God Himself has given it.

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”
(John 15: 13-15)

In light of the Crucifixion and all that God has done for mankind, the Church has no trouble recognizing that God wants to be and indeed has made Himself our Friend! And so she sings:

“Thou in Thy great power didst destroy death’s dominion and didst show forth unto all Thy dread Resurrection. And thus we now glorify Thee, O only Friend of man.” *(Sessional Hymn from Matins, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman)*

“O Master, Who wast crucified with thieves, Thou didst deliver from crafty thieves and soul-corrupting passions all them that with one accord praise Thy crucifixion and arising, O man-befriending Lord.” *(Canon, Ode 6, Sunday of the Blind Man)*

How bold these verses must have sounded in the ears of antiquity, accustomed to looking up at the heavens with fear. How inappropriately familiar it must have seemed to call God “Friend!” But this is the Gospel message! The Lord has made Himself mankind’s Friend; and He looks to us, whom He made in His own image, to be His friends! This state of affairs is astounding, incomprehensible, almost unthinkable! But this is the truth we live by and which we celebrate.

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters
of St. Barbara Monastery

THERESA MARIA DZIUBEK GRADUATES FROM THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE



Our close friend, Theresa Maria Dziubek, is one of many seniors in the U.S. who this spring was not able to have the public graduation ceremony she had looked forward to since becoming a freshman at neighboring Thomas Aquinas College. In fact, she was not even able to complete her last year of studies on campus. When the Coronavirus pandemic emerged, she was obliged to return to her home in Connecticut, where she finished her classes for the year and defended her senior thesis via Zoom.

We met Theresa when she was a freshman and a Byzantine Rite Catholic with a deep interest in Orthodoxy. She accompanied us on many Sundays, when we attended the Divine Liturgy at various area Orthodox Churches, often came to services at the monastery and shared meals with us. On Lazarus Saturday in her sophomore year, she was chrismated into the Orthodox Church by Archbishop Benjamin in the monastery chapel.

During this past academic year, Theresa was working on her Senior Thesis, a graduation requirement at the college. We had hoped to see her defend her thesis in person, but instead watched her defense via Zoom at the monastery. The title of her thesis is “The Humblest of Senses: On the Precision of Man’s Sense of Touch and its Place in the Intellectual Life.” Yes, we were impressed too! She did an honorable job before her inquisitors – er, tutors (as they call the professors at Thomas Aquinas College).

We will miss Theresa very much, and we will surely keep in touch with her. Oh, and by the way, Theresa is getting married in August. We wish her and her fiance all the best in their new life together.

IT’S ALMOST LAVENDER SEASON AGAIN!

We have spent almost the entire month of May nursing our two lavender fields. First came two intense weeks of weeding, because the heavy rains this spring produced a bumper crop of tall weeds (wild grasses) and short, spreading ones (clover), which soon threatened to strangle not only our small, newer plants, but even our most mature, established bushes.

No sooner had we made significant progress with the weeding, however, than we found ourselves faced with another major task: the planting of new lavender wherever previous plantings had perished. Since the Coronavirus lockdown meant no parish



work parties could come and help, the lion's share of the labor fell to our most hale and hardy sisters of whom two are pictured here. Thankfully, as we send this Newsletter off to the printer, the end of this work is in sight and we can anticipate watching the blooming of the fragrant, purple spikes in a little over a month.

We should add here that because of the Coronavirus restrictions the Ojai Lavender Festival has been postponed until October (when fresh lavender is not in bloom) and the St. Demetrius Greek Orthodox Church's annual festival in June has been cancelled. These are the two venues where we ordinarily have sold the bulk of our fresh lavender as well as our various lavender products (lip balm, salve, hydrosol, and sachets). (Should you have ideas for alternative venues where we might sell our fresh lavender, please let us know: 805-921-1563 or

sbmonastery@gmail.com.)

ETERNAL MEMORY: V. REV. CATALIN MITESCU

Archpriest Catalin Mitescu, founder and pastor of St. Anne Romanian Orthodox Church in Pomona, passed away on Saturday, March 20th at the age of 82. He and his wife, Preoteasa Nicole, were both close friends of St. Barbara Monastery. The sisters would visit St. Anne's on special occasions, bringing along the monastery icon with the relic of St. Anne on the parish feast day, and Fr. Catalin and Preoteasa would visit and attend Friends' Gatherings when they could make the long trip to Santa Paula from their home in Claremont.



Born in Bucharest in 1938, he emigrated to Canada with his parents as a child and then as a young man graduated from McGill University in Montreal, later earning his PhD in Physics from CalTech. He became a professor of Physics and Astronomy at Pomona College, where he taught for 47 years.

Father Catalin was ordained a deacon in 1980, a priest in 1987 and was elevated to the rank of archpriest in 2007. He served parish churches in Los Angeles and Claremont before organizing the parish church in Pomona. He retired from the active priesthood in 2015.