

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

CHRIST IS BORN!



GLORIFY HIM!

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Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

The Christmas season, 2013, finds our monastery happily occupied with the ongoing construction of the new chapel. To the rat-a-tat of incessant hammering and the whirring of electric saws, we nevertheless light the lampadas as usual in our house chapel and sing the round of daily services with their special pre-Christmas hymnody announcing the immanence of Christ's coming—or, as the Typikon grandly calls it, *The Coming in the Flesh of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*. Meanwhile--yes, of course!--the pre-Christmas baking is progressing at full tilt, filling the house with spicy festal aromas, and the doorbell rings at least twice as much for deliveries of mysterious packages, some labeled to be refrigerated but not opened before Dec. 25th. There is, indeed, anticipation in the air at every turn.

We still don't know for certain if we will be able to continue building the chapel now to the point where the shell is complete—our immediate goal. Mercifully, at least from the point of view of construction, the winter rains have not yet arrived and only a day or two with the likelihood of showers is in the weather forecast for the next few weeks. How far we can go with the construction depends on what funds come in from our current fundraising efforts. Some of you have asked for particulars, and we are astonished and very happy to tell you that, as we take this newsletter to the printer, by the grace of God we have already received nearly half of what is needed to finish the shell—about \$70,000.00! So, there is reason to hope we will reach this interim goal. On the back of this newsletter are photos showing the present status of the construction. If you would like to see updates from time to time, you can find the latest photos posted on our website (www.stbarbaramonastery.org).

We wish each and every one of you, near and far, a most blessed celebration of Christmas and a peaceful and truly grace-filled New Year.

Abbess Victoria
and the community of
St. Barbara Monastery

THE FEAST OF ST. BARBARA, 2013

Once again this year we were blessed to have with us for our altar feast His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN, who presided at both the Vigil on the eve of the feast and at the Divine Liturgy on the feast day itself. Joining him were nine priests and a deacon: V. Rev. Nicholas Boldireff, V. Rev. Lawrence Russell, V. Rev. Paul Waisanen, V. Rev. Nicholas Speier, V. Rev. John Finley, V. Rev. Josiah Trenham, V. Rev. John Sommer, Rev. Yousuf Rassam, Hieromonk Dionisei and Hierodeacon Neonil. Ruth Rutledge was also with us again to direct the choir at the Divine Liturgy, and a large crowd gathered to celebrate with us.



An article about St. Barbara and our monastery was published in the online magazine *Mission and State* in late November. Remarkably, the author, Jeff Wing of Santa Barbara, wrote the piece after just two visits! The article can be found by googling either "Mission and State" or the Russian site "Pravmir."

A WORD FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER MITCHELL DENNY

Our chapel construction site this morning is a flurry of activity. Cement-dust clouds rise as blocks are being cut and fitted onto our nearly 3 ft. high walls, and the openings for the windows and doors are starting to take shape. It is a miracle of sorts. When Mother Victoria brought me on to this project earlier this year, I was both honored and, well, unsure. As everyone familiar with this entire process knows, this project has faced setback after setback (mostly county regulation related), all of which were unforeseen. Given that, how many "unforeseen"s were still lurking in the shadows? Were we weeks, months, or still years away from obtaining the much sought after building permit? Thank God, I came to find out that I truly was being passed

the baton for the final stretch. Enough blood, sweat, tears, and treasure had been spent, and on August 6th our first piece of heavy equipment came across the bridge to begin the grading.



The next month or so will bring about dramatic change in the look of the chapel. By the end of January, the block walls will be completed and the steel framing of the roof will be attached extending to the height of three stories. As we move into the new year, there are still questions in my mind. Will we have the funding needed to complete the project? What will happen once we need additional sign-offs from our good friends at the County of Ventura? But these questions don't have nearly the weight they did in the beginning. I am learning from those wiser than I that worrying is of little use. It is a much better thing to take each day as it comes "with peace of soul and with the firm conviction that God's will governs all"; that is to say, whatever happens is from the hand of God for our salvation. And so we trust that, according to His will, we will see those meant to do so come alongside and help us with the funds needed to bring this to completion, that by His mercy He will guide the hands of all the craftsmen who have worked and are yet to come and work on the chapel, and that in His time we will see this house of prayer built to His glory.

CHAPEL FUNDRAISER

A member of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery has provided a significant prize for a raffle on behalf of the monastery chapel Building Fund. The prize is seven (7) nights at the beautiful Westin Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Villas in Hawaii for any date in 2014 plus \$1,200 for airfare and an economy rental car. Tickets are \$100.00 and must be purchased before January 1, 2014, so there are only a few days left to enter. The drawing will take place on Sunday, January 5, 2014. To purchase tickets, please call St. Luke Church Office (714-971-2244) or the monastery (805-921-1563). The winner need not be present to win.