

*St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery*

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**There will be  
no Friends' Gathering  
in June 2022.**

**See you in July!**



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

As Christians, we have the great privilege of making firm in ourselves the realities of our life in Christ. Christ has renewed us by His death and resurrection, and we have followed Him into His death and resurrection through baptism. The baptized person wears a white robe upon emerging from the baptismal font--a symbol of his cleansed and newly illumined state in Christ. Nevertheless, there are still many distorted thought patterns that need to be removed as he learns to walk, by the grace of God, in this new life. He will need to consciously address his accustomed ways of viewing God, himself, others and the world. He will have to learn to reject old thought patterns and begin to develop Christlike habits of thought. Saint Paul admonishes us to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2, NKJV)

Our liturgical services can be of great help to us in this process. We are invited to consider deeply the facts of our Christian faith and to cultivate a yearning for the realities about which they inform us. We are invited to take the time to intentionally contemplate and then enter into these realities as we strive to solidify them in our hearts and minds.

Consider the invitation we are given in the service for the Ascension: “Leaving the things of earth, and surrendering to the earth things of ashes, come, *let us come to our senses and raise our eyes and thoughts on high*; let us, O mortals, turn our gaze together with our senses, up unto the heavenly gates. Let us consider ourselves present at the Mount of Olives, and gaze intently at the Redeemer Who is riding upon a cloud; for the Lord hath hastened up from there into the Heavens....Our nature, which fell of old, hath been raised up higher than the angels, and hath been placed on the throne of God in a manner surpassing understanding.” (Pentecostarion, Ikos for kontakion and troparion from Ode VIII).

Throughout the year, we are led by the Holy Spirit in the Church’s cycle of services to review salvation history. This post-Paschal season, in particular, is liturgically very rich, as we arrive at the culmination of Christ’s work for and in us. We celebrate His Ascension, where our nature is taken up into heaven. We celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit by which we can be transformed. It is through the Holy Spirit, with our active cooperation, that we can be freed from our worldly ways and views, allowing us to live increasingly godly lives in Christ.

As we strive to make firm in ourselves the new man we are in Christ, seated as we already are “in the heavenlies,” and as we press forward to live out our calling in Christ here on earth, by the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, let us say, with Saint Paul, “Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me....All I can say is that I forget the past and strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:12-14, New Jerusalem Bible.) And what is this “prize” but our completed maturation in Christ, where there is no discrepancy between “my” way of life and His way of life, where we are fully united with Christ, made firm in reality—Reality with a capital R, for it is the reality of life in God.

The Sisters of St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery



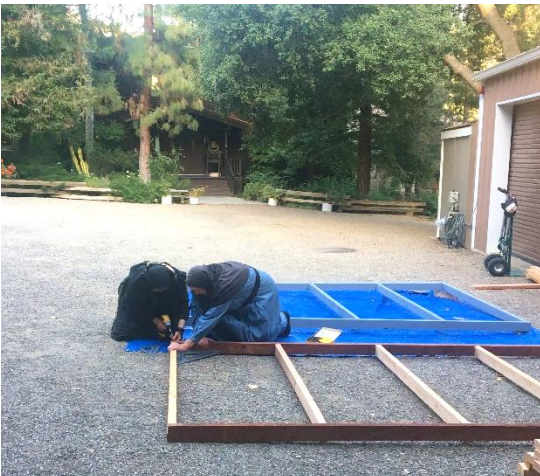
## ***PREPPING FOR SUMMER FESTIVALS***



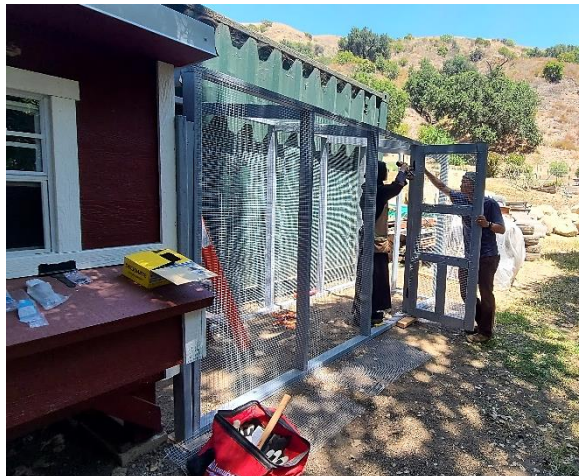
**Left:** Harvesting calendula and lavender. **Above:** Making lavender & calendula lip balm.

## ***UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS***

Recently, Michael Joellson, a new monastery friend who works in the construction business, gifted the monastery with a truckload of power tools and home improvement equipment. Power saws, sanders, grinders, ladders, and other most helpful tools of the highest quality appeared as if “out of the woodwork.” Not long after, the sisters happily put the tools to use by building a small chicken run from scratch to attach to one of our existing coops. No doubt this equipment will enable the monastery to tackle many other such small projects in the future. We thank God for these unexpected blessings!



*Framing the walls of the run:  
I think we nailed it!*



*Hanging the door*

## ***ST. ATHANASIUS SUMMER SCHOOL DAY TRIP***

On Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, the monastery briefly hosted a group of 20 kids, their teachers and chaperones, including Fr. Nicholas Speier and Fr. Symeon Halsell, from St. Athanasius Church Summer School in Goleta. This day trip did not begin at the monastery but rather at nearby Poco Farm—a small 4-acre educational farm in Ojai. To begin the tour, everyone gathered under a large oak tree in the middle of the farm—determined to be 800 years old by a local arborist! Grace, our tour



guide, accompanied by Francis, the farm guard dog, led everyone through an engaging adventure of exploration and education. We learned about various interrelated aspects of God’s creation and our human stewardship of His gifts of flora, fauna, soil, air and water. (Did you know that animals can sense a nearby human’s heartbeat?) Racing to the tractor, picking and eating fresh tangelos from a giant tangelo tree (not to mention scaling its inviting branches), interacting with curious and friendly baby goats and petting a slightly reluctant chicken stand out as highlights from this 1.5-hour tour.



*Baby goat receives pets and scratches while mama keeps a close eye.*

After this lively event, all proceeded up the hill to the monastery to join the nuns in praying the Sixth Hour. Having worked up quite an appetite from a busy morning, everyone sat down at the picnic tables to a burrito-bar lunch and homemade cookies. After a brief time exploring the monastery grounds, it was time to say goodbye. When asked about what her favorite part of the day was, one girl answered, “Worshipping God in church...and petting the baby goats!”

### **June Festivals**

**Friday – Sunday, June 24, 25, 26<sup>th</sup>: Ventura Greek Festival, Camarillo, CA**  
**Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>: Ojai Lavender Festival, Ojai, CA**