

March 7, 2021



THE IMAGE...

(Jn 12:45 & 14:9; Heb 1:3; Col 1:15)

www.stjohnofdamascus.org

Publication of St. John of Damascus Orthodox Church, Poway, CA

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

TONE 6

MEATFARE SUNDAY

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Welcome!

...to all who have gathered to follow Jesus Christ and manifest the Kingdom of God in the Liturgy of His Church. If this is your first time with us, give us a chance to get to know you.

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A Word from the Holy Fathers

Have confidence in the compassion of our Creator. Reflect well on what you are now doing, and keep before you the things you have done. Lift up your eyes to the overflowing compassion of heaven, and while He waits for you, draw near in tears to our merciful Judge. Having before your mind that He is a Just Judge, do not take your sins lightly; and having also in mind that He is compassionate, do not despair.

The God-Man gives man confidence before God.

— *St. Gregory the Great*

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Email info@stjohnofdamascus.org

Include "News at St John's" as the subject

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

This week is our final preparation before we enter into Great Lent. Starting Monday the Church eases us into the rigors of fasting, instructing us to refrain just from meat. It is a week to prepare for how we will participate in Great Lent, the Great School of Repentance.

Whenever we go on a trip, or take a vacation, we make a plan so that we can maximize our experience in the limited time we have. Our time in this life is limited and while we do not know the length of time, the days can, indeed, be counted. The days of Great Lent are also numbered & we must plan our time wisely to get the most benefit from it.

We are called to fast not only from certain types of foods, but from the amount of food we eat. We are called to fast not only from food, but to reduce other things in our life that distract us from our true purpose: learning to love God and others as God loves us.

We are called to increase our time and attention to the "things from above." Prayer, worshipping as Christ's Body — the Church, charitable works, scripture and other spiritual reading are all part of the things we are called to "add" as we "subtract" other things.

Due to responsibilities and circumstances in our life, we are not always able to participate in this incredible opportunity fully. We will have to make choices about what services we will attend, what our increased spiritual efforts will be, as well how fasting will "look" in our house.

As we prepare to enter Great Lent this week, this is the time for us to sit down and make a concrete plan for how we (and our family) will participate in Great Lent.

I encourage you to make it a priority. Please reach out to me if you have any questions!

In Christ,

Parish Life

MASLENITSA NEXT SUNDAY (3/14) ALL ARE WELCOME!

With the new directives from our Archbishop we are able to have fellowship meals OUTSIDE as long as adhere to all the usual protective measures we have all grown to know (social distancing, etc.).

Some of beloved members are hosting a traditional Slavic Maslenitsa meal of blini (thin pancakes) with a variety of toppings (salmon, herring, caviar as well as maple syrup, jam, etc).

There will also be coffee!

While donations (\$5 suggested) are accepted all are welcome to participate and enjoy this first parish fellowship meal since the beginning of the pandemic.



PARISH BOOKSTORE NEW LENTEN MATERIALS

Our Parish Bookstore has a number of items to help us with our Lenten Journey.

We have prayer books, daily devotionals, short meditations, books about Great Lent and the Spiritual Life, Lenten cookbooks and even honey from one our Diocesan monasteries.

Visit our bookstore in the parish hall. Speak to Evan Keeling, our Bookstore Manager or one of our Greeters for help.

ADULT EDUCATION AT ST. JOHN'S

Adults are blessed to have a number of opportunities to grow in their knowledge and understanding of our Faith.

Tuesdays 10:30am — Father's (Virtual) Café

Currently being held virtually via GoToMeeting, this one hour gathering is an opportunity to ask Fr Michael questions about our Faith and/or our parish and to visit with each other. We begin with prayer, read a short spiritual reflection and talk about whatever comes up.

The link for the meeting is.... <https://www.gotomeet.me/StJohnofDamascus/fatherscafe>

The password is **fellowship**

Wednesdays 7:00pm — Prayer & Being a PRAY-ER

This 5-week class with Fr Michael explores what prayer is as well as questions that often come up about prayer. This Wednesday will be the final class on this topic.

A new series on a new topic will begin after Holy Pascha.

This class meets via GoToMeeting at <https://www.gotomeet.me/StJohnofDamascus/wednesdayadulted>

The password is **grow**

Saturdays 1:00pm — Reading Group on Great Lent by Fr Alexander Schmemmann with Dn George.

This class is reading and discussing Fr. Schmemmann's famous book about Great Lent and what all the aspects of it (fasting, services, etc.) as Orthodox Christians.

Books are available in our parish bookstore.

The class meets via ZOOM at <https://uhealth.zoom.us/j/89973875832>

*All links to classes are included on our parish website calendar
www.stjohnofdamascus.org/calender*

**ST JOHN'S AUXILIARY
EASTER BAKE SALE**

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021

We will be holding our annual "Easter Bake Sale" on Sat April 3 from 11am-2pm.

We have a fully stocked freezer of all our traditional ethnic foods, and will have freshly made baked goods on the day.

Your favorites are sure to be available, however you need to order ahead of time and we encourage you to order early to get the items you want.

Our traditional Menu Flyer will be mailed & emailed in approximately a week. It will also be posted on our parish website and Facebook page.

We are very grateful for all our bakers and for the folks volunteering on the day!

THANK YOU for your support to St John's Auxiliary **and therefore your support to our parish**

Dates for 2021

Great Lent Begins	March 15
HOLY PASCHA	May 2
<i>Western Easter</i>	April 4
Ascension	June 10
Pentecost	June 20

FAST SEASONS

Great Lent/Holy Week	Mar 14-May 1
Apostles Fast	June 28
Dormition Fast	Aug 1-14
Nativity Fast/Advent	Nov 15-Dec 24

FAST-FREE WEEKS

Bright Week	May 2-9
Week after Pentecost	June 21-25
After Christmas	Dec 26-Jan 4

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
Archpastoral Visit of His Eminence
Archbishop Benjamin April 10-11**

His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin will make his annual archpastoral visit to St. John's on April 10 and 11.

Be sure to mark your calendars and plan on attending services that weekend.

Hopefully, we will be able to have a fellowship meal after Liturgy on Sunday to allow everyone to visit with him.



**Support our Parish Through the
Auxiliary's Scrip Program**

Purchase gift cards for your regular expenses through St John's Auxiliary Scrip Program (gas stations, grocery stores, retail stores, etc) and at no extra cost to you the parish will receive a percentage of your purchase.

See Beth Brown after Liturgy to purchase gift cards.



New Scrip Coordinator Needed

After a number of very faithful years, Beth Brown is stepping down as Scrip Coordinator.

If you are interested in helping with this program that has provided significant support to the parish over the years, please speak to Beth, Tanya Franchak or a member of the Auxiliary.

Today's Worship — Hymns

TROPARIA

Resurrection—Tone 6

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Your grave,
seeking Your most pure body.
You captured hell, not being tempted by it.
You came to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who rose from the dead, //
glory to You.

St John of Damascus —Tone 8

Teacher of Orthodoxy, piety, and purity!
Enlightener of the universe!
And divine inspiration to monastics
by your teachings we are all enlightened,
and by your spiritual music, O all-wise John of
Damascus,
pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our
souls!

KONTAKIA

St John of Damascus — Tone 4

Let us the faithful sing praises to John,
worthy of great honor the composer of hymns.
The star and teacher of the Orthodox Faith,
the defender of its doctrine.
Through the might of the Lord's Cross he
overcame heretical error!
Now he is fervent in prayer to Christ God,
to grant forgiveness of our sins.

Triodion—Tone 1

When You, O God, shall come to earth with
glory,
all things shall tremble,
and the river of fire shall flow before Your
judgment seat;
the books shall be opened, and the hidden
things disclosed;
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,
and make me worthy to stand at Your right
hand, O Righteous Judge!

PROKEIMENON & ALLELUIA

Prok. Tone 3 — *(Resurrection)* Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, His understanding is
beyond measure. *(Ps 146/147:5)*

v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps 146/147:1)

Alleluia Tone 8 — *Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our
Savior! (Ps. 94:1)*

*Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with
songs of praise. (Ps. 94:2)*

Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

Epistle — 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

⁹ But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.

¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

¹¹ And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

¹ Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

² If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Gospel — Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?' ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

⁴¹ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

⁴⁴ Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Our Life in Christ

UNDERSTANDING FASTING..... READ A COUPLE PER DAY THIS WEEK

1. A leader of a community asked Abba Poemen: "How can I gain the fear of God?" Abba Poemen replied: "How indeed can we gain the fear of God when we have bellies full of cheese and jars of salted fish?" Abba Poemen thus teaches us that the ultimate goal of fasting is to help lead us, or to open us, to the fear of God.
2. Another old man came to see one of the Fathers, who cooked a few lentils and said to him: "Let us say a few prayers," and the first completed the whole Psalter, and the brother recited the two great prophets by heart. When morning came, the visitor went away, and they forgot the food. Fasting here witnesses that the true nourishment of Christians is prayer and meditation on the word of God, not the eating of food.
3. A brother was hungry early in the morning, and he fought his desire so as not to eat before the third hour. When the third hour came, he forced himself to wait until the sixth hour. At that time he broke his loaves and sat down to eat, then stood up again, saying to himself: "Now wait until the ninth hour." At the ninth hour he said the prayer and saw the power of the devil like smoke rising from his manual work, and his hunger vanished.
4. It was said of an old man that one day he wanted a small fig. Taking one, he held it up in front of his eyes, and not being overcome by his desire, he repented, reproaching himself for even having had this wish. Fasting in both of these cases is the spiritual effort which establishes the spirit over the flesh.
5. Abba Joseph asked Abba Poemen: "How should we fast?" And Abba Poemen said: "I myself think it's good to eat every day a little at a time so as not to get full." Abba Joseph said: "Well, when you were young, didn't you used to fast for two days at a time?" And the old man said: "Believe me, indeed I did, for three days, and even a week. But the great elders tried all of this, and found that it is good to eat every day a little less each time. In this way, they showed us the royal highway, for it is light and easy." Abba Poemen teaches us that we should be careful not to undertake efforts too great for us. This gives the proper perspective in relation to the efforts praised in selections 3 and 4 above. It is better to make slow and steady progress with moderate efforts than to become discouraged or to miss the goal altogether with efforts too great for us.
6. Once two brothers went to visit an old man. It was not the old man's habit, however, to eat every day. When he saw the brothers, he welcomed them with joy, and said: "Fasting has its own reward, but if you eat for the sake of love, you satisfy two commandments, for you give up your own will and also fulfill the commandment to refresh others."
7. A brother said to an old man: "There are two brothers. One of them stays in his cell quietly, fasting for six days at a time, and imposing on himself a good deal of discipline, and the other serves the sick. Which one of them is more acceptable to God?" The old man replied: "Even if the brother who fasts six days were to hang himself up by the nose, he could not equal the one who serves the sick." Here we learn that love is above fasting, that we must not presume to put our fasting above "the more excellent way," the "new commandment" to love one another.
8. There was a man who was leading an ascetic life and not eating bread. He went to visit an old man. It happened that pilgrims also dropped by, and the old man fixed a modest meal for them. When they sat together to eat, the brother who was fasting picked up a single soaked pea and chewed it. When they arose from the table, the old man took the brother aside and said: "Brother, when you go to visit somewhere, do not display your way of life, but if you want to keep to it, stay in your cell and never come out." He accepted what the old man said, and after that behaved like the

Our Life in Christ

others whenever he met with them. We are reminded here that fasting must be done in secret, not before others, as the Lord has said: "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." --St. Matthew 6:17-18

9. It was said about an old man that he endured seventy weeks of fasting, eating only once a week. He asked God about certain words in the Holy Scripture, but God did not answer him. Then he said to himself: "Look, I have put in this much effort, but I haven't made any progress. So now I will go to see my brother and ask him." And when he had gone out, closed the door and started off, an angel of the Lord was sent to him, and said: "Seventy weeks of fasting have not brought you near to God. But now that you are humbled enough to go to your brother, I have been sent to you to reveal the meaning of the words." Then the angel explained the meaning which the old man was seeking, and went away. Along with fasting there must be humility! Fasting opens the way; it is a means to an end; it is not the end itself.

10. I myself once harshly judged a monk whom I saw drinking milk during the Great Fast. He did it so routinely that I thought, "Why, he must think nothing of the ascetic life." It was I who had forgotten the rule of the inner life -- that one judges himself and excuses others. I later learned that the monk was ill and had to have milk to ingest his medication. I learned something about hasty judgments. Here we learn that we must never judge another person.

11. Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said: "Abba, as much as I am able I practice a small rule, a little fasting, some prayer and meditation, and remain quiet, and as much as possible I keep my thought clean. What else should I do?" Then the old man stood up and stretched out his hands toward heaven, and his fingers became like ten torches of flame. And he said: "If you wish, you can become all flame." We must never be shortsighted about the goal of our Christian life with all its efforts. It is nothing less than theosis, union with the Living God, becoming "all flame."

St. Seraphim of Sarov on Fasting

- "Prayer, fasting, vigils, and all other Christian practices, however good they are in themselves, do not constitute the goal of our Christian life, although they serve as a necessary means to its attainment. The true goal of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. Fasting, vigils, prayers, alms-giving and all good deeds done for the sake of Christ are but means for the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. But note, my son, that only a good deed done for the sake of Christ brings us the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All that is done, if it is not for Christ's sake, although it may be good, brings us no reward in the life to come, nor does it give us God's grace in the present life."
- "One should make use of food daily to the extent that the body, fortified, may be the friend and assistant of the soul in the practice of virtue. Otherwise, the soul may weaken because it is exhausted."

St. John Chrysostom on Fasting

I speak not of such a fast as most persons keep, but of real fasting; not merely abstinence from meats, but from sins as well. For the nature of a fast is such that it does not suffice to deliver those who practice it unless it is done according to a suitable law. So that when we have gone through the labor of fasting we do not lose the crown of fasting, we must understand how and in what manner it is necessary to conduct the business since the Pharisee also fasted, but afterward went away empty and destitute of the fruit of fasting. The Publican did not fast, and yet he was accepted in preference to him who had fasted in order that you may learn that fasting is unprofitable unless all other duties accompany it.



LOOKING AHEAD

*The following are services and parish events **IN ADDITION** to the usual weekend services (Sat 4pm & Sun 8:30am).*

Sunday March 7 MEATFARE SUNDAY

Tuesday March 9

10:00am — Father's Virtual Café (via GoToMeeting)

7:00pm — Parish Council Meeting (via GoToMeeting)

Wednesday March 10

7:00pm — Adult Ed: Prayer & Being a PRAY-ER (via GoToMeeting)

Saturday March 13

1:00 pm — Reading Group with Dn George "Great Lent" by
Fr Schmemmann (via Zoom)

Sunday March 14—Forgiveness Sunday

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY —SET YOUR CLOCKS FORWARD 1HR

Immediately after Liturgy — Forgiveness Vespers
followed by Maslenitsa Meal & Fellowship Outside

Monday March 15

BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT

6:00pm — Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew

Tuesday March 16

10:00am — Father's Café

6:00pm — Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew

Wednesday March 17

6:00pm — Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew

Thursday March 18

6:00pm — Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew

Friday March 19

6:00pm — Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Saturday March 20

6:00pm — Great Vespers for the Resurrection (TIME CHANGE)

For more dates please visit our website: www.stjohnofdamsacus.org

Many Years!

Dennis Seitz (on his birthday—3/9)
Vivian Ketz (on her birthday — 3/13)

Confessions are held on Saturdays after Great Vespers or by appointment with Fr Michael.

PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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Attached Clergy: V. Rev. Alexander Federoff, Retired & Dn. George Shumaik

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