

March 21, 2021



# THE IMAGE...

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

[www.stjohnofdamascus.org](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org)

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

1ST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—TONE 8

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

RESTORATION OF THE HOLY ICONS



**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.



### A Word from the Holy Fathers

"To every thoughtful person there is a benefit"... and Christ implied more than this when he said, "He that seeks finds." ... Philip, not having learned anything from anyone but Christ who said to him only this, "Follow me," immediately obeyed and did not go back. In fact, he even became a preacher to others. For he ran to Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote." Do you see what a thoughtful mind he had, ...For the expression "we have found" belongs always to those who are in some way seeking. *St. John Chrysostom*



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



ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS ORTHODOX CHURCH + THE DIOCESE OF THE WEST + THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Parish Life

### LITURGY COMMEMORATION LOAVES Come on Time to have your loved ones prayed for

This Sunday we will also begin to again have the small commemoration loaves for people to have their loved ones prayed for.

We will be accepting names through the end of the Great Litany at Divine Liturgy. After that, any names that are submitted will be put aside to be remembered at the next Divine Liturgy.

### 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.

Check out the menu on our website at:

<https://stjohnofdamascus.org/calendar/>

Or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/events/2842022619394048/>

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**

### 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**

#### **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](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org/calender)***



## Parish Life

### 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.



### Use Amazon Smile & Support St John's

Amazon has a program that if you select Amazon Smile in your app settings (settings, amazon smile) or go to smile.amazon.com when you shop you can select a charity (ie, St John of Damascus Church) and a percentage of most purchases goes to the parish at no additional cost to you.

If you purchase Amazon gift cards through our scrip program the parish gets a double donation!

### 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.

### 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

## Today's Worship — Hymns

### TROPARIA

#### Resurrection—Tone 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!  
Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//  
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

#### Sunday of Orthodoxy —Tone 2

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One;  
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.  
Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh  
and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy.  
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:  
“Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,//  
by coming to save the world.”

### KONTAKIA

#### Sunday of Orthodoxy — Tone 8

No one could describe the Word of the Father;  
but when He took flesh from thee, O Theotokos,  
He accepted to be described,  
and restored the fallen image to its former state  
by uniting it to divine beauty.//  
We confess and proclaim our salvation in words  
and images.

### PROKEIMENON & ALLELUIA

**Prok. Tone 4** — *(Song of the Fathers)* Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever! *(Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3)*

*V. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us! (v. 4)*

**Alleluia Tone 4** — *V. Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. (Ps. 98:6)*

*V. They called to the Lord and He answered them. (Ps. 98:7a)*

## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Epistle — Hebrews 11: 24-26, 32-12:1

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. <sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. <sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated— <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

<sup>39</sup> And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,

### Gospel — John 1: 43-51

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Beth-saida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathana-el, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup> Nathana-el said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathana-el coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" <sup>48</sup> Nathana-el said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup> Nathana-el answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

## Our Life in Christ

### THE ANNUNCIATION—EXALTING THOSE OF LOW DEGREE



In most Orthodox churches, the image of the Mother of God towers over us—sometimes literally, as her icon fills the upper apse of the church temple, proclaiming there how she united heaven and earth by her willing assent to the Incarnation of the divine Messiah. In all her icons, she is a majestic figure—regal, composed, serene. Many icons of the Annunciation portray her as seated on a throne, and with a small footstool, as befits royalty. In all her images, she is a person of power.

This is as it should be, since icons portray the eschatological reality, and present not a naturalistic perspective, but a heavenly, hieratic one. An icon is not a painted photo or a portrait, but a proclamation of the person's heavenly glory. Thus, it is appropriate that Mary of Nazareth be presented as exalted by God to a place "more honourable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim."

But these heavenly images of her present power should not blind us to the low degree and powerlessness that she had while she lived and walked in Palestine. At the time of the Annunciation, Mary was not a person of power, but a simple peasant girl in a small town in Galilee, far

from the halls of the mighty in Jerusalem and further afield in Rome, and unconnected with the movers and shakers of the world. It would be hard to exaggerate her powerlessness as far as this world was concerned. She was a member of a despised race, the Jews, a nation that had lost the last bit of its national sovereignty when the Romans took over in 63 BC. In a world that respected age, she was young; in a culture that valued marriage, she was single; in a society that revered wealth, she was poor. She lived in Galilee, derisively called "Galilee of the Gentiles" by those in Judea, and the town of Nazareth was looked down upon even by others in Galilee. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" was a proverbial taunt uttered by Jews in neighbouring Cana (John 1:46). And we must remember that at the time of the Annunciation she was of the usual marriageable age—that is, about thirteen years old.

Later, loving devotion would adorn her story with other details, like tinsel on a beloved Christmas tree. The so-called *Protoevangelium of James*, written in the second century as a kind of devotional attempt to fill in the blanks of her life, supplies a number of biographical details not strictly historical. But the sober history of the Gospel preserves a picture of what we might expect—a young girl, unknown and poor, coming face to face one day with the eternal and the incalculable. Saint Luke's Gospel presents her as a young girl "betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph," and when the angel Gabriel informed her that she had been chosen to bear the Messiah and was about to

## Our Life in Christ

conceive Him, she was naturally “greatly troubled,” asking how this was possible since she had “never known a man” (Luke 1:27f). When it came time to offer the sacrifice required from those who had given birth, she and Joseph offered “the sacrifice of the poor” — two young pigeons (Leviticus 12:8, Luke 2:24). Neither does Saint Matthew’s Gospel present her as a celebrity: when Joseph receives news of her pregnancy, he considers divorcing her quietly (Matthew 1:18f). In neither of these accounts is Mary presented as famous or rich and powerful. And later in our Lord’s ministry, when people stumbled at His claims, they invoked His family with no suggestion that they were special: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” (Matthew 13:55f). It is clear enough from the Gospel records that Mary was not considered a celebrity by the world around her.

This is her greatest boast, for her “low degree” was rooted in her invincible humility. She herself said it first and best: God’s plan was to scatter “the proud in the imagination of their hearts,” to “put down the mighty from their thrones, and to exalt those of low degree” (Luke 1:51f). Her Son echoed His Mother: “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14). Mary was humble, of low degree, powerless in this age. And because of this, God exalted her, making her honourable and powerful — indeed, more honourable than the cherubim, and reigning with her Son in heaven: “The Queen stood at Thy right side, arrayed in golden robes all glorious” (Psalm 45:9).

Her exaltation from low degree was the first of many such exaltations. We find this divine delight in exalting the humble playing like a theme-song throughout the New Testament. “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to nullify things that are” (1 Corinthians 1:27f). “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom?” (James 2:5). The world utterly misunderstands the nature of true greatness, and equates greatness with outward strength and self-assertion. In the world, the one in first place is the one who rules, who exerts his will, who makes a big splash. God overturns all this, for in His Kingdom the one in first place will be the one who serves as the slave of all (Mark 10:44). It is the humble, and self-effacing, and powerless servant who is truly great. God’s Kingdom inaugurates a revolution, and the revolution began with the Annunciation.

Mary is an image of the Church, and her exaltation prophesies and prefigures ours. It is important therefore that we see and appreciate her humble estate and her powerlessness during her life, for they form the basis for her exaltation after her death. It is right that our icons dress her in the robes of royalty and place her upon a throne, for these images simply acknowledge in art what God has done for her in heaven. But as we venerate these images, let us not fail to appreciate the revolution they portray: that God took a humble, young girl from a small town, and exalted her to a place unmatched in the cosmos or the Kingdom. He exalted her who was of low degree, so that we and all generations may see His work, and call her blessed.

By Fr. Lawrence Farley



## LOOKING AHEAD

*The following are services and parish events **IN ADDITION** to the usual weekend services (Sat 6pm & Sun 8:30am).*

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**Tuesday March 23**

10:00am — Father's Café

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**Wednesday March 24**

6:00pm — Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

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**Thursday March 25— Annunciation**

6:00pm — Vespers Liturgy for the Feast

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**Saturday March 27**

1:00pm — Adult Ed: Great Lent with Dn George via Zoom

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**Tuesday March 30**

10:00am — Father's Café

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**Wednesday March 31—St Innocent of AK**

6:00pm — Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

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**Saturday April 3**

11:00am-2:00pm — Auxiliary Bake Sale

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**Tuesday April 6**

10:00am — Father's Café (Now on ZOOM)

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**Wednesday April 7**

6:00pm — Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

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**Saturday April 10-Sunday April 11**

Archpastoral Visit of His Eminence Archbishop BENJAMIN

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*For more dates please visit our website: [www.stjohnofdamascus.org](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org)*

### Many Years on Their Birthdays!

Anna Hubler	3/16
Dathan Hubler	3/18
Klavdia Ivanushkina, Reena Kale	3/22
Mike Wesdell	3/23
Caleb Fenlason, Margarita Sladack	3/25
Nicholas Ketz	3/26

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

#### PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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**Priest:** V. Rev. Michael Anderson, Rector

**Email:** [FrMichael@stjohnofdamascus.org](mailto:FrMichael@stjohnofdamascus.org) — **Phone:** (858) 717-2172

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

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