

May 16, 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

**3RD SUNDAY OF PASCHA
SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARERS
& ST TAMAR OF GEORGIA**

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Welcome!

...to all who have gathered to follow Jesus Christ & 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

And let us also take note of what it means that the angel is seen sitting on the right side. For what does the left side mean but this present life; and the right hand side, if not life eternal? ... And so, since our redeemer has now passed over beyond the mortality of this present life, rightly does the angel, who had come to announce his entry into eternal life, sit at the right side. And he came clothed in white: for he was announcing the joy of this our present solemnity. *St. Gregory the Great*

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For sacraments, services, instruction, home/office/hospital visits please contact **Fr. Michael &erson**
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**"HE HAS RISEN, HE IS NOT HERE; SEE THE
PLACE WHERE THEY LAID HIM."**

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

Parish Life

PASCHAL GREETINGS

English:

Christ is risen! ...*Indeed/Truly He is Risen!*

Albanian:

Krishti U Ngjall! ...*Vertet U Ngjall!*

Aleutian:

Khris-tusax agla-gikux!
...*Agangu-lakan agla-gikux!*

Arabic:

El Messieh Kahm! ...*Hakken kahm!*

Chinese:

基督復活了！確實復活了！

Ethiopia (Amharic):

Christos tenestwal! ...*Ewnetem tenestwal!*

French:

Le Christ est ressuscite!
...*En verite il est ressuscite!*

Georgian:

ქრისტე აღსდგა! ჭეშმარიტად აღსდგა!

German:

Christus ist auferst&en!
...*Er ist wahrhaftig auferst&en!*

Greek:

Christos anesti! ...*Alithos anesti!*

Polish:

Chrystus zmartwychwstal!
...*Prawdziwie zmartwychwstal!*

Russian:

Hristos Voskrese! ...*Voistinu Voskrese!*

Romanian:

Hristos a inviat! ...*Adeverat a inviat!*

Spanish:

Cristo ha resucitado!
...*En verdad ha resucitado!*

Ukrainian:

Hristos Voskres! ...*Voistino Voskres!*

Vietnamese:

Chua Song Lai Qua That Song Lai

Collection for St Eugene's Youth Camp

St Eugene's Camp has been a ministry of our Diocese for over 40 years. They are in need of funds to help pay for expenses of the needed camp counselors & staff..

We will make the collection on the Sundays of May 16 & May 23.

Please give generously.

For more information visit www.steugeneecamp.org



Diamond Club & Father's Café IN PERSON

Tuesday May 18—10:30am

We are able to have small socially distant gatherings of masked people for fellowship & education.

On Tuesday May 18 at 10:30am will be having an "in person" Fathers' Café in connection with our Diamond Club Seniors Group in the Church Hall.

If you would like to be contacted about these gatherings please contact Patty Pelachik at pelachik@sbcglobal.net



Parish Life

Mothers' Day Meal NEXT Sunday May 23

Due to potential rain in the forecast for this Sunday we have moved our Mothers' celebration luncheon to NEXT Sunday (May 23).

Please plan on being part of the celebration!



Birthday Celebration Luncheon for our Beloved Choir Director Carole Shumaik—5/30

After Divine Liturgy on Sunday May 30 we will have a luncheon to celebrate the 70th birthday of our beloved Carole Shumaik who has served our parish for the majority of those years.

If you would like to help contact Tanya Franchak.



Adult Ed Class to Begin Wed 5/26 Topic TBD

Our next adult education class will begin Wed May 26. Classes which are discussion based (rather than lecture) are held weekly at 7:00-8:30pm.

People can attend via Zoom (see our parish website calendar). We are investigating having a hybrid model where people can also attend in person.

The topic is still to be determined, so if there is a subject you would like to suggest please email, call or text Fr Michael.

Visit of Miraculous Icon of St Anna, the Ancestor (Grandmother) of the Lord Sunday June 6—8:30pm

We were contacted by the Dean of St Tikhon's Seminary & he offered us the opportunity to host the miraculous icon of St Anna on the evening of Sunday June 6. We will greet the icon at 6:30pm, have a short service of intercession (molieben) & allow people to then venerate the icon. After the service we will have a reception & presentation by Fr John Parker (Dean of St Tikhon's) about the work & needs of the seminary.

We will also be able to enjoy a local surf b& during the reception. More details to follow.
Mark your calendars & share the news!



St John's Youth Food Drive Results

We give thanks to God for our children & youth who spear-headed our food drive during Great Lent this year. The San Diego Food Bank arrived Monday 3 to pick up the food.

Our food drive event brought in a total of **453 pounds** of food. That, in combination with your monetary donation brings our total to **1,478 meals** donated.

That is a wonderful impact!



Today's Worship — Hymns

TROPARIA

Resurrection — Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! & when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Sunday of Myrrhbearers - Tone 2

The Noble Joseph,
When he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen & anointed it with spices,
& placed it in a new tomb.
But Thou didst rise on the third day, O Lord,
Granting the world great mercy.

Sunday of Myrrhbearers - Tone 2

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb & said:
Myrrh is meet for the dead;
But Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!
So proclaim: the Lord is risen,
Granting the world great mercy!

KONTAKIA

Sunday of the Myrrhbearers- Tone 2

Thou didst command the myrrhbearers to rejoice, O Christ!
By Thy Resurrection, Thou didst stop the lamentation of Eve, O God!
Thou didst command Thy apostles to preach:
The Savior is Risen!

Pascha — Tone 8

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,
Thou didst destroy the power of death.
In victory Thou didst arise, O Christ God,
proclaiming: "Rejoice!" to the Myrrhbearing

PROKEIMENON

Tone 6 (*Pentecostarion*) - O Lord, save Thy people, / & bless Thine inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (Ps. 27:1a)

ALLELUIA

Tone 8 — V. O Lord, Thou hast been gracious to Thy land; Thou hast turned back the captivity of Jacob. (Ps. 84:1)

V. Mercy & truth are met together, righteousness & peace have kissed each other. (Ps. 84:10)

Worship — Scripture Readings

Epistle — Acts 6:1-7

¹ Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² & the twelve summoned the body of the disciples & said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit & of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer & to the ministry of the word." ⁵ & what they said pleased the whole multitude, & they chose Stephen, a man full of faith & of the Holy Spirit, & Philip, & Prochorus, & Nicanor, & Timon, & Parmenas, & Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, & they prayed & laid their hands upon them.

A Prayer for our Enemies

Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst command us to love our enemies, and those who defame and injure us, and to pray for them and forgive them; Who Thyself didst pray for Thine enemies, who crucified thee: grant us, we pray, the spirit of Christian reconciliation and meekness, that we may heartily forgive every injury and be reconciled with our enemies. Grant us to overcome the malevolence and offences of people with Christian meekness and true love of our neighbor. We further beseech Thee, O Lord, to grant to our enemies true peace and forgiveness of sins; and do not allow them to leave this life without true faith and sincere conversion. And help us repay evil with goodness, and to remain safe from the temptations of the devil and from all the perils which threaten us, in the form of visible and invisible enemies.

Gospel — Mark 15:43-16:8

⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage & went to Pilate, & asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ & Pilate wondered if he were already dead; & summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ & when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ & he bought a linen shroud, & taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, & laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; & he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene & Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

¹ & when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, & Mary the mother of James, & Salome, bought spices, so that they might go & anoint him. ² & very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ & they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" ⁴ & looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back;—it was very large. ⁵ & entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; & they were amazed. ⁶ & he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples & Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." ⁸ & they went out & fled from the tomb; for trembling & astonishment had come upon them; & they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

Our Life in Christ—On Love of Enemies: St Silvan of Mount Athos

Although it is natural & usual to love those who love us & to do good to those who do good to us (Mt 5:46-47; Lk 6:32-33), to love our enemies is distasteful to our nature. One can say that it isn't in our power but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. This is why St. Silvan the Athonite writes, "The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies, & does not accept it."

The Staretz repeatedly says that love of enemies is impossible without grace: "Lord, You have given the commandment to love enemies, but this is difficult for us sinners if Your grace is not with us"; "Without God's grace we cannot love enemies"; "He who does not love his enemies, does not have God's grace"; "He who has not learned to love from the Holy Spirit, will certainly not pray for his enemies." On the contrary, St. Silvan always teaches that this attitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit: "The Lord has commanded us to love our enemies, & the Holy Spirit reveals this love to us"; "One can only love one's enemies through the grace of the Holy Spirit"; "When you will love your enemies, know that a great divine grace will be living in you."

This grace does not suddenly erupt in the soul, but rather shows itself in a divine process of teaching: taking into account the weakness & the difficulties of man, the Holy Spirit progressively teaches him to love & teaches him all the attitudes & ways which will allow him to do so. "The Holy Spirit teaches us to love even our enemies"; "The Holy Spirit teaches the soul a profound love for man & compassion for the lost. The Lord had pity for those who were lost... The Holy Spirit teaches this same compassion for those who go to hell"; "I could not speak about it if the Holy Spirit had not taught me this love"; "The Lord taught me love of enemies... The Holy Spirit taught [me] to love."

The grace of the Holy Spirit shows to him who possesses it the way to love his enemies. But it also reveals to him the foundation of this love: the love of God for all people & His will to save them: "No man can know by himself what divine love is if the Holy Spirit does not instruct him; but in our Church divine love is known through the Holy Spirit, & that is why we speak about it." Grace also "gives man the capacity & the strength to love his enemies, & the Spirit of God gives us the strength to love them."

Staretz Silvan insists that because love of enemies is a fruit of grace, it is essentially through prayer that it can be obtained. Several times he urges us to "ask the Lord with our whole being to give us the strength to love all men." He also advises to pray to the Mother of God & the Saints: "If we are incapable [of loving our enemies] & if we are without love, let us turn with ardent prayers to the Lord, to His Most Pure Mother, & to all the Saints, & the Lord will help us with everything, He whose love for us knows no bounds." The Staretz confesses that he himself constantly prays God for this: "I continuously beg the Lord to give me the love of enemies... Day & night I ask the Lord for this love. The Lord gives me tears & I weep for the whole world." Wishing in his universal love for all men to receive such a gift, he links them to himself in his prayer: "Lord, teach us through Your Holy Spirit to love our enemies & to pray for them with tears . . . Lord, as you prayed for your enemies, so teach us also, through the Holy Spirit, to love our enemies."

Yet obtaining the grace to love one's enemies presupposes other conditions. The love of enemies is completely bound to the love of God: we have seen that the principal foundation for the love of enemies is the love that God shows to all His creatures equally & His will that all people should be saved, & Christ gave us a perfect example of such love throughout his earthly life. The love of God leads man to accomplish His will & to imitate Him as much as possible, & so also to love his enemies. The Staretz also notes that he who does not love his enemies shows that he has not learned from the Holy Spirit to love God.

To love one's enemies is also tightly bound to humility. The Staretz often associates these two virtues. Almost all the difficulties we encounter in loving our enemies are linked with pride: it is from pride that

Our Life in Christ—On Love of Enemies: St Silouan of Mount Athos

flows the affliction that follows upon insults, hatred, bad temper, spite, the desire for revenge, contempt for one's neighbor, refusing to forgive him & to be reconciled with him.

Pride excludes the love of enemies & love of enemies excludes pride: "If we love our enemies, pride will have no place in our soul." The fact that humility goes hand in hand with love of enemies proves the presence of grace & the authenticity of love: "If you have compassion for all creatures & love your enemies, & if, at the same time, you judge yourself the worst of all people, this shows that the great grace of the Lord is in you."

Indeed humility is the indispensable condition to receive & keep the grace that teaches us to love our enemies & gives us the strength to do so. The Staretz advises: "Humble yourself, then grace will teach you." On the other hand, "pride makes us lose grace... The soul is then tormented by bad thoughts & does not understand that one must humble oneself & love one's enemies, for without that one cannot please God."

The Staretz sometimes also stresses the role played by penitence in connection with humility. "Regard yourself the worst of men," he advises. This is an attitude of great humility that of its nature implies penitence. He who counts himself the worst of men necessarily thinks others better than himself; he will judge & blame himself, & not judge & criticize his enemies, for he tends to estimate them better than himself.

The Staretz also gives us the example of another penitential attitude – asking God's forgiveness each time one has not loved one's enemy: "If I judge someone or look at him angrily, my tears dry up & I fall into despondency; & again I start asking the Lord to forgive me, & the merciful Lord forgives me, a sinner. "Through such an attitude, by which the soul humbly recognizes before God its faults & shortcomings & obtains from Him forgiveness, an opening can be made that becomes bigger & bigger for grace & unceasing progress in love. As to a total absence of compassion for enemies, it shows the presence & the action of an evil spirit; sincere repentance is the only way to be freed from it."

The insistence on prayer, humility & penitence shows that, although St. Silouan recognizes a determining role to the action of grace in acquiring love of enemies, he does not neglect the role played by the efforts that man makes. The Staretz is very conscious of the importance of the initial action; this is why he says, "I beg you, try," & states, "In the beginning, force your heart to love your enemies." The efforts one makes must manifest themselves in a general way in a straight intention & constant good will, stretched toward the realization of God's command. God will not fail to respond.

For Christ there are no enemies—The Staretz would say that for Christ there are no enemies – there are those who accept "the words of eternal life," there are those who reject & even crucify; but for the Creator of every living thing, there can be no enemy. So it should be for the Christian, too, who "in pity for all must strive for the salvation of all." Wherein, then, lies the force of the command, "*Love your enemies*"? Why did the Lord say that those who keep His commandments would know from very experience whence is the teaching?

... God is love, in superabundance embracing all creatures. By allowing man to actually know this love the Holy Spirit reveals to him the path of fullness of being. To say "enemy" implies rejection. By such rejection a man falls from the fullness of God... "The whole paradise of Saints lives by the Holy Spirit, & from the Holy Spirit nothing in creation is hid," writes the Staretz. "God is love & in the Saints the Holy Spirit is love. Dwelling in the Holy Spirit, the saints behold love & embrace it, too, in their love."

... [It] is possible to judge whether a given state of contemplation was a reality or an illusion only after the soul had returned to consciousness of the world; for then, as the Staretz pointed out, if there were no love for enemies & so for all creatures, it would be a true indication that the supposed contemplation had not been a real communion with God.



LOOKING AHEAD

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

Tuesday May 18

10:30am — Father's Café & Diamond Club Gathering—IN PERSON
7:00pm—Parish Council Meeting

Sunday May 23

Mothers' Day Meal after Divine Liturgy

Tuesday May 25

10:30am — Father's Virtual Café (via Zoom—see website calendar)

Wednesday May 26

7:00pm — Adult Ed: Topic TBA (hybrid Zoom & in person)

Tuesday June 1

10:30am — Father's Virtual Café (via Zoom—see website calendar)

For more dates please visit our website: www.stjohnofdamascus.org/calendar

Many Years!

Birthdays

| | |
|---|------|
| Rdr John Klavzar, Artemis Sladack | 5/16 |
| Matthew Zmina, Evangelos Keeling, Callie Vera Carlson | 5/17 |
| Archpriest Elias Velonis, Elaine Mayol Perez | 5/18 |

Wedding Anniversaries

| | |
|---|------|
| Anne & Nathan Cooper & James & Elena Sullivan | 5/18 |
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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 &erson, Rector

Email: powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org — **Phone:** (858) 717-2172

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

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