

December 25, 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 in Poway, CA

NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

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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. Please join us for our fellowship meal following the service.

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A Word from the Holy Fathers

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

—St John Chrysostom

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**Include Something in the Bulletin or
Be Included in our Weekly E-mails
(News@stjohnofdamascus.org)**

**E-mail info@stjohnofdamascus.org
with your request**



*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting.”
—Micah 5:2*

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



Parish Life



Make glad, O ye righteous! Greatly rejoice, O ye heavens! Ye mountains, dance for joy! Christ is born; and like the cherubim the Virgin makes a throne, carrying at her bosom God the Word made flesh. Shepherds, glorify the newborn Child! Magi, offer the Master gifts! Angels, sing praises, saying: "O Lord past understanding, glory to Thee!"

*—First Sticheron of the Praises,
Nativity Matins*

2022 Membership/Pledge Drive

December is the time for our membership and pledge drive to help us prepare our budget for next year. Please take a moment to complete the attached membership and pledge (time, talent & financial) form (3 pages) and return it to myself (powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org) or our Treasurer (treasurer@stjohnofdamascus.org) before the end of the month.

Dates for 2021

FAST-FREE WEEKS

After Christmas

Dec 26-Jan 4

Today's Worship — Hymns



TROPARION

Nativity — Tone 4

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
Has shone to the world the Light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
Were taught by a Star to adore Thee,
The Sun of Righteousness,
And to know Thee, the Orient from on High.
O Lord, glory to Thee!

KONTAKION

Nativity — Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the
Transcendent One,
And the earth offers a cave to the
Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The wise men journey with a star!
Since for our sake the Eternal God was
born as a Little Child!

LITURGY PROKEIMENON

Tone 8 (Nativity) — Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee; let it praise Thy Name, O Most High! (*Ps 18:2*)

v: Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth! Sing of His Name, give to Him glorious praise! (Ps 65:2)

LITURGY ALLELUIA VERSES

Tone 1 (Nativity) — *V. The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. (Ps. 18:1)*

V. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. (Ps. 18:2)



Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

GOSPEL AT MATINS

MATTHEW 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; ¹⁹ and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; ²¹ she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us).

²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

EPISTLE AT DIVINE LITURGY

GALATIANS 4:4-7

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

⁷ So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.





GOSPEL AT DIVINE LITURGY

MATTHEW 2:1-12

¹ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ² “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.”

³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.’” ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; ⁸ and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”

⁹ When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was.

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.





Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2021

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

**TO THE HONORABLE CLERGY, VENERABLE MONASTICS, AND PIOUS
FAITHFUL OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA:**

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

I greet you all today on this Great Feast of our illumination. At the Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great for this Feast we sing:

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy virgin, the whole universe was filled with light. The shepherds watched in the fields. The wise men worshiped and the angels sang. But Herod was troubled, for God had appeared in the flesh. He is the Savior of our souls! (Third Sticheron at "Lord, I Call")

The Lord's entry into the world invites us all to pursue this spiritual illumination, which is Christ, the Wisdom of God Himself. In the Gospel we read of the shepherds who leave their pastures to find the Infant Christ. Likewise, Magi, the wise men from the East, traveled in pursuit of true Wisdom, which they found lying in a manger. They came at great cost and with great effort to worship Christ and offer their gifts to Him. In return, the darkness of their hearts was lifted, and they left, refusing to return to Herod, but instead "departed to their own country by another way" (Mt 2:12).

But we know that not everyone wants this light that our Lord offers. Herod did not. We remember that he also pursued the Wisdom of God. But instead of seeking illumination from Him, Herod sought His blood, preferring earthly power to heavenly blessings. His vision was too narrow to see that in trying to protect his throne he was keeping himself in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and selfish ambition.

Seeing these examples before us, we need the light of Christ's Nativity in our world darkened with confusion, anxiety, and temptations. We might struggle to see this light in our suffering world, racked by a pandemic, and with societal changes coming at an alarming rate. We acutely feel the words of St. Paul: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in



Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON



travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:22–23).

Be encouraged! It is into our world, “groaning in travail,” that our Deliverer is born. God in His love for mankind did not leave the world in darkness but came as its Savior. Even today Christ has “shone to the world the light of wisdom” (Nativity Troparion). We can see this light by unreservedly following the gospel and trading the earthly for the heavenly. Because of the light which shines from the cave this morning, the shadows of ignorance are dispelled and we are able to perceive the world as an object of God’s eternal love. For Herod, Christ’s Nativity brought anxiety and a troubled heart. For us today, we are offered illumination and joy. Like the shepherds, Magi, and angels let us behold the Incarnation of the Son of God with reverence and pious hope, in full knowledge that the “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:16) is born for our redemption.

With all the blessings of the Feast, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada



LOOKING AHEAD

*The following are services and parish events **in addition** to the usual weekend services (Sat 6pm & Sun 9:30am)*

Saturday December 25—Nativity of Our Lord in the Flesh

8:30am — Hours & Festal Divine Liturgy followed by Carol Sing

Sunday December 26

After Divine Liturgy—Annual Youth Christmas Program

Monday December 27

7:00pm—Adult Ed: Orthodox Christianity 101

Tuesday December 28

11:00am-2:00pm — Diamond Circle Gathering (at Church Hall)

Monday January 3

7:00pm—Adult Ed: Orthodox Christianity 101

Tuesday January 4

10:30am—Father's Café

Wednesday January 5—Eve of Theophany

Strict Fast

9:00am — Royal Hours for Theophany

6:00pm—Vigil for Theophany

Thursday January 6—Holy Theophany

8:30am — Hour & Festal Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water

12:00pm — Blessing of Water at Lake Poway

Tuesday January 6-March 5

Annual House Blessings—Contact Fr Michael to Schedule

Monday January 10

7:00pm—Adult Ed: Orthodox Christianity 101

Tuesday January 11

10:00am — Father's Café

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

Many Years!

To the Faithful Members & Friends of St John of Damascus Orthodox Church!

PARISH CONTACT INFO:

Church: 16903 Espola Rd Poway — **Mailing Address:** PO Box 28291 San Diego, CA 92198

Web: www.stjohnofdamascus.org

Email: info@stjohnofdamascus.org — **Phone:** (858) 674-1931

Priest: V. Rev. Michael Anderson, Rector

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

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

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