

February 12, 2023



# 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

**35TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 2**  
**SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON**  
**ST. MELETIUS ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH**

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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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### From the Holy Fathers

Vigils and fasts and acts of mercy are the methods advocated by the saints to attain the spiritual life. .... But they must not stand alone, nor must the Christian put his trust in them. Humility must have faith for its principle, and fasting be combined with charity, that is feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked.

*St. Basil the Great*

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**Include Something in the Bulletin or  
Receive our Weekly  
Parish E-mails**

E-mail [info@stjohnofdamascus.org](mailto:info@stjohnofdamascus.org)  
with your request.



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

## Parish Life

### Adult Classes New Adult Ed Wednesdays 7pm Christ's Parables: Images of the Kingdom

Our Orthodox Christianity 101 class on Monday evenings and our Wednesday evening Adult Education Class will resume this week.

This year our parish education classes are focusing on the gospels. Our last Wednesday evening class was "The Gospel and the Gospels"

Our next class will be on Christ's Parables: Images of the Kingdom and will continue up until Great Lent.. Everyone is encouraged and welcome to take part.

Classes will be held in person and via Zoom (see online calendar for link



### Blood Drive Sign-up

We are working on scheduling another blood drive here at St John's to help with the current blood shortages being reported in San Diego County. This time we will be working with the San Diego Blood Bank.

We need 35 people to sign-up before we contact them about setting a day and time. At present we have 12.

Please consider adding your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulleting board to the right of the doors in the church hall.

### Collection for Earthquake Victims in Syria & Turkey

As you all are probably aware the recent earthquakes in Syria and Turkey have caused immense suffering. The death toll continues to rise and these horrible numbers don't even include the thousands of injured and displaced.

His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin is calling on all the parishes in the Diocese of the West to hold collections to help with the humanitarian response need and asks that funding be directed to IOCC which has a **goal of \$250K** to meet the needs of most pressing urgency: food, bedding, and clothing for those who have been displaced.

Please give as generously as you are able.

### Dates for 2023

#### **MOVABLE FEASTS**

Palm Sunday	April 9
Pascha	April 16
Ascension	May 25
Pentecost	June 4

#### **FASTS**

Great Lent	Feb 27-April 17
Holy Week	April 10-15
Apostles Fast	June 12-28
Dormition Fast	August 1-14
Nativity Fast/Advent	Nov 15-Dec 24

#### **FAST-FREE WEEKS**

Bright Week	April 16-22
After Pentecost	June 4-10
After Christmas	Dec 25-Jan 4

## Parish Life

### Help Needed with Pre-School & Early Elementary Church School Classes

We need a couple people to help with our pre-school and early elementary church school classes.

Classes are held twice a month (1st & 3rd Sundays) from September to June at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

If you are willing to help please see Bill Moision, Fr Michael or Sally Menig



### Fellowship Meal Sign-up Posted Jan—June

The sign-up calendar for fellowship meals after Sunday Divine Liturgies for the first half of 2023 has been posted in the church hall on the bulletin board. Please take a look and sign up for a few. There is room on the form for multiple families to sign-up for a given Sunday so no one is tasked with feed the masses alone. Please be a part of this important ministry of fellowship and hospitality.



### Schedule Your Annual House Blessing Jan 6-Feb 25

The annual blessing of our homes is a regular part of Orthodox Christian life. It reaffirms our understanding that God desires and promises to be with us ALWAYS. It is our opportunity to receive the blessing of the Lord into our daily lives in the place we spend most of our time.

You can schedule your house blessing by contacting Fr Michael via email, text or phone.

### Potluck & Chili “Cookoff” Sunday February 19

On Sunday February 19, in connection with our annual parish meeting, we will have our usual potluck meal. However, some parishioners, in the spirit of Meat-fare Sunday, thought it might be fun to also include a “Chili Cook-off”

Prizes would be announced at the conclusion of the meeting.

We are inviting parishioners to submit entries for the day. If you would like to participate please speak to Fr Michael by Sunday Feb 11

### Parish Annual Meeting Sunday February 19

Following our parish tradition of having our annual meeting on the Sunday after the Super Bowl, the Parish Council has scheduled this year’s annual meeting for Sunday February 19 after Divine Liturgy.

Be sure to mark your calendars and make sure to get your membership/pledge form submitted.

### Parish Elections Nominations Being Taken

Those who are interested in serving in one of the elected positions in our parish should speak to Fr Michael or a member of the Parish Council.

Elected positions include:

- Parish Council Member
- Parish Auditor (need 2 new people)
- Parish Lay Representative.

Nino Kiria & Gene Francello are our Nominations Committee and will be asking people if they would be willing to run for a position

## 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! And 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!

#### St John of Damascus —Tone 8

Teacher of Orthodoxy, piety, & purity!  
Enlightener of the universe!  
& divine inspiration to monastics  
by your teachings we are all enlightened,  
& 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 & 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.

#### Prodigal Son – Tone 3

I have recklessly forgotten Your glory, O Father;  
and among sinners I have scattered the riches which You gave me.  
And now I cry to You as the Prodigal:  
"I have sinned before You, O merciful Father;  
receive me a penitent,  
and make me as one of Your hired servants!"

### PROKEIMENON

**Tone 2 (Resurrection)** — The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. (Ps 117/118:4)

*v: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps 117/118:18)*



### ALLELUIA

**Tone 2 (Resurrection)** — V. May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you! (Ps. 19:1)

V. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call! (Ps. 19:9)

## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Epistle — 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20

<sup>12</sup> [You say:] "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be brought under the power of anything. <sup>13</sup> "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will bring to nothing both of these. However, the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is [made] for the body. <sup>14</sup> Now God raised up the Lord, and he will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that whoever is joined to a prostitute is one body? For God says, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But whoever who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. <sup>18</sup> Flee sexual immorality! "Every sin that a person can do is outside the body," but whoever commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which dwells in you, and which you have from God? You are not your own! <sup>20</sup> You were bought with a price! Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which belong to God

### Gospel — Luke 15: 11-32

<sup>11</sup> Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that will come to me.' So the father divided his livelihood between them. <sup>13</sup> A few days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and traveled to a far country. There, he squandered his property, living immorally. <sup>14</sup> When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> He went and hired himself to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He wanted to feed himself with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough to spare, and I am dying with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will get up, go to my father, and tell him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son! Make me as one of your hired servants."'

<sup>20</sup> So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still at a distance, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. He ran, and embraced his son, and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> Then the son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you! I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup> But the father said to his slaves, 'Bring out the first robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet! <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this, my son, was dead, and he is alive again! He was lost and [now he] is found!' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> Calling one of the servants, he asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup> The servant replied, 'Your brother has returned! Your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.' <sup>28</sup> However, the elder son became angry and he would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and begged him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, 'Look, for so many years I have served you, and I have never disobeyed a commandment of yours. Yet, you never gave me a goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this, your son, arrived, he who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

<sup>31</sup> The father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours! <sup>32</sup> But it was fitting to celebrate and to rejoice, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost and is found!' "

## Our Life in Christ

### Some Frequently Asked Questions about the Orthodox Church

**Q:** "Why can't we eat meat on certain days or during certain months? Why can't we have breakfast before church on Sundays?"

**A:** Orthodox Christians abstain and fast on Wednesday in remembrance of the betrayal of Christ and on Fridays in remembrance of His crucifixion and death. In Matthew's Gospel, Christ says, "When you fast do not be like the hypocrites," which indicates that the Jews fasted -- it also indicates that Christ assumes that one fasts, for He says "when you fast" not "if you fast." Fasting and abstinence is not something that only developed alongside Christianity; rather, it is a practice that had been followed by the Jews, and even Scripture mentions that Christ fasted. The purpose of fasting is not to "give up" things, nor to do something "sacrificial." The purpose of fasting is to learn discipline, to gain control of those things that are indeed within our control but that we so often allow to control us. In our culture food dominates the lives of many people. We have eating disorders, diets galore, weight loss pills, liposuction treatments, stomach stapling -- all sorts of things that proceed out of the fact that we often allow food to control us. We fast in order to discipline ourselves, to regain control of those things that we have allowed to get out of control. Giving up chocolate -- unless one is controlled by chocolate -- is not fasting. Further, as we sing during the first week of Great Lent, "while fasting from food, let us also fast from our passions." By fasting we place ourselves in the Hands of God and let Him take control of our lives. We also fast and abstain before receiving Holy Communion as a means of preparing ourselves to feast at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb of God and partake of His Body and Blood. Finally, we fast on certain days or during certain seasons as a means of disciplining and preparing ourselves for the upcoming feast (Christmas, Theophany, Pascha, etc.).

**Q:** "Why do we have to confess to a priest?"

**A:** In the early Church, one confessed one's sins in the presence of the entire faith community. When this became impractical, it was the priest who "stood in" for the community, as its presiding officer and as its witness to the penitent's repentance.

Of course we can confess directly to God -- even a casual reading of the daily prayers reveals that we should do this -- but we often find that we need help and advice in overcoming the very things we have confessed.

We do not confess "to" the priest; rather, we confess to God "in the presence of" the priest who, as the prayer before Confession clearly states, is God's "witness" and who, having witnessed our confession of sins offers pastoral advice on how we can better our lives and overcome the very things we confess. Just as one would not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own physical ailments, so too one should not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own spiritual ailments.

We confess in the presence of the priest to acknowledge that our sins, whether we wish to accept it or not, affect the entire faith community on the one hand, and that we cannot "heal ourselves" on the other. The priest is there to help us overcome those things for which we seek forgiveness, to give advice that a friend or neighbor

## Our Life in Christ

might not be in a position to give, and to bear witness on behalf of the faith community, of which he is the spiritual father, that we have indeed repented and been forgiven by God.

When we refuse to confess what we have done, we commit a second sin -- a sin of pride, by which we are unwilling to acknowledge what we have done to another person, often justifying this by thinking, "Well, I didn't really hurt anyone." We also sin by thinking that we are "pulling the wool over" God's eyes, which we cannot do. He knows our hearts and He alone judges the sincerity of our repentance -- and a key element in genuine repentance is acknowledging to God and to others that we are indeed sinners.

So continue to ask God daily for forgiveness, but please do not overlook the need everyone has -- including priests! -- to seek guidance and direction in overcoming sin. And never forget that, if it true that God often heals the physically ill by guiding the hands of a surgeon, He also heals the spiritually ill by guiding the words and advice of a priest.

**Q:** "Why do we have to stand throughout the entire service?"

**A:** We stand as a way of showing our respect in the presence of God, Who is very much present and the focal point of our liturgical worship. When the President enters for the State of the Union Address, everybody stands. When a judge enters the courtroom, everybody stands. In the "old days" we used to stand when a teacher entered the classroom. Standing is simply our way of honoring the One in Whose presence we find ourselves during church services. There are other times when we kneel (i.e., make full prostration) or even sit (especially for the Old Testament Lessons or even readings from the Psalms), but in prayer at Liturgy, we stand.

**Q:** "Why are the church services so long?"

**A:** Our services are not really long, when you realize just what it is that we do. We gather, we chant psalms, we pray, we proclaim / hear the Scriptures, we hear the homily, we pray some more, we offer our gifts to God, we receive the Holy Communion, we give thanks, we are dismissed. That's a lot. To squeeze that much in in less than 90 minutes would really be pushing it. Quality activity takes time.

**Q:** "Why do we use incense?"

**A:** At Vespers, we chant "Let my prayer arise in Your sight as incense, and the lifting-up of my hands as an evening sacrifice." (Ps. 141:2) This comes from the manner of worship that God had ordered to be made in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem (Exod. 37:25-29) The prophet Malachi prophesied that incense would be offered everywhere God is worship (Malachi 1:11). In the Book of Revelation, incense is likened to the prayer of the saints rising to the Throne of God. (5:8) Smoke is also a symbol for the very presence of God. (Exod. 19:16-20) We cense the Gospel Book on the altar, we cense the altar, then the icons and frescoes in the sanctuary, we cense the icons in the church, and finally, we cense the faithful. This is a means of honoring them all.



## LOOKING AHEAD

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

### Jan 6-Feb 25

Annual House Blessings

Contact Fr Michael to arrange a time and place

### Mon Feb 13

6:00pm—Orthodox Christianity 101 CANCELLED due to Fr Michael travelling to funeral of Bishop Tihon

### Wed Feb 15

10:30am — Father's Café (In person & via Zoom—see website calendar for link)

7:00pm—Adult Ed: Topic The Parables of Christ

### Sat Feb 18—Memorial Saturday

8:30am — 3rd Hour & Divine Liturgy for the Departed

### Sun Feb 19—Meatfare

After Divine Liturgy—Parish Annual Meeting

### Feb 20-Feb 22

Fr Michael Travels to San Francisco for Diocesan Council Meetings

### Tues Feb 21

11:00am—Diamond Circle

### Sun Feb 26—Cheesefare

After Divine Liturgy—Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

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

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

### Many Years!

#### *Name Days*

Leo Keeling 2/18

#### *Birthdays*

Alex Darjania 2/16

Iryna Sheeler 2/17

#### *Wedding Anniversaries*

Kyra and Joshua Toth 2/15

### PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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

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