

December 24, 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

**29<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 4**

**SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST**

**EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST**

**NUN MARTYR EUGENIA OF ROME**



**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 and fill out a visitor card.



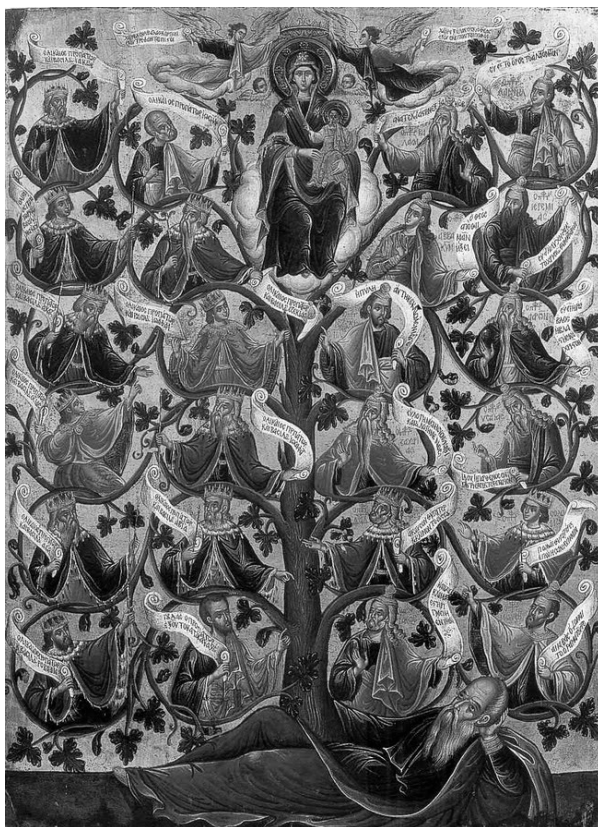
## **A Word from the Holy Fathers**

The Lord did not come to make a display.  
He came to heal and to teach suffering  
men. For one who wanted to make a  
display, the thing would have been just to  
appear and dazzle the beholders. But for  
Him Who came to heal and to teach, the  
way was not merely to dwell here, but to  
put Himself at the disposal of those who  
needed Him—and to be manifested  
according as they could bear it, not  
vitiating the value of the Divine appearing  
by exceeding their capacity to receive it.

— *St. Athanasius the Great*



**Include Something in the Bulletin or  
Be Included in our Weekly E-mails**  
E-mail [info@stjohnofdamascus.org](mailto:info@stjohnofdamascus.org)



The Tree of Jesse

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

Parish Life

Youth Christmas Program  
Next Sunday after Liturgy

Our children and youth have been preparing a program to share the joy of the season with the parish.

Next Sunday after Divine Liturgy and before our fellowship meal they will perform their presentation. Please plan on staying and keeping the spirit of the season alive for the entire feast!



Fellowship Meal POTLUCK  
Next Sunday  
We Need Everyone’s Help

As we continue the celebration of the feast of Christmas next Sunday, we will be having a potluck for our fellowship meal.

Please plan on bringing something to share.

If you are not a cook we still need your help cleaning up, wiping down tables and aking out the trash and recycling.



Charity Collection for Christmas for  
Poway Families—GOAL REACHED!

We had a wonderful response to the call to help with a couple of our local Poway families. We were able to meet their needs for the holiday.

Glory to God that he has inspired such love and generosity for our neighbors here at St John’s!

2024 Wall Calendars Available  
(with Feasts, Fasts, Scriptures  
Readings)

The wall calendars for 2024 have arrived and are available in the narthex in the back of the church.

\$10 donation is requested.



Diamond Circle Christmas Party  
Thurs Dec 28 11am

All of our Diamond Circle folks are encouraged to gather for a Christmas party at the home of Joe and Cora Temnick on Thursday at 11am

If you need their address please ask someone.



Choir to Sign Carols at Care Facility  
Wednesday Evening

Choir members are gathering on Wednesday at 5pm at the church for a short rehearsal before heading to Westmont Senior Care Facility in Escondido to share the joy of the season with some Christmas carols. .



STEWARDSHIP (PLEDGE/TITHE) FORMS  
FOR 2024  
PLEASE SUBMIT TODAY

Thank you to all who submitted their pledge forms. There are only about a handful of people who have not submitted their forms yet.

Please take the time today to do so. Forms are availabe in the church narthex and in the hall.

You can give it to Fr Michael, Dennis Stravrou or Ed Lump.

## Today's Worship — Hymns

### TROPARIA

#### Resurrection—Tone 4

When the women Disciples of the Lord  
learned from the Angel the joyous message of  
the Resurrection,  
they cast away the ancestral curse  
and elatedly told the Apostles:  
“Death is overthrown!  
Christ God is risen,  
granting the world great mercy!”

#### Fathers—Tone 2

Great are the accomplishments of faith,  
for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain  
of flames as though in the waters of rest;  
and the Prophet Daniel appeared  
a shepherd to the lions as though they were  
sheep.  
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our  
souls!

#### Forefeast—Tone 2

Mary was of David's seed,  
so she went with Joseph to register in  
Bethlehem.  
She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by  
man.  
The time for the birth was at hand.  
Since there was no room at the inn,  
the cave became a beautiful palace for the  
Queen.  
Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of  
old.

### KONTAKIA

#### Fathers—Tone 1

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself,  
O Ephratha!  
The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief  
Shepherd she carries in her womb.  
The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice,  
beholding Him,  
and with the shepherds, they will glorify the  
Virgin nursing Him.

#### Forefeast—Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave  
to give birth to the Eternal Word.  
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!  
Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds  
the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a  
little child!

### PROKEIMENON

**Tone 4** — (*Song of the Fathers*) Blessed are You, O Lord God of our Fathers, and  
praised and glorified is Your Name forever! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3*)

*v: For You are just in all that You have done for us! (v. 4)*

### ALLELUIA

**Tone 4** — V. We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us. (Ps. 43:1a)

V. For You have saved us from them that oppose us, and have put to shame them that hate us. (Ps. 43:8)

## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Epistle — Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," <sup>19</sup> concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

<sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. <sup>23</sup> By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: <sup>33</sup> who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

<sup>35</sup> Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting

deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

<sup>39</sup> And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, <sup>40</sup> God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.



## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Gospel — Matthew 1:1-25

1 The book of the origins of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. <sup>2</sup> Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac became the father of Jacob. Jacob became the father of Judah and his brothers. <sup>3</sup> Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron. Hezron became the father of Ram. <sup>4</sup> Ram became the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon. Nahshon became the father of Salmon. <sup>5</sup> Salmon became the father of Boaz by Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse. <sup>6</sup> Jesse became the father of King David. David became the father of Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. <sup>7</sup> Solomon became the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam became the father of Abijah. Abijah became the father of Asa. <sup>8</sup> Asa became the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat became the father of Joram. Joram became the father of Uzziah. <sup>9</sup> Uzziah became the father of Jotham. Jotham became the father of Ahaz. Ahaz became the father of Hezekiah. <sup>10</sup> Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh. Manasseh became the father of Amon. Amon became the father of Josiah. <sup>11</sup> Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the exile to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> After the exile to Babylon, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel became the father of Zerubbabel. <sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel became the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim. Eliakim became the father of Azor. <sup>14</sup> Azor became the father of Sadoc. Sadoc became the father of Achim. Achim became the father of Eliud. <sup>15</sup> Eliud became the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan. Matthan became the father of Jacob. <sup>16</sup> Jacob became the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. <sup>17</sup> And so, all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the exile to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until

the Christ, fourteen generations.

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened like this: after his mother, Mary, was promised in marriage to Joseph but before they came together, she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, her betrothed, who was a righteous man did not want to make her a public spectacle and so intended to put her away quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he was thinking about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for what is conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son and you shall give him the name Jesus because he will be the one to save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> Now all this happened so that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled:

<sup>23</sup> Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bring forth a son.

They shall call his name Emmanuel;  
which means, 'with us [is] God.'

<sup>24</sup> Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him: he took his wife to [live with] him, <sup>25</sup> and had no relations with her before she had brought forth her firstborn son; and he named him Jesus.



## Archpastoral Message of His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin for Christmas

To the Reverend Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of the West,

Dearly beloved:

**CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!**

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord, as we sing of this present mystery: the wall that divided God from man has been destroyed; the flaming sword withdraws from Eden's gate; the Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life; and I, who had been cast out through my disobedience, now feast on the delights of Paradise: for today the Father's perfect Image, marked with the stamp of His eternity, has taken the form of a servant. without undergoing change He is born from an unwedded mother...

(Lord I Call Stichera, The Nativity of our Lord)



One of the realities of the celebration of our Lord's Incarnation is that we have lost the sense that it is precisely a "present mystery." The festal prayer of the Church noted above refers to it as just that. The mystery is that the pre-eternal Son of God divests Himself of the glory of the Godhead and takes upon Himself human nature today. Not just human nature, but human nature in the way we each take upon ourselves human nature — as a little child. And not just as a past historical event. Today He becomes what we are, giving us the chance to become what He is. We must enter into this present mystery at this moment of time. What human reasoning can imagine this reality as the way that God saves His creation?

This supremely humble act fulfills the divine plan and inaugurates everything else necessary for that plan to come to fruition. Paradise was given to us at the beginning and it was thrown away in selfishness and the desire to "be like God" but without Him. We placed the wall between us and God. That is destroyed when the Son of God becomes the Son of Man. God protected His fallen creation by placing the angel with a flaming sword at the gates of paradise so we could not return to the Tree of Life that would permanently seal our separation if we ate of it. He replaces it with the Tree of Life that is the Son of God who comes to be crucified on the Cross, which is now the only Tree of Life, bringing us back to Paradise.

On this Day, we who were exiled from the first paradise through disobedience and sin, are invited back to the eternal Paradise, where we can feast on the fruits of this uniting of the human and divine. This fruit will never allow us to hunger again. The "celebrations" which have been going on for months now in our world will end on this day. All the feasting with which the world has enticed us (and which we sometimes are all too eager to accept) — food, drink, partying, carols, Christmas trees, etc. — will fade away rather quickly. All the enjoyment consumed will soon pass through our bodies and trees will wither away on our curbs. But while the world has had a bacchanalia of consumerism, we have been called to fast and to make an effort to prepare a place in the cave of our bodies and the manger of our souls to receive the One whom we have anticipated since that exile from paradise. Heaven and earth are united once again.

## **Archpastoral Message of His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin for Christmas**

Today the earth offers a cave, the Magi offer prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, angels offer hymns, simple shepherds offer adoration, and we offer the Virgin. Indeed, it is a present mystery. Brothers and sisters, my beloved flock, this day we are offered the Child who is the God-Man come to restore Paradise. Let us, in all humility, receive this most wonderful Gift and give thanks!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

In the new-born Child,

✠ Benjamin

Archbishop of San Francisco and the West

### **NATIVITY SERMON OF ST ISAAC THE SYRIAN**

***This Nativity night bestowed peace on the whole world – So let no one threaten;***

***This is the night of the Most Gentle One – Let no one be cruel;***

***This is the night of the Humble One – Let no one be proud.***

***Now is the day of joy – Let us not revenge;***

***Now is the day of Good Will – Let us not be mean.***

***In this Day of Peace – Let us not be conquered by anger.***

***Today the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our sake; So, rich one, invite the poor to your table.***

***Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask; So let us give alms to those who implore and beg us.***

***This present Day cast open the heavenly doors to our prayers;***

***Let us open our door to those who ask our forgiveness.***

***Today the DIVINE BEING took upon Himself the seal of our humanity, In order for humanity to be decorated by the Seal of DIVINITY.***



## LOOKING AHEAD

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

### Sun Dec 24—Christmas Eve

6:00pm — Vigil for Nativity

### Mon Dec 25—Christmas

8:30am — 3rd & 6th Hours

9:00am—Festal Divine Liturgy

### Wed Dec 27

10:30am — Father's Cafe

5:00pm —Choir Meet at Church for Caroling

### Thurs Dec 28

11am — Diamond Circle Christmas Party at home of Joe & Cora Temnick

### Fri Dec 29

7:00pm — Adult Ed: The Lives of the 12 Apostles—A Primer

### Sat Dec 30

4:30pm — Baptism of Vincent & Emmanuel Palmumbo

**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*

Stephen Brown, Steve Zmina, Steven Drexler, Huyen Sarah Do 12/27

### *Birthdays*

Mat. Victoria Anderson, Fadwa Harb 12/24

Michael Geralt 12/26

Nathan Jones 12/28

### *Wedding Anniversaries*

Tanya & Dale (Michael) Franchak, George & Tania Minakov 12/28

Dmitriy & Caitlin (Juliana) Panasenko 12/29

## PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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