

April 14, 2024



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

4TH OF GREAT LENT—TONE 4

ST JOHN CLIMACUS (OF THE LADDER)

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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 and fill out a visitor card.

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A Word from the Holy Fathers

If the poison of pride is swelling up in you, turn to the Eucharist; and that Bread, Which is your God humbling and disguising Himself, will teach you humility. If the fever of selfish greed rages in you, feed on this Bread; and you will learn generosity. If you are lazy and sluggish about spiritual things, strengthen yourself with this heavenly Food; and you will grow fervent. Lastly, if you feel scorched by the fever of impurity, go to the banquet of the Angels; and the spotless Flesh of Christ will make you pure and chaste.

—St. Cyril of Alexandria

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Include Something in the Bulletin or Be Included in our Weekly E-mails

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



Parish Life

Paschal Bake Goods & Food Available

The Auxiliary will be offering a selection of Paschal baked goods and foods for our parishioners.

An order form has been included in this week's bulletin. Orders are due by April 28, the latest. People will be able to pick up their orders on Holy Wednesday or Thursday



New People Needed to Volunteer as Greeters & Counters

Due to illness and people traveling, we are in urgent need for new people to volunteer as Greeters & Counters.

There are easy to follow "how to" documents for each of these ministries to help newcomers.

Please speak with Fr. Michael if you are willing to help.



Monthly Collections

As we continue to restore many of the beloved practices of our parish we are reinstating our monthly Sunday collections:

- 2nd Sunday of the Month—Seminarian at St Herman's Seminary in Alaska
- 3rd Sunday of the Month—Charities (local needs, IOCC, Project Mexico, etc.)

The basket will be placed out for the veneration of the cross at the end of Liturgy. Please give as you can.

Adult Ed Class on Healing & Sacrament of Unction Mon April 22 — 7pm

We will be celebrating the Sacrament of Unction on Tuesday April 23. To help prepare to participate in the Sacrament we will be having a 1-session class on its meaning and place in healing. The class will be offered in person in the church hall and via zoom



Service Schedule for Great Lent & Pascha Available on Parish Website

For those that would benefit from looking ahead to plan to attend more of the services of Great Lent & Holy Pascha, the schedule of services is available on our parish website at <https://stjohnofdamascus.org/calendar/>



PYSANKI WORKSHOP SUNDAY APRIL 14 12:30PM

Our much-loved annual pysanki workshop is scheduled for today beginning at 12:30pm.

Please speak with Diane Worth if you have any questions.



Today's Worship — Hymns

TROPARIA

Resurrection—Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord
learned from the angel the joyous message of
Your Resurrection,
they cast away the ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:

“Death is overthrown!

Christ God is risen,//

granting the world great mercy!”

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!

St John Climacus —Tone 1

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the
body,

you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing
Father John.

You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil
and prayer,

healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to
you by faith.

Glory to Him Who gave you strength!

Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//

Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

KONTAKIA

Resurrection—Tone 4

My Savior and Redeemer

as God rose from the tomb and delivered the
earth-born from their chains.

He has shattered the gates of hell,
and as Master,//

He has risen on the third day!

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.

St John Climacus —Tone 4

The Lord truly set you on the heights of
abstinence,

to be a guiding star, showing the way to the
universe,//

O our father and teacher John.

Steadfast Protectress—Tone 6

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,

Constant advocate before the Creator:

Do not despise the cry of us sinners,

But in your goodness, come speedily to help us
who call on you in faith.

Hasten to hear our petitions & to intercede for
us, O Theotokos,

For you always protect those who honor you!

Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

Hebrews 6: 13-20

¹³ When God made a promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, ¹⁴ saying, "I will surely bless and multiply you." ¹⁵ Thus, having patiently endured, Abraham obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For humans indeed swear by someone greater, and in every dispute they have, the oath is final to get things settled. ¹⁷ In this way, being determined to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of his purpose, God intervened with an oath. ¹⁸ And so, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, may we have a strong encouragement, since we have sought refuge and taken hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor of the soul, a hope which is both sure and solid. It reaches beyond the veil, ²⁰ where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Ephesians 5:9-19

⁹ for the fruit of the Spirit is in all [manner of] goodness, righteousness and truth. ¹⁰ Discern what is well-pleasing to the Lord! ¹¹ Have no fellowship with the vain works of darkness, but rather, expose them for what they are. ¹² It is a shame even to speak about the things which these people do in secret! ¹³ But all things are revealed when they are exposed to the light. ¹⁴ Therefore, it is said:

Awake, you sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

¹⁵ Therefore, watch carefully how you live, not as unwise, but as wise [people], ¹⁶ making good use of time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk with wine—this is reckless living—but be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs! Sing and chant to the Lord in your heart,

PROKEIMENON

Tone 4 (Resurrection) — O Lord, how manifold are Your works; / in wisdom have You made them all. (Ps. 103:26)

V. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, You are very great! (Ps. 103:1)

Tone 7 (St. John Climacus) - Let the saints exult in glory; / let them sing for joy on their couches! (Ps. 149:5)

ALLELUIA

Tone 4 - V. Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth!
(Ps. 44:3b)

V. For You love righteousness, and hate iniquity. (Ps. 44:6)

Tone 4 — V. They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. (Ps. 91:12)

Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

Mark 9: 17-31

¹⁷ Someone in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son who has a mute spirit.

¹⁸ Wherever [the spirit] seizes him, it throws him to the ground and my son foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they were not able."

¹⁹ Jesus answered him, "Unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me."

²⁰ They brought the son to him, and when he saw Jesus, the spirit immediately convulsed the boy who fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. ²² "Often, it has thrown him both into the fire and into water, in order to destroy him. But if you are able to do anything, have compassion on us and help us!"

²³ Jesus said to the man, "If you are able! All things are possible to the one who believes!"

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, "I believe! Help my unbelief!"

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!"

²⁶ The spirit cried out, convulsed greatly, and came out of the boy. He became as dead, so much that many said, "He is dead!" ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up; and the boy stood up.

²⁸ When Jesus entered into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁹ He answered, "This kind can come out by nothing, except by prayer and fasting."

The Lord's passion announced again—The greatest in the Kingdom

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee, [and] Jesus did not want anyone to know it. ³¹ He was teaching his disciples and told them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and when he is killed, he will rise again on the third day."

Matthew 4: 25-5:12

²⁵ Great crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

⁵ Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up to the mountain and when he had sat down, his disciples came to him. ² He began to speak and to teach them, saying:

³ Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted!

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth!

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
after righteousness,
for they shall be filled!

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy!

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God!

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God!

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for
righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!

¹¹ Blessed are you when people revile you,
persecute you,
and say all kinds of evil against you falsely
for my sake! ¹² Rejoice, and be extremely
glad,
for great is your reward in heaven!

Indeed, this is how they persecuted the prophets
who were before you!

Our Life in Christ

THE MEANING OF THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

—Fr Alexander Men

Every day of Great Lent, with the exception of Saturdays and Sundays, the prayer “O Lord and Master of my life” is read. According to tradition, this prayer was written in Syria in the fourth century by the ascetic Mar Afrem or, as we have grown accustomed to calling him, Ephraim the Syrian. He was a monk, poet, and theologian, one of the most eminent sons of the Syrian Church, who entered world literature as a remarkable writer.

The words of the prayer, which were quite accurately transmitted by Pushkin (in the poem “Desert Fathers and Immaculate Women”), sound as follows when translated from the Syrian: **“O Lord and Master of my life,”** that is: Ruler of my life, Who gave me life, Who is the center and focal point of my life. **“Give me not a spirit of idleness,”** that is, laziness, which is, according to the old adage, the mother of all vices. Laziness seems like an innocent thing, but it engenders much that is dark and black.

“Despondency.” Christianity is a joyful doctrine; joyful, too, is he who is despondent — for it will leave him. St. Seraphim of Sarov, the great Russian saint of the nineteenth century, said: “We have no ways to be despondent, for Christ has saved everyone.”

“Ambition.” This means love of authority. Everyone has it; do not think that the cult of personality exists only in politics: it can also be present in the family or in any small community. Everyone has in himself the seeds of the aspiration to crush the will of others, to strangle and subdue it.

“Idle talking.” I exempt children: they have the right to chatter, but only until the age of fifteen or sixteen. When children chatter they are learning to communicate and are practicing their language; but when these “children” are already twenty, or sometimes older than forty— this means they are being pitiless towards their own lives. Let us consider (and let us be honest with ourselves): how much longer do we have to live? Not much longer at all. Therefore, I repeat, we should value life and love the gift that God has given us, remembering that we will carry into eternity only that which we have in our hearts. Idle talk and blathering are frightful words, for they involve killing time.

Further on the prayer says: **“a spirit of chastity... patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant.”** Chastity is purity of relations with the world and with people, wholeness of soul, without duality, and without the passions gaining possession over you.

“Humble-mindedness.” This means the wisdom of the healthy person. Humility here, in the given context, means knowing where you stand against the backdrop of eternity. Do not inflate yourself like the frog in Krylov’s fable *The Frog and the Ox*—it burst. There is no need to exaggerate, but one should know one’s worth. The wisdom of modesty is extraordinary and beautiful. The wisdom of modesty is not abasement beyond pride, but healthiness of soul. Here is an example for you. When someone begins to imagine himself as something that he is not, he is only a few steps from megalomania. Megalomania is a pathological state of pride. One person announces that he is the chairman of the Council of Ministers or Napoleon, and he is placed in a psychiatric hospital; another

Our Life in Christ

makes no such pronouncement, for which reason he is not in the hospital, but in his soul he thinks he is superior to everyone else.

“Patience, and love.” What is patience? I will put it briefly so that you will remember. Patience is not the state of cattle, which tolerate everything. It is not humiliation—not at all. It is not a compromise with evil—under no circumstances. Patience is the ability to maintain equanimity of spirit in circumstances that impede such equanimity. Patience is the ability to achieve one’s goals when encountering various obstacles along the way. Patience is the ability to maintain a joyful spirit even when there is an excess of grief. Patience is a victory and an overcoming; patience is a form of courage. This is what real patience is.

Finally, love. Love is the utmost happiness of man; it is the ability of our souls to be open, immanent (as the philosophers say), inwardly open to the other person. When you are riding the escalator in the subway, test yourself to see if you are able to love or not. When you look at the people riding on the other side and you find it repulsive to look at their faces, it means that all the pores of your soul are clogged and that your feeling of love is in an embryonic state.

But the power of Christ’s grace is capable of rebuilding a person in such a way that he sees people in an entirely different manner; so that his first reaction will be benevolence; so that he will immediately see the beautiful in both women and men, in an inspired manner, even where no one else notices it; so that when seeing a suffering face he will feel compassion; so that he will be open. Such a person is always happy, because he is united with people and lives lovingly.

At the end of the prayer it says: **“Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother.”** You understand this. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself. We are extremely careful—I would say observant and even psychologically sophisticated—when we are considering the sins of our neighbors or the sins of other people. Here we display maximum knowledge of all moral laws in all their subtleties. Here we act like strict judges, although we have no right to do so, since we ourselves are guilty of the very things of which we condemn others.

You ask me: perhaps this is appeasement and compromise with evil? Under no circumstances. Never. We must call evil by its name. But we must have compassion for the person who falls into this sin.

This is the essence of this prayer read daily with prostrations during Great Lent.

—From the lecture *“Great Lent,”* delivered on April 1, 1989.
Translated from Russian on Pravmir.com.



LOOKING AHEAD

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

Sun April 14

12:30pm — Pysanki Workshop

Tues April 16

7:00pm — Parish Council Meeting

Wed April 17

10:30am — Father's Café

6:00pm — Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten Potluck

Thurs April 18

6:00pm — Matins with the Great Canon of Repentance

Fri April 19

6:00pm — Matins with the Akathist to the Theotokos

Sat April 20

4:30pm — Choir Rehearsal

Mon April 22

7:00pm — Adult Ed: On Healing in the Church—the Sacrament of
Unction

Tues April 23

6:00pm — Holy Unction

Wed April 24

10:30am — Father's Café

6:00pm — Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten Potluck

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

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

Many Years!

Birthdays

Tanya Franchak	4/14
Marie Kopcha	4/15
Mark Griebing	4/16
John William Stafford	4/17

PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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Priest: V. Rev. Michael Anderson, Rector

Email: 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