

January 26, 2025



# 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

31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 6

HOLY NEW MARTYRS & CONFESSORS OF  
RUSSIAN UNDER SOVIET YOKE

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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**

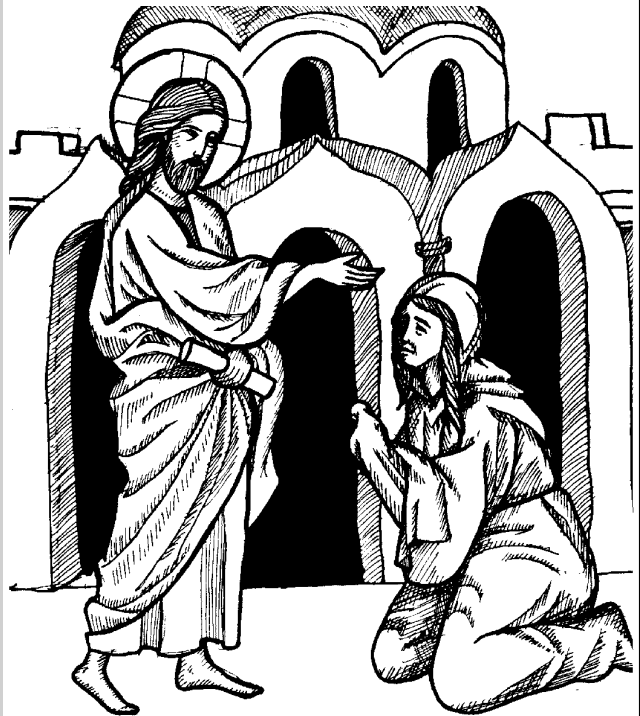
Paul pointed out to all the deeds he had  
dared to commit before. He thought that it  
was better for his former life to be  
publicized to all in order to make evident  
the greatness of the gift of God than to  
cover up his ineffable and indescribable  
mercy by shrinking from proclaiming his  
own sins to all....And because of this he  
held out good hope even to those who had  
despaired of themselves.

*St. John Chrysostom*

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

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



"Lord, help me"

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

## Parish Life

### **2025 Wall Calendars Available (with Feasts, Fasts, Scriptures Readings)**

The wall calendars for 2025 have arrived and are available in the narthex in the back of the church. \$10 is the suggested donation.



### **SAVE THE DATE St John's 50th Anniversary May 25, 2025**

The weekend of Sunday May 24 and 25, 2025 we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of our beloved parish.

His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin along with other special guests will be with us.

There will also be a celebratory banquet at Vintana Wine + Dine in Escondido

More details to follow



### **All-American Council AND Diocesan Assembly July 14-18, 2025 Phoenix, AZ**

The 21st All-American Council will take place in Phoenix, AZ at the Grand Arizona Resort from July 14-18, 2025.

We will be sending our usual clergy and lay delegate to the Council but other parishioners are welcome and encouraged to come as well.

There will be a special celebration in connection with the glorification of Matushka Olga of AK, Mark your calendars and be on the lookout for hotel, scheduling and other information.

### **List of Current Voting Members Posted**

In preparation for our upcoming annual parish meeting in February, the list of voting members (those parishioners who have submitted pledge forms for 2025) has been posted in both the church narthex and in the church hall.

If your name is not on there, please submit your pledge form ASAP.

### **Youth Sunday Sunday Feb 2**

This year our parish's annual "youth Sunday" will take place on Sunday Feb 2 in connection with the Feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple which is also the World Day of Orthodox Youth.

Our younger members will take on various aspects of the Divine Liturgy.

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending.

### **Parish Annual Meeting Nominations for Parish Council, Lay Representative & Auditors**

Our annual meeting is coming up in February. We will be electing

- 4 people for positions on the Parish Council
- a Lay Representative for our Diocesan Assembly and All-American Council (Phoenix, AZ July 14-18)
- 2 Auditors for 2025

If you would like to be nominated to run for any of these positions please see Fr Michael or any member of the current Parish Council.

### **House Blessings**

Following the feast of Theophany until the beginning of Great Lent (Jan. 7 - Mar. 1) Fr. Michael will be blessing homes.

Please contact Fr. Michael to arrange a date and

## Today's Worship — Hymns

### TROPARIA

#### **Resurrection—Tone 6**

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb;  
the guards became as dead men.  
Mary stood by Your grave,  
seeking Your most pure body.  
You captured hell, not being tempted by it.  
You came to the Virgin, granting life.  
O Lord, Who rose from the dead, //  
glory to You.

#### **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!

#### **New Martyrs —Tone 4**

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in  
joy,  
praising her new martyrs and confessors;  
hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers,  
right-believing princes and princesses,  
venerable men and women, and all Orthodox  
Christians.  
Having laid down their life for faith in Christ  
during the days of godless persecution,  
they preserved the truth by the shedding of  
blood. //  
By their protection, O long-suffering Lord,  
preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the  
end of the age.

### KONTAKIA

#### **Resurrection—Tone 6**

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,  
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery  
with His mighty hand,  
He bestowed resurrection on the human race. //  
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life,  
and the God of all.

#### **New Martyrs—Tone 3**

Today the new martyrs of Rus' stand in white  
robes before the Lamb of God,  
and with the angels they sing to God the hymn of  
victory:  
"Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise,  
and honor,  
and power, and strength be to our God //  
unto the ages of ages. Amen."

#### **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

### Epistle — 1 Timothy 1: 15-17

<sup>15</sup> This saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the first. <sup>16</sup> This is how I obtained mercy, so that in me as 'the first,' Jesus Christ might show all his patience as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup> Now to the eternal King, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

### Epistle — Romans 8: 28-39

<sup>28</sup> We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> Whoever God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that his Son might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Whoever God predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how would he not also give us all things with him freely? <sup>33</sup> Who could bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies! <sup>34</sup> Who is the one who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes and rather, who is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Could oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> Even as it is written:

*For your sake we are killed all day long.  
We were accounted as sheep for the  
slaughter.*

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> Indeed, I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### PROKEIMENON

**Tone 6** — (*Resurrection*) O Lord, save Your people, / and bless Your inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

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

**Tone 7** - (*New Martyrs*) God is our refuge and strength, / a help in afflictions that severely befall us. (Ps. 45:1)

## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Gospel — Matthew 15: 21-28

<sup>21</sup> Jesus then left that area and withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> Behold, a Canaanite woman came out from those borders and cried out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David! My daughter is severely demonized!"

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus did not answer her a word.

His disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away! She is shouting after us!"

<sup>24</sup> However, Jesus answered, "I was not sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

<sup>25</sup> Still, the woman came forward and expressed adoration to him, saying, "Lord, help me."

<sup>26</sup> But he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

<sup>27</sup> But she replied, "Yes, Lord, but even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done to you even as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

### Gospel — Luke 21: 8-19

<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, "Watch out that you do not get led astray, for many will come in my Name, saying: 'I am he,' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not follow them!" <sup>9</sup> When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified, for these things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, famines, and plagues in various places. There will be fearful events and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> But before all these things [happen], you will be placed under arrest and be persecuted; you will be handed over to synagogues and prisons, and brought before kings and governors for my Name's sake. <sup>13</sup> But it will turn out for you as an occasion to bear witness. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, settle it in your hearts not to ponder in advance how to answer, <sup>15</sup> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or withstand. <sup>16</sup> You will be handed over even by parents, relatives, friends, and brothers. Some of you will be put to death. <sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all for my Name's sake, <sup>18</sup> yet not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> By your endurance acquire your lives

### ALLELUIA

**Tone 6** — V. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. (Ps. 90:1)

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust." (Ps. 90:2)

**Tone 4** - V. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Ps. 33:17)

## Sanctity of Life Sunday

**To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,**

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we mark our annual **Sanctity of Life Sunday**, I would like to speak to you about martyrdom. Specifically, by understanding martyrdom, which we might consider the most pure, fundamental realization of the Christian vocation, we understand just why we hold life sacred.

At first, this may appear paradoxical. Martyrdom, after all, is willingly surrendering one's life for the sake of the Christian faith. Martyrdom teaches us that life in this world is not to be compared with the glorious and everlasting life that awaits us in the world to come. As the Lord says, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mk. 8:35).

Christ promises us in his Beatitudes that "blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. 5:11–12). When we are rejected by the world because we accept the Gospel—when we reject the world in order to take up our Cross—then we display the Christian faith in all its truth and power and glory. Martyrdom, etymologically and in fact, always means "bearing witness," and the greatest and most fundamental way to bear witness to the Gospel is to die for the sake of the Gospel.

However, martyrdom, even when it points us towards the next life, also testifies to the immeasurable sacredness of our mortal life in this world. Here, in this life, it is possible for us to bear witness; here, in this life, we have the possibility of accepting Christ's gift of salvation. This is true for the literal martyrs, but it is also possible for every Christian through the bloodless martyrdom of asceticism. Whenever we die to our fleshly desires for the sake of the Gospel, we suffer a little martyrdom. Whenever we forgo power or wealth or gratification for the sake of Christ's commandments, we are bearing witness, in a small way, to the truth of the Christian faith.

In other words, martyrdom proper, as well as the ascetic martyrdom to which we are all called, are a way of "redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16). Through Christ's Incarnation and Passion, the fallen world and passing present age have become an arena of spiritual struggle and the place where salvation is accomplished.

Seen from this perspective, life in this world is not something cheap and utilitarian, but incredibly dear. The Lord gives us this life that we might offer it back to him, fulfilling our primordial role as priest and mediator of creation: man is called to commend himself and his fellow-men and all his life to Christ our God.

All life comes from God; all life belongs to God; and through the saving work of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, biological life in this world is now open to the possibility of true and everlasting life in the world to come.

Thus, on this Sanctity of Life Sunday, we bear witness to the truth that all human life, from conception to natural death, is sacred. We pray that the scales will fall from the eyes of our countrymen who do not recognize this basic truth, and we beseech the Lord that all violations of this holy principle—abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and the rest—would come to a swift end in our age and our land. Finally, we pray that we might find the strength to live in accordance with this teaching, showing forth the sanctity of life by devoting our own life to the pursuit of sanctity, thus bearing witness in our flesh to the truth of the holy Orthodox Christian faith.

**Sincerely yours in Christ,**

**+Tikhon<sup>[SEP]</sup> Archbishop of Washington<sup>[SEP]</sup> Metropolitan of All America and Canada**

## **Blessing of Homes**

According to the Orthodox Christian Faith, the family is considered to be a “small church” and the family table is the “home altar” where the people gather each day to receive their “daily bread” from God with thanksgiving in the Name of Christ. Thus, during the Theophany season, the priest, who is the father of the great “family of God,” the Church community, comes to each of the “small churches” bringing the blessings of God the Father and all of the brothers and sisters in Christ.

The sanctification of the home takes place not only by the words of prayer, but by the sprinkling with the blessed water which stands for the new creation of the Kingdom of God in which God Himself “fills all things with Himself” including even the smallest particles of material existence.

The priest asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. All pray together for the good of the living and the departed of the family, and of all who live and have lived in the house. All sing together the great hymn of salvation that Christ, the Son of the Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit, “has revealed Himself and has enlightened the world.” This the house itself, together with the living persons of the family, is “filled with all the fullness of God.”

### **Preparing for your house blessing**

When the priest comes to bless the family and its house it is not something to worry about. The priest comes to bless a house that is lived in, not one that has to be in Better Homes and Gardens. There are some basics that are normally observed:

- • A lighted candle, an icon and a wide bowl for the blessed water should be placed on the main table in the house.
- • All radios, televisions, video games, mp3 players etc. should be turned off. Phones should be on silent.
- • All who are present in the house should come together and stand by the table until the end of service.
- • Those who are able should join in the singing of the hymns and responses of the services.
- • The first names of those for whom special prayers are to be offered, including, of course, all members of the family and those living in the house, should be clearly printed on a sheet of paper, with the clear distinction between the living and the departed.

*Taken and revised from the Introduction to the Great Blessing of Water by Fr. Thomas Hopko.*

**Following the feast of Theophany until the beginning of Great Lent**

**(Jan. 6-Mar2) Fr. Michael will be blessing homes.**

**Please contact Fr. Michael to arrange a date and time.**



## LOOKING AHEAD

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

### Monday January 6-March 1

Annual House Blessings—Contact Fr Michael to Schedule

### Monday January 27

6:00pm—Adult Ed: Orthodox Christianity 101

### Wednesday January 29

7:00pm — Adult Ed: Parish Reflections for All-American Council (In person in Church Hall & Via Zoom)

### Sunday February 2

Youth Sunday

### Monday Feb 3– Friday Feb 7

Fr Michael travels to MA to help his mother.

### Monday February 10

6:00pm—Adult Ed: Orthodox Christianity 101

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

## Many Years!

### *Birthdays*

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Kyra Miller, Emily (Emma) Neskin

1/31

### PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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

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**Attached Clergy:** V. Rev. Alexander Federoff, Retired, Rev. John Robinson, Retired & Pdn. George Shumaik

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