

March 2, 2025



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

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY— TONE 3

FORGIVENES SUNDAY

**EXPLUSION OF ADAM & EVE FROM
PARADISE**

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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

As the Searcher of hearts, the Lord
knows that men are liable to very frequent
trespass, and that, having fallen, they
often rise up again; therefore He has given
us the commandment to frequently forgive
trespasses, and He Himself is the first to
fulfill His holy word. As soon as you say
from your whole heart, 'I repent,' you will
be immediately forgiven.

— *St John of Kronstadt*

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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.



*"Come, my wretched soul, and weep today over
thine acts, remembering how once thou wast
stripped naked in Eden and cast out from delight
and unending joy."*

—*from the First Canticle of the Matins Canon.*

Parish Life

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

The 21st All-American Council and the 2025 Diocesan Assembly 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.

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

San Diego Clergy Brotherhood Lenten/Paschal Services

The San Diego Clergy Brotherhood has put together a schedule of Sunday Lenten & Paschal Vespers as opportunities for the faithful to gather pray together, and build the bonds of fellowship.

All Vespers are followed by a community light meal.

See the schedule below.

Sunday March 9 (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

6:00pm St Constantine & Helen Orthodox Church, 3459 Manchester Ave, Cardiff, CA 92007

Sunday March 23 (Sunday of the Cross)

6:00pm St Gregory of Nyssa Orthodox Church, 1454 Jamacha Rd, El Cajon, CA 92019

Sunday April 6 (Sunday of St Mary of Egypt)

6:00pm St George Orthodox Church, 4175 Poplar Street, San Diego, CA 92105

Sunday May 4 (Sunday of the Myrrhbearers)

6:00pm St John of Damascus Church, 16903 Espola Rd Poway CA 92064

Auxiliary Cooking Days—March

The Auxiliary will have cooking days on the Thursdays in March beginning at 9am.

Please come and help if you can!

Keep Informed Receive Weekly E-mails About Parish Life

We are an active community with a lot going on. These days it is especially helpful to keep up to date on things taking place in our parish.

We have an email group
News@stjohnofdamascus.org

It is all those who are interested in the activities of St. John of Damascus Orthodox Church.

**To be included E-mail Fr Michael at
info@stjohnofdamascus.org**

Lenten Message of His Eminence Archbishop BENJAMIN

Dearly beloved,

Once again, we have arrived at the threshold of the Holy Tithe of the year — Great Lent. We are called by the Lord and the Church to set aside these weeks, gird ourselves and begin the journey to the Resurrection. We have spent five Sundays with the Church giving us lessons of preparation for this holy time. The paradox is that the preparatory Sundays are simply preparation to move into preparation for Pascha. We cannot enter Great Lent without the desire of Zacchaeus, the humility of the Publican, the realization of exile and subsequent return of the Prodigal, the finding of true salvation in the “least of my brethren,” and, perhaps most difficult of all the preparation: bowing down to ask and grant forgiveness to all. To pause and realize that all of this is but getting us ready to enter into Lent is almost breathtaking.

Enter into Lent we will. Each and every person must choose for him/herself whether and how much to fast. But what does this “fast” mean? We face Great Lent every year being tempted to look at things as a contest or checklist. “I ate the right things. I ate the right amount of those things. Umm, there wasn’t milk in that bread I had, was there? I made 90% of the extra services. I went to confession just like Father said I had to. My Lent was successful!” Then after singing “Christ is Risen!” we go back to the life we had before all the preparation, before all the services, before all the confessions, before all the “checklists.”

We only find the true meaning of Great Lent in repentance and the realization that the Fast isn’t a checklist of dos and don’ts, but rather a very serious battlefield in which we are fighting tooth and nail to lose ourselves. Then, and only then, the Lord says we will find ourselves. That is the goal of Lent — to lose myself. The contest isn’t to eat less, eat the right things, go the right services or any other count we wish to keep. We eat less because we normally stuff ourselves while ignoring our neighbor, we eat the “right” things because the normal things we eat are more important to us than the eternal food of heaven, we go to the services because we can lift up our hearts, minds and voices to the Lord instead of parking ourselves in front of Netflix. Any “count” we keep is only valuable if they replace the mundane and yet so valuable items that usually clutter our lives, creating a space for Something and Someone more important.

If Lent is a war with the dark forces of this world, the battleground is my soul. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving and repentance are the weapons the Church gives us to fight this battle. She gathers us together in prayer often, feeds us at the training table of warriors and the Lord Himself stands beside each of us to fight with us and uphold us in our weak moments. Repentance is the foundation of all Lenten effort. To repent means to turn around. To want to be something — someone — different than the person I am in my sin and weakness. The Lord is standing ready to receive us! St. Ephraim the Syrian prays thus about the truly penitent:

You, O Master, are omniscient and see the resolve with which a man turns from sin. And before he comes to the door, You open it for him. Before he falls at Your feet, You stretch out Your hand to him. Before he sheds tears, You bestow upon him Your compassion. Before he confesses his debts, You grant him forgiveness. You do not accuse him or say: how did you squander your belongings? You do not remember how he angered You with his depravity; You do not reproach him for scorning Your good works. (St. Ephraim the Syrian, A Spiritual Psalter)

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is waiting for us! Let us bow down before each other and seek (and grant) forgiveness as we enter into this tithe of the year. Let us pray personally, and corporately, with a sincere and humble heart. Let us live disciplined lives that do not scandalize anyone. Let us fast in order to create a space for the One who is going to His Passion and Resurrection for us. I wish for all my faithful parishes and each and every one of you a most fruitful and joyous Fast. May we all rejoice in the celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection at the end of these most holy days.

With love in Christ,

+BENJAMIN

Archbishop of San Francisco and the West

Today's Worship — Hymns

TROPARIA

Resurrection—Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to 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!

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.

Triodion—Tone 6

O Master, Teacher of wisdom,
Bestower of virtue,
Who teach the thoughtless and protect the poor,
strengthen and enlighten my heart!
O Word of the Father,
let me not restrain my mouth from crying to You:
"Have mercy on me, a transgressor,
O merciful Lord!"

PROKEIMENA

Tone 8 (Lenten Triodion) - Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (Ps. 75:10a)
V. In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

ALLELUIA

Tone 6 — V. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. (Ps. 91:1)

V. To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night. (Ps. 91:2a)

Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

Epistle — Romans 13:11-14:4

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

¹ Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

⁴ Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Gospel — Matthew 6:14-21

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

¹⁶ Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Our Life in Christ

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon on the Beginning of Great Lent



To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, beloved children in the Lord,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

We read in the life of St. Euthymius the Great that, in the time of the great Palestinian monastic fathers, many of the monks had a practice of retreating into the desert, not just for the forty days of Lent, but for the entire period between Theophany and Palm Sunday. This practice is referenced in the hymns of the Triodion. At Matins on Friday of the Sixth Week—the last of day of Lent—the final troparion of the second canon proclaims: “All who dwell in deserts, in mountains and in caves, draw near and assemble with us, to meet the King and Master with palms in your hands; for he comes to save our souls.”

Such a practice is unthinkable in our time, even for most monastics. Still, this practice holds an important lesson for all Orthodox Christians as we prepare for Great Lent. Namely, that ascetic effort should not be divorced from silence, *hesychia*, a withdrawal from the tumult of the world.

In fact, the cultivation of silence has a special value in this age of constant noise. Social media platforms capitalize, quite literally, upon our endless “engagement” with one another. Advertising is ubiquitous, invading every nook of our life, sometimes in truly insidious forms. Thanks to smart phones, a barrage of “entertainment”—podcasts, TikTok videos, YouTube Shorts, Spotify playlists, mobile games—is constantly at our fingertips. News outlets try to persuade us to read or watch or listen to the world’s happenings on a 24-hours-a-day basis. Streaming services like Netflix and live-streaming services like Twitch provide us with a nearly endless river of “content.” And the prevailing ideology tells us that self-expressions and making ourselves “heard” are among life’s highest values.

However, if we constantly fill our eyes and minds with soul-numbing entertainment, what room do we leave for the encounter with God? If we constantly fill our ears with the sound of our own voice and opinions and expression, how shall we hear the eternal Word of the Father?

Therefore, I call upon each of us, all the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, to make a Lenten commitment to cultivate silence in our life in some concrete way. I offer here but a few examples, asking each of us to consider adapting the practice of silence to the realities of our own daily life. We might:

- fast from posting on social media, or perhaps fast from using social media entirely, even passively;
- limit our time on the computer by turning it off at dinnertime and not turning it on again till after breakfast the next day;
- make rules around cellphone usage—no entertainment apps, no podcasts or videos.
- give up all streaming services for the entirety of Lent, or even give up movies, television, and

Our Life in Christ

videos altogether for the holy Forty Days.

Regardless of our other efforts, all of us would benefit from resolving to spend 10 minutes or half an hour in complete silence each day, both for the period of the Fast and beyond. In this regard, I recall the 8th and 9th maxims of Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko: "Practice silence, inner and outer. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day." It would behoove all of us to practice such deliberate silence in addition to the time we spend in prayer each day.

This practice of silence will take effort, and we may find that we fall short of our goals. But, as with every ascetic effort, we recognize that we are passionate sinners, weak and erring, and in need of God's strengthening grace. Despite our failures, we know that Christ receives and rewards authentic struggle. As St. John of the Ladder says, to fall is human, but to remain fallen is proper only to the demons. If we come up short, we repent and try again, and if we keep trying, by God's grace, we will notice a change in ourselves.

To wit, when we cultivate silence, we weaken our passionate ties to the world. We challenge our tendency to idolize our own words and actions. We become more vigilant, noticing the movements in our mind and soul, helping us to see our own sinfulness and our need for Christ. Perhaps most importantly, when we are still and silent, we allow God to act and to speak.

"Be still, and know I am God," says the holy Scripture (Ps. 45:10); the Word of God came to the holy prophet Elijah in the silence after the storm, as a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12). When Christ quieted the winds and waves, saying "Silence, be still," then the disciples recognized his power (Mk. 4:39). If we, too, wish to encounter his power and his Person, we must practice stillness, allowing him to calm the waves of passion and worldliness that trouble our heart and soul.

The Russian term for a monastic novice is *poslushnik*: the one who obeys, or, more fundamentally, the one who listens. Though we may not be able to retreat into the desert like the great monastic fathers of old, at least we can imitate the novice's way of life by cultivating a small measure of silence and attention in our lives. In addition to our usual and necessary Lenten efforts in fasting, prayer, almsgiving, this Lent, let us all become novices in spirit, through silence learning to listen to God and to obey his word, in which lies our salvation and his great mercy.

Wishing all of you a soul-saving Forty Days, with my primatial blessing and prayers, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada



LOOKING AHEAD

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

March 2

After Divine Liturgy — Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

Mon March 3

6:00pm—Repentance Canon of St Andrew of Crete

Tues March 4

6:00pm—Repentance Canon of St Andrew of Crete

Wed Mar 5

10:30am — Father's Café (in person in hall or via Zoom)

6:00pm—Repentance Canon of St Andrew of Crete

Thurs March 6

9:00am — Auxiliary Cooking/Baking Day

6:00pm—Repentance Canon of St Andrew of Crete

Friday March 7

6:00pm—Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten Potluck

Saturday March 8

10:00am—Vigil in San Diego for the Sanctity of Life
(2017 1st Ave, San Diego)

4:30pm—Choir Rehearsal

Sunday March 9

6:00pm — Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers followed by Lenten

Dinner (Ss Constatine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church

3459 Manchester Ave, Cardiff, CA 92007)

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

Many Years!

Newly-illuminated Evalina Rose Franchak

Newly-illuminated Aliana Paraskeva Witt

Birthdays

Carmen (Anthony) Brown, Leo Federoff	3/2
Barry Temnick	3/3
Elena Miller	3/5
Peyton Budde	3/8

PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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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, Rev. John Robinson, Retired & Pdn. George Shumaik

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