

**Saint John of Damascus:**

Today the Church remembers St John of Damascus. He was a theologian and a zealous defender of Orthodoxy.

The year was 676 in Damascus, Syria, when the renowned writer and church poet John Mansour was born. He later became known as St. John Damascene or St. John of Damascus.

St. John's father, Sergius, died in 726 and St. John was appointed to take his father's position as counselor to the caliph (civil and religious leader in a Moslem state). During the time he was in office, Leo the Isaurian, the Greek emperor, prohibited the veneration of icons. St. John wrote convincingly against Leo the Isaurian, as well as the iconoclasts (people who destroyed religious images/icons). The emperor tried punishing St. John with physical force, but it didn't work. So he next tried punishing him with a different strategy.

The emperor had the scribes learn St. John's handwriting, and had them write a letter of treason, claiming to overthrow the caliph, and the city of Damascus. They sent the letter to Abdul Malek, who was the caliph at the time. St. John was immediately punished. The caliph ordered St. John's right hand to be cut off and hung in the marketplace.

Later in the night St. John went to the market place and recovered his hand. He placed it in front of an icon of the Virgin Mary and prayed, promising he would write hymns for Orthodoxy if he was healed. That night while St. John was sleeping, the Virgin appeared to him saying, "Thy hand is now whole; sorrow no more." John awoke with great joy and astonishment seeing that his cut-off hand was back in its place. It had become whole with only a little scar.

The caliph received the news of the miracle. Through careful investigation, he proclaimed he was guilty of accusing St. John unjustly, and offered St. John great honors. But St. John did not accept any honor given to him. Instead he asked to have a replica of his hand made from silver and for it to be hung by the icon of the Virgin Mary. Thus the icon received the name "Three-handed".

St. John went on to write many hymns and books which are still used in church services today. He later retired to the monastery of St. Sabbas, right outside Jerusalem. Since St. John was so renowned, none of the monks wanted to teach him. An elderly monk finally agreed to only if, for the sake of humility, St. John agreed to no longer write. St. John agreed and began to live as an ordinary monk.

A few years later, St. John's friend's father died and he asked St. John to write a prayer for him. The prayers and hymns he wrote are still used in funerals today.

The elderly monk heard of this and became angry and wanted to expel St. John from the monastery. The brethren went against this, so the elderly monk agreed to forgive St. John under the condition that he clean the filthy places of the monastery. So St. John humbly did.

After this the Mother of God appeared to the elderly monk in his sleep and said, "Do not stop up my wellspring any longer. Grant it to flow unto the glory of God." The elderly man woke up and realized it was pleasing to God that St. John dedicate himself to writing.

From that time on, no one kept St. John from writing. After several years of uninterrupted labor he enriched the church with many hymns and prayers that are still used in the church services today.

The righteous St. John of Damascus became a bishop and died at the age of 104. His memory is celebrated on December 4.

by Jenna Misleh

See us on the web at:

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Sunday Bulletin

# Church of the Mother of God

## "The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

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Saint John of Damascus

Glory to Jesus  
Christ

Glory Forever

*Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship,  
the enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs:  
all-wise father John, your teachings have gleamed with light upon all things.  
Intercede before Christ God to save our souls.*

Troparion - John of Damascus

**On this day the Church remembers:**

- Greatmartyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana, at Heliopolis in Syria (ca. 306)
- Glorification of Hieromartyr Protopresbyter Alexander (Hotovitzky) (1994)
- **Ven. John of Damascus (776)** • St. John, Bishop of Polybotum (8<sup>th</sup> c.).

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**December 4, 2011**

**Tone 8** of the Octoechos.

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke

**Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:****For health of:**

**Adam** Jankowski on his birthday, offered by Paul and Linda

**Readings:**

- Hebrews 13:7-16 (Saint Alexander)
- Luke 20:19-26 (Saint Alexander)
  - **Ephesians 4:1-7**
  - **Luke 17:12-19 \***

**BRETHREN**, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

**At that time**, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus's feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him: "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

\* (The reading for the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke is always read 2 Sundays before the Nativity, and that Sunday's reading from Luke is read on the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke. This year, the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> are switched.)

**Sunday service:**

**Hours - 9:40 AM**

**Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

(**General Confession** – 9 50 AM on the first Sunday of each month)

(**Pannikhidas** – after Divine Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month)

**Church School - 9:30 AM**

(no classes 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month)

**Coffee hour** after Liturgy

**We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy, downstairs, for Coffee hour.**

**Announcements:**

- There will be Church School today.
- **St Nicholas Celebration.** Our Saint Nicholas Day celebration will be held next Sunday, **December 11<sup>th</sup>** at coffee hour after Divine Liturgy. There will be food, fun, and surprise guests.
- **Toys for Kids** The church school students will be collecting for the "Toys for Kids" campaign again this year. If you can, please bring a new unwrapped toy for any age child on or before **December 11, 2011**. There is a collection box in the basement of the church. All of the toys will be distributed in December to needy children throughout the Atlantic County area. The website for the Atlantic County Toys For Kids Program is: [www.toysforkidsprogram.com](http://www.toysforkidsprogram.com)
- **On the next few Sundays, there will be a second collection for the Nativity flowers and decorations.**

**Special Announcements:**

- **The cookie dough** orders are in. Please see Tammy Zimmerman to pick up your order. **Thank you** to everyone who participated in our fundraiser. We raised \$155 for the Sisterhood.
- The Sisterhood is having an informal meeting today after coffee hour to discuss our upcoming St. Nicholas Day celebration. Please join us if you are interested.

**Reminder:**

- Upcoming bulletins can be sponsored; this can be done with the sign up sheet at the candle stand.
- Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to: [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)