

December 4th

Saint JOHN OF DAMASCUS, priest and doctor of the Church

Memorial

Born about 675 in the city of Damascus, which the Arabs had conquered some forty years earlier, John was the son of a Christian who bore very important responsibilities in the court of the Caliph. He succeeded his father in the office of Grand Vizier, but a short time later he gave up everything to become a monk in the monastery of St. Sabas.

After ordination in the diocese of Jerusalem, he gathered the thoughts of the Fathers in his writings and composed liturgical hymns. He was a vigorous defender of the holy images destroyed in Constantinople under the pretext of idolatry. As a theologian of the Incarnate Word, he reacted against those who doubted the divinity of Christ. He was also appointed Preacher for the solemn feasts of the diocese of Jerusalem.

During the 8th and 9th centuries, when the legitimacy of the icon was called into question and some people wanted to destroy every representation of God and of His saints, those who defended this practice recalled that God manifested himself at the very heart of the history, without ceasing to be hidden, in the features of the face of Jesus.

The veneration of sacred images is linked in a particular way to our faith in the Incarnation of Jesus, true God and true Man at the same time. This is what John of Damascus had understood, and that is why he fought "as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 2: 3). "Since the Invisible has clothed Himself in the flesh, he wrote, since He has manifested Himself, let us not hesitate to represent the likeness of Him who thus manifested Himself."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Ps 37: 30-31a

The mouth of the just man utters wisdom,
and his tongue tells forth what is just.
The law of his God is in his heart.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may be helped by the prayers of the Priest Saint John Damascene, so that the true faith, which he excelled in teaching, may always be our light and our strength.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

FIRST READING

A reading from the 2nd letter of Saint Paul to Timothy 1: 13-14. 2: 1-3

My dear child, take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us. So you, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well. Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 19: 8. 9. 10. 11 (R. John 6: 64b)

R. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

1. The law of the LORD is perfect;
it revives the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are steadfast;
they give wisdom to the simple.

2. The precepts of the LORD are right;
they gladden the heart.
The command of the LORD is clear;
it gives light to the eyes.

3. The fear of the LORD is pure,
abiding forever.
The judgments of the LORD are true;
they are, all of them, just.

4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than quantities of gold.
And sweeter are they than honey,
than honey flowing from the comb.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION John 14: 23

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.
"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him".
R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 25: 14-23

Jesus spoke to his disciples **in parables, about the coming of the Son of Man, saying,** "It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; 8 to another, two; to a third, one - to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, may the sacrifice we present on the fest day of Saint John Damascene be pleasing to you, for he taught us to honour the images of the saints and to imitate their virtues,
Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON 2 Cor 3: 18

All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is the Spirit.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have received, O Lord, this your Eucharist. May it teach us to be detached from all that is corruptible so that, following the example of Saint John Damascene, we may learn to seek you above all things.
Through Christ our Lord.