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# ❖ THE TORCHBEARER ❖

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Vol. 6 ... No. 6

February, 1998

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## **From the Pastor...**

*In the October, 1997 Torchbearer, I wrote about the sanctity of the Eucharistic gathering, i.e. the Divine Liturgy, and our call to become full and meaningful participants of it, using the petition, "For this holy house, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord." As I mentioned, people went from receiving the Eucharist on a limited basis, albeit preparing themselves, to frequent Communion with little or no preparation. In order to continue our discussion on this important issue, I offer the following thoughts by Fr. John Meyendorff on this very subject.*

*One of the bright lights of Orthodox theological education in the world, until his untimely death, Fr. John was the former dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary, as well as Professor of Church History and Patristics. It was my privilege to have learned from this great man; I hope that you learn from him as well.*

*I look forward to seeing many of you as I continue house blessings. To those who have received me already, thank you for your kind hospitality.*

In Christ,

Rev. Fr. John K. Teebagy  
Pastor

### The Eucharist and the Church



One of the most remarkable traits of our life as Orthodox Christians in America during the past decades has been the restoration of the Eucharist, or the Divine Liturgy, as the real spiritual center of our Christian commitment. This occurred with the realization – promoted also in Russia by Fr. John of Kronstadt, in Greece by St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, and many others – that Holy Communion is offered to all, so that a non-communicating laity practically excludes itself from the Church.

Look now at our All-American Councils: the Divine Liturgy, celebrated every morning with hundreds of communicants, stands as the model which we can use to build the life of our parishes and to make them grow, not as human associations or clubs, or some mysterious holy places where the priests alone and by themselves perform rites watched by the laity, but as revelation of the Kingdom of God for the salvation of all.

But, of course, there are risks and dangers:

- the danger of pietism, if we reduce our participation in the Divine Liturgy to a diffuse feeling of goodness without further responsibility;
- the danger of approaching the Eucharist casually, without regular confession and appropriate preparedness;
- the danger of forgetting that the Son of God, when He became man, did not come to save us – you and me – who happen to know about Him and are members of His Church, but **the whole world**, and that He has entrusted the task of preaching to His disciples, that this task does not consist of words only, but of deeds, thoughts, work, creativity, love for everybody and everything which God created, and a sense of responsibility for those who are in misery – spiritual or material – the “little ones” around us, whom we neglect...

The discussion about “Church growth” is about all this; let us learn together how to relate our membership in the Body of Christ, granted to us in the Eucharist, with our task in the world today.

Taken from The Vision of Unity by Fr. John Meyendorff

## **THE TORCHBEARER** **is the Monthly Newsletter of the** **Church of St. John of Damascus**

*A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of North America*

Rev. Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

300 West Street ♦ Dedham, Massachusetts 02026-5594

♦ Telephone: (781) 326-3046 ♦ Fax: (781) 326-4473

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**Services:** Sunday-Matins 9:00 a.m.,

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

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## ***From the President...***

The Holiday Season is past and we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year. The Bazaar and Feast Day Weekend are all behind us. We just celebrated Epiphany. The Parent's Guild held their annual Godparent's brunch, which was the most successful ever. I'm pleased to tell you that the *net income* from our 1997 annual bazaar was approximately \$39,300, which showed an 11% gain over last year. (Let me also tell you that most of this money is budgeted and the income is necessary for our church to operate.) The Feast Day Weekend was also very profitable (which was not budgeted) and was a memorable weekend for all who came to share in the celebration. After all this, what's next?

With all of this behind us, your Executive Board is ready to get back to work. We have already met this year, and in the coming months will be looking at many items that have already been brought to us which need to be addressed. We are hoping to be able to give the exterior of our church complex a much needed face-lift. We are also looking for new ideas. One thing I have realized this year is that our parishioners always have ideas. It is important that your Executive Board members know what your ideas, comments and concerns are. If your Executive Board doesn't know what your comments are, we cannot act on them and be truly representative of our parishioners.

Some parishioners have told me how much they enjoyed the Bazaar and Feast Day Weekend. If we take a moment to look at these church functions, the Bazaar, Feast Day Weekend, and even the Godparent's Brunch to try to duplicate what made them successful. As always, the committees of these events worked very hard to make sure that they put together a quality function. The biggest single ingredient in these functions cannot be duplicated by any committee. What made these events successful was your participation. Your attendance and support make the difference between just another church function, and a great evening. Nothing says "thank you" to a committee more than having a function that is well attended. Whenever we all come together as a family, for any reason, it is always a night to remember.

In closing, I ask that you continue to support your church, at functions, and during Church Services. It is what gives the church of St. John of Damascus its life and its future.

Wishing you Health and Prosperity in the New Year,

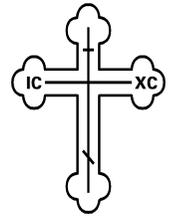
Abraham E. Sabbag  
President, Executive Board

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## ***Church Records...***

***"Blessed are they whom thou has  
chosen and taken O Lord!"***

John Shallah (70) of N. Chelmsford, MA fell asleep in the Lord on December 13, 1997. He is survived by his wife, three sons, brother and three sisters. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park, MA.



George J. Tawa (67) of Burlington, MA fell asleep in the Lord on December 24, 1997. He is survived by his two sisters, and two brothers. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park, MA .

Phillip Maloof (81) of Duxbury, MA fell asleep in the Lord on January 4, 1998. He is survived by his three daughters and brother. Burial was at Pine Hill Cemetery in Quincy, MA.

***Memory Eternal!!***

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## ***From the Church School...***

Our Church School continues to flourish as the New Year unfolds. Our Shut In program is in full swing – Grade 6/7 and Grade 2 have created and sent personalized cards and gifts to each of our Shut Ins. Our goal is to have one or more classes correspond with our Shut Ins each month. If you know anyone who is not an "official" Shut In, but would benefit by being added to our list, just let me know.

We prepared for the Godparents' luncheon by discussing the significance of godparents, and their meaning in our Christian lives. Students have presented their ideas and feelings on this topic in writing and artwork, and they will be displayed for you to enjoy.

For those who missed His grace Bishop ANTOUN's sermon last month (as those who teach or assist in Church School did), Emily Vogel eloquently summarized it for us all. Emily is one of our seventh graders, and I am very appreciative of this effort!

"Bishop ANTOUN's sermon was on two different topics.

First he began on how three miracles were performed during the Liturgy – changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; ordaining a deacon; and ordaining a deacon to a priest. He told us that a bishop by himself cannot ordain someone. He needs a parish, too. The parishioners are the people who chant 'He is worthy.'

Bishop ANTOUN also talked about how when this Church was built, it was our grandparents and great-

grandparents who came, and now, the children are the future of this Church!"

May this New Year find you all in good health, and may you have a wonderful 1998!

In Christ,  
Nancy Close

**From the Parent Guild...**

We hope that you all had a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

The Godparents' Luncheon was held on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. We had over 200 people in attendance. It was a wonderful family time enjoyed by all. Special thanks to the Y.P.A. for helping with the serving of the luncheon and to all others who helped in the decorating, serving, and cleaning up afterwards.

The next activity that the Parent Guild has planned is a Valentine fundraiser on February 1<sup>st</sup>. We will be raising money to provide scholarships for the children going to the Antiochian Village. Please check the weekly bulletin for further details.

The Penny Sale is going to be held on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Please get your donations together. Any gifts or donations of services, products, weekend get-aways, etc., are greatly appreciated.

Wishing you health and happiness,  
Paula J. Hamwey, Guild President  
Kathleen Tawa, Guild Vice-President

**Announcements**

- Please be sure to check the total pledge amount printed on your monthly pledge statement. If it is incorrect, please call the church office.

- The Fellowship of St. John the Divine will be holding their annual "Super Sunday" Bake Sale on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, proceeds to benefit the Children's Relief Fund...sponsorship of Nina Nasr.



holding their annual "Super Sunday" Bake Sale on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, proceeds to benefit the Children's Relief Fund...sponsorship of Nina Nasr.

**Church Office Hours...**

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is Thursday at noon.  
Please plan accordingly.

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# St. John's Y. P. A.

invites you to attend  
their  
**Snowball "Semi -  
Formal" Dance**

**Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>  
7:30- 11 p. m.  
St. John of Damascus  
Church  
300 West St., Dedham, MA**

**No Date Required.  
A night of great  
music and dancing.**

**Cost: \$10 (includes light buffet style  
dinner.)**

**Come join the fun.**



Watch the weekly bulletin for further details.

**St. Paul's Shelter Needs Volunteers...**

I would like to volunteer to serve on the following Sunday(s):

1998

Feb. 15 \_\_\_\_\_ March 15 \_\_\_\_\_

April 5 \_\_\_\_\_ May 17 \_\_\_\_\_ June 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ # of people to volunteer  
\_\_\_\_\_

I cannot serve but would like to cook on  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Date

I would like to donate towards the cost of food. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**DEADLINE for the March, 1998**

***Torchbearer***

will be February 10<sup>th</sup>.

Please consult the Weekly Sunday Bulletin for any Changes, corrections, etc.

***Update...***

**The Theophany Orthodox Christian School**

For the parents of seventeen children in the Boston area, who have wished to give their young children an Orthodox Christian-based education, their wish has now become a reality.

The Theophany Orthodox Christian School opened its doors for the first time on September 15, 1997 to eight pre-schoolers and nine K1 students. The children and their parents were greeted by Director, Sheila Tawa and Assistant Director, Susan Wilson.

The school is located at St. John of Damascus Church in Dedham. It was originally conceived to be a school that would offer the students a strong spiritual experience, as well as firm academic training. Their goal is to develop the intellectual, moral, and spiritual gifts and talents of the students through the teachings and life of the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church is "ecumenical" in nature, and so the school welcomes all children of any background and creed whose parents feel they could benefit from such a learning environment. The effort is pan-Orthodox, and the teachers and students presently come from both Antiochian and Greek jurisdictions.

As stated in a letter from Bishop Methodios of Boston:

*"This venture will not only greatly benefit the Orthodox families with young children in this area, but it will also do much for our efforts in working together as one Orthodox family."*

The Theophany School is open and running smoothly. The current pre-school classes are licensed by the Office for Children of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Presently, the school is making preparations to open a kindergarten for five-year-olds in September 1998. A first grade class and then one additional grade would be added each year thereafter.

Registration for the 1998-99 school year will begin in early February 1998. For those who wish to visit the school, or who have questions, you are invited to call the school at (781) 326-6434.

**Valentine Fundraiser**

**February 1, 1998 from 11:30pm - 1 p.m.**

*Sponsored by the Parent Guild*



Proceeds to benefit the Antiochian Village Scholarship Fund

Make your own cards/craft table.  
Gifts for all of your sweethearts - Mom, Dad, Jedo, Tete, Aunts, Uncles & Teachers

Chocolate, Chocolate and More Chocolate!!  
All types of gift items!  
Many items priced \$1 - \$3

*All of this and More!!*

**THE PARENT GUILD**

will be holding their

**3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL PENNY SALE**

**on Friday, May 15, 1998 at 7:30 p.m.**

***Each Church School student is responsible for bringing ONE NEW item (valued under \$10.00)***

to be auctioned off at the Penny Sale. Proceeds to benefit the Church School.

**DONATIONS NEEDED**

(i.e. gift items, donations of services, products, weekend get-aways, CASH DONATIONS ALSO WELCOME, etc.). Items may be brought to the Church School Office. Thank you.

***Please plan on joining us for this evening of fun for all!***





Dear Parishioners,

As part of our community outreach program, Saint John's parish has committed to going to **Saint Paul's Shelter** (a satellite shelter of the Pine Street Inn) in Dorchester one Sunday a month in order to provide food for 60-70 homeless men. Last year's program was very successful, and we thank the dozens of volunteers who helped.

Our responsibility is to cook the food in advance, go to the shelter, heat the food, serve it, and then clean up. John Najjar and Sheila Demerjian have volunteered to be responsible for organizing the cooking of the food and the trips to the shelter with a group of people on each of the Sundays involved. We would like 5 people to go each time to help, and we encourage you and your family to sign up. We also need volunteers to cook the food and package it before it goes.

If you decide to be a server, the commitment for the afternoon is merely two and a half-hours. You will meet at the church at 4:00 p.m., arrive at the shelter at 4:30 p.m., and then leave the shelter to go back to the church by 6:00 p.m.

Please sign up to either cook or serve, and we will be in touch with you when the time approaches. If you can't do either, perhaps you would like to make a small donation to help with the cost of the food that we have to provide. You may also call John Najjar at (617) 361-2376 or the church office.

Please check the month(s) you would like to help.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer to serve:

**1997:**  
November 16 \_\_\_\_\_ December 14 \_\_\_\_\_

**1998**  
January 11 \_\_\_\_\_ February 15 \_\_\_\_\_ March 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
April 5 \_\_\_\_\_

May 17 \_\_\_\_\_ June 14 \_\_\_\_\_



**The number of people to volunteer is: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**I cannot serve but would like to help cook in \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**(month)**

I would like to donate towards the cost of the food. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Church of St. John of Damascus**  
300 West Street  
Dedham, MA 02026-5594

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## *Choose Carefully*



*A careless word may kindle strife  
A cruel word may wreck a life.  
A bitter word may hate instill  
A brutal word may smite and kill.*

*A gracious word may smooth the way  
A joyous word may light the day.  
A timely word may lessen stress  
A loving word may heal and bless.*

