
❖ THE TORCHBEARER ❖

Vol. 8 ... No. 4/5

December 1999/ January 2000

From the Pastor...

Beloved in the Lord:

As I write this, we have just completed another successful bazaar. A debt of thanks goes to John Haddad and Ray Hamwey, co-chairs of the bazaar, for once again offering their time and talents to the church. Thanks also go to all the many, many people who also worked so very hard, especially the faithful members of the Virgin Mary Society.

The week after the bazaar the Parent Guild, Teen SOYO and church school ran an overnight retreat for 65 kids from our church school and from around the region. Nick Louh, the youth director from St. George, Boston, and other youth workers facilitated the retreat whose theme was "Living the Liturgy." Many positive comments were received from all those who were involved; we hope to make this a permanent part of the church school calendar. A few weeks before this the Parent Guild ran a "50's" dance to help raise the necessary funds to offset the cost of sending our kids to the Antiochian Village. Last summer our parish sent around 25 kids to the camp; this summer the number will be greater. On December 5th, we will celebrate the feast day with liturgy and a special lunch; on December 12th, we will host the seniors of our church at their annual Christmas luncheon; and finally on December 19th, the church school will present their annual Christmas pageant along with a light luncheon.

Hence, as you can see the Church of St. John of Damascus, thanks be to God, is alive and well! For us, Thanksgiving is not simply once a year but every time we gather as a community. We have much to be grateful for! Don't take all the good and positive things that this church does and stands for, for granted. This would be wrong and sinful. On the other hand, don't think for one moment that what we have and what we do is on our own. Rather, we should thank God for bestowing His blessings upon this church community.



This month not only marks Christmas but my birthday as well. If you want to get me two gifts for my birthday and Christmas, I know the perfect present. Invite two people that you know from the parish who haven't been to church in a while to liturgy. What a gift this would be to me and really to them as well!

Thank you to all who do so much for this church. Thank you to all who make this parish such a special place. On behalf of my family, I greet each of you with the words of salvation, "Christ is Born! Glorify Him!"

In the new born babe,

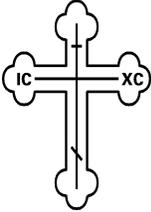
Rev. Fr. John K. Teebagy

Pastor

Liturgical Notes

- The Christmas Fast, which began on November 15th, is well under way. The Church, in Her wisdom, gives us this unique gift to prepare ourselves for the mystery of Christ's Incarnation so that we may be able to meditate on its great significance in our lives. What better way to prepare for Christmas than by having your confession heard. Confessions are heard before the Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings from 8:30 a.m. until 9:45 a.m. and by appointment. *Confessions, however, will NOT be heard on Christmas Eve.*
- Please join us on Friday evening, December 24th at 6 p.m. to celebrate the Lord's birth. Liturgy is held at this time so that families with and without small children can worship together before going to visit friends and families. Let's ALL plan on coming to Christmas Liturgy so that with one voice we may all shout "Christ is Born! Glorify Him!"
- Notices regarding House Blessings have been mailed. If you would like Fr. John to visit your home to bless it, kindly return the form by

Monday, December 27th. If you have not yet received this form, or have misplaced it, please call the church office. Please return the form by the deadline so that Father John can visit you when he is in your town. Thank you!



- The Feast of Theophany, which is January 6th, will be observed on January 9th with the traditional Blessing of Water. All are urged to come celebrate this feast and drink the life giving waters of Theophany.

Wishing you and all a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year!

Sincerely,
Maryann Hamwey

Announcements

- Year 2000 Pledge Forms have been sent out. As in the past, we ask that everyone who considers St. John's "their church" to return this form. As always, the amount you pledge is confidential. It is from your response that the Finance Committee can prepare the year 2000 budget. **Failure to return the Pledge Form will result in your pledge being automatically set by the computer at a default pledge of \$416 per year.** Please help the church by sending this form back. Thank you for your cooperation!
- 10th Annual Orthodox College and Young Adult conference "coming Home" – December 18-22, 1999 at the Antiochian Village, Ligonier, PA. Rejoicing in the 2000th Anniversary of the Birth of Christ and of our Home in His Church, sponsored by the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America and hosted by the Department of Campus Ministry. The conference is open to all college students, graduated high school students and young adults. The all inclusive registration fee is only \$150, based on four-person occupancy (other accommodations are available for an additional charge.) For more information see Fr. John or log onto www.antiochian.org/campusministry.
- The deadline for the Christmas bulletin, December 24th and the deadline for the Sunday, December 26th bulletin will be **Tuesday, December 21st at 12 noon.**
- ***This deadline must be strictly adhered to – please plan ahead.***

Church Records...

"O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor."

Einar Juliusson and Louella Cardoos were married on October 17, 1999. They reside in West Roxbury, MA.

Many Years!!

"As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

Elena Maria Nosiglia, daughter of Bruno and Jodie (Shaheen) Nosiglia of Milford, MA was baptized on November 14, 1999.

Many Years!!

From the Virgin Mary Society...

Now that our Annual Bazaar is over, the Virgin Mary Society members have resumed their every day activities and can now prepare for the holiday season. It was very gratifying to see the many women who filled our kitchen every scheduled work day, ready to do their part in whatever was on the cooking or baking agenda that day. A special "Thank you" to all these devoted women who gave so many hours of their time in order to achieve the very profitable contribution we proudly added to the success of the 1999 Bazaar. This could not have been accomplished without the teamwork shown during our working months of September and October. Hopefully, next year will be the same!

Our year 2000 calendar of events will include our annual sfeeha sale and lenten dinner. Details to follow at a later date.

The Proof of Fasting

Do you fast?

Give me proof of it by your works.
If you see a poor man, take pity on him.
If you see a friend being honored,
do not envy him.

Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eyes and the ears and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies.

Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice.
Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin.
Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at
that which is sinful...
Let the ears fast by not listening
to evil talk and gossip...
Let the mouth fast from foul words
and unjust criticism.
For what good is it if we abstain from birds and
fishes, but bite and
devour our brothers?
St. John Chrysostom

From the Parent Guild...

The Church School year successfully kicked off in September with a Magic Show and Taco Night followed on Sunday with the annual barbecue. Thanks to all that helped.

On December 19th the Sunday school children will be performing in the Christmas Pageant. This will be followed by a luncheon provided by the Parent Guild. Details will be sent home with the children.

The Parent Guild is made up of the parents of our church school children. If you would like to help with any upcoming events, please contact me. We are always looking for participation from everyone.

Faithfully yours,
Kathleen Tawa

From the Church School...

Hi Everyone!

Just a quick note to thank everyone who helped with our "Bazaar Theme Baskets." This was the church school's first involvement with the bazaar, and it was quite a success, to say the least!

Thanks to the students, parents and staff members who generously contributed items to fill the baskets. Each of the eight baskets was brimming with a myriad assortment of treasures! Each theme - Christmas, House Warming, Rainy Day, Sports, Camping, Baby, Kitchen and Birthday - had its own unique style. Thanks to Chris, Renee and Mom for their assistance in actually putting together the baskets so creatively.

To all who purchased raffle tickets and supported our efforts, we certainly appreciate your enthusiasm and generosity. We raised over \$800 this year, and we hope that our "Theme Baskets" will be a regular

attraction at the Bazaar for years to come!

Faithfully,
Nancy Close



the

*What shall we offer Thee O Christ, who for
our sakes hast appeared on earth as
man?*

*Every creature made by Thee
offers Thee thanks.
The angels offer Thee a hymn;
the heavens a star;
the Magi, gifts;
the shepherds, their wonder;
the earth, its cave;
wilderness, the manger:*

*and we offer Thee a Virgin Mother.
O pre-eternal God, have mercy upon us!*

From the Bazaar Committee...

Just a quick note of thanks to everyone who attended our bazaar this year. This year's bazaar was very successful, not only financially, but socially as well. Our preliminary financials show that we grossed between \$4,000-\$5,000 more than last year's bazaar. When the final numbers are in, we will publish them in the next newsletter.

We received compliments from many people. These compliments, to name a few, included comments like "this is one of the most beautiful bazaars I've attended" and "the food was delicious and we had a great time" and "the people working the bazaar were friendly and made me feel very welcome to your church."

To list every single parishioner who helped with the bazaar this year would take up most of this newsletter. The help we had this year was outstanding. It was great to see new faces volunteering and helping this year. The love and fellowship felt by all the parishioners who worked together on this function was incredible.

To all those dedicated parishioners who worked so hard these past few months, we say thank you, thank you, thank you! You made our job as chairmen very enjoyable. Your cooperation, innovation and teamwork were evident by the nice comments we received.

Thanks to all for a successful 1999 Bazaar!
John Haddad & Ray Hamwey
1999 Bazaar Co-Chairmen

**"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will to men."**

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." ...

Proverbs 19:18

As the Chairman reported in the November newsletter, the Executive Board has recognized the need to establish long-term goals, and to that end assigned a Long Range Planning Committee. The members of the committee are Fr. John, John Haddad, Don Khouri, Kathleen Tawa, and Bob Zahka.

A special meeting of the Executive Board was held on September 20th to generate ideas for long-term goals. There was much discussion, and general agreement on a number of issues that the board feels is important to direct our attention during this year. The result was a blueprint for the Executive Board.

At a high level, the Executive Board agreed to focus on the following goals this year:

1. outreach to the community;
2. create a maintenance plan including: a) review the storage situation to free up space and to make room for the increased enrollment in the Sunday School 3. Clean-up the kitchen with the goals of: (a) renovating/expanding it and (b) better supplies. It was also felt that a new market oriented hall rental policy and hall rental financial review was needed. 4. Clean-up rolls to address the many parishioners not currently offering a pledge to the church along with a census. 5. Annual Bazaar 6. Create a Fundraising Plan to assist in paying for the new roof.

We have also agreed to focus on the following long-term goals: create \$1M Endowment Fund; finance and investigate alternate energy alternatives; ongoing maintenance of the church complex; increase interest among our youth; investigate the

possibility of purchasing the property surrounding the church; encourage more participation in the choir.

The Committee will be pursuing a number of vehicles to solicit input from the parish on the long range plan. Please keep your eyes open for more information on the web and in the Sunday bulletin. If you are interested in either attending or leading a focus group to discuss the above, please contact the church office or anyone on the committee. Stay tuned for more to come...

"All our dreams can come true -- if we have the courage to pursue them." Walt Disney.

The Long Range Planning Committee

Christmas in the Orthodox Home

Some suggestions for a more meaningful Christmas Fast (Advent)

1. Prepare for the feasts of Christmas and Theophany AS A FAMILY. Abstain from meat at least on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

2. Intensify your prayer life and be sure to read the Holy Scriptures DAILY.

3. In your Christmas preparations remember the poor and needy. Your care gives them hope.

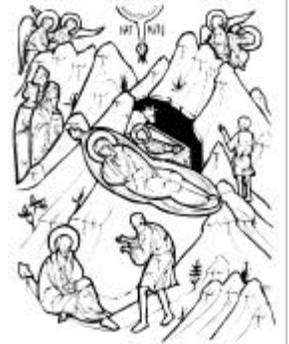
4. Make a good Advent Confession and receive Holy Communion - the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ often during the Advent season.

5. Be sure to make Christ the center of your Christmas celebration.

6. Plan on bringing yourself and your family to the Christmas Divine Liturgy and that all are prepared to partake of Holy Communion.

7. And last, but not least, please remember

**Our Lord Jesus Christ is
the Reason for the Season.**



From the Fellowship of St. John the Divine...

- The Annual Senior Citizen Christmas Dinner will be held on Sunday, December 12th immediately following Liturgy. Watch for your invitation in the mail!
- "Super Sunday" Bake Sale will be held on Sunday, January 30th to benefit our sponsorship of Nina Nasr. Plan on getting all of your "goodies" for the Big Game!



DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT CHURCH???!
WHAT A GREAT IDEA!!!!

We have a great selection of Christmas gifts for your family and friends. Check out our unique gift ideas:

- *Crosses* – both 14kt gold and wooden wall crosses.
- *Icons* – in various sizes for your home, car or office – of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Hospitality of Abraham, St. George, St. Christina, St. Christopher, the Mystical Supper and others.
- *Books for all ages* – Prayer books for children and adults, cookbooks, bookmarks, and the best selling book, "The Orthodox Study Bible."
- *Children's gifts* – coloring books, activity books, puzzles, and communion bibs. Choir, "First Fruits," CD with members from our sister Church of St. Mary's in Cambridge, and our Orthodox folk songs from "Kerygma."
- *Advent Activity Books* – Why not start the advent season with the Children's advent activity book – "The Biggest Birthday Party."

Our beautiful, hand-painted icons make a wonderful gift for all occasions. Consider a special gift for weddings, baptisms, housewarming, birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions.

The showcase will be open during coffee hour each Sunday until Christmas. If you have a special request, please contact Cindy Haddad at (781) 647-7122 or the Church office at (781) 326-3046. We will try our best to have your order in for Christmas.

Feast Day of St. John of Damascus

CELEBRATION DINNER

will be held on
Sunday, December 5th

immediately following Liturgy.

Menu:

Vegetable Lasagna, Pasta w/Tomato Sauce, Salad,
Garlic Bread, Coffee/Dessert
Adults: \$7.50 / Children: \$5.00
Call the church office for reservations.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
Best wishes for a joyous Christmas



and a Blessed New Year in 2000

from Your friends at the
Church of St. John of Damascus

- Cindy and Mark Haddad
- Tony and Tillie Kandalaft
- Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Khouri

Donations made in support of the
Choir of St. John of Damascus.

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

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Dedham, MA
Permit No. 74

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

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

♦ Web Page: <http://www.stjohnd.org>

Services: Sunday-Matins 9:00 a.m.,
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours...

Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is Thursday at 10 a.m.

Please plan accordingly.

DEADLINE for the **LENTEN ISSUE** of the **TORCHBEARER**
will be **January 10th**.

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

“O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor!”

Mark R. Taranto and Marcia M. Gatteny were married on September 20, 1997. They reside in Everett, MA.

Many Years!!

