
THE TORCHBEARER

The Newsletter of the Church of St. John of Damascus, Dedham, MA

November/December 2001

From the Pastor...

Beloved in Christ,

"The Archdiocese? What do they do? More than you think!"

From 30 November – 2 December, our church will host our Father in Christ – His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP. Saidna will visit St. John's for two reasons: to celebrate our patronal feast and to lead the festivities for the burning of our church's mortgage. Because the Metropolitan and his auxiliaries don't visit St. John's that often, and when they do it is only for a weekend, we don't see their role in shepherding the whole Church. We sometimes think that the archdiocese consists of the parishes of Massachusetts and Pawtucket. Whenever an appeal for financial help is made by the archdiocese to us, we often wonder why. So what exactly does the archdiocese do for us? For our parish?

As you may know, each year the archdiocese assesses each parish \$25 per baptized soul. Hence, \$25 is paid for every man, woman, and child on the church rolls. In our case, we send the archdiocese around \$25,000 per year. This money is raised by using a portion of your yearly pledge to the church. But what does this mean in the life of our parish? In the life our archdiocese? We so often here the comment, "What does the bishop want now? More money, again?" or maybe "What does the archdiocese do for our parish?" If you read on, you may discover that the archdiocese does more than you think.

In 1966, when His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP became Primate, the Antiochian Archdiocese had 65 churches and a minimal budget. As we approach 2002, our archdiocese has, thanks be to God, 235 churches and a budget of \$3.5 million dollars. Each year, the archdiocese sends us a copy of its budget, which is kept in the church office. You are welcome to look at it at your leisure, but I would like to spend a little time going over some of the budget items and show how it affects us on the grassroots level.

The archdiocese provides much support to the parishes and the faithful. Some of these areas are:

Children: Without a doubt, the needs of our children and young people are of paramount importance. Whenever teens of any church host a function or whenever the church school puts on something, they are usually very well attended. Our parishes always go out of their way "for the kids." What does the archdiocese do for our kids? In three words? The Antiochian Village. This camp, in Western Pennsylvania, I feel, is responsible for a Renaissance that has taken place in the life of the Church. Since 1978, when I was part of the first staff at the camp, until now, the camp has stood as beacon - engulfing the children who attend with Christian love, understanding, morals, and the like. In addition to "regular" camp activities, the children attend church twice a day, have bible studies, chant the hymns of the Church, and live in a totally Christian environment devoid of TV and radios. To accommodate those children who had to be turned away because of space limitations. Last year three new cabins were built, at a cost of \$155,240 through the generosity of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. The Metropolitan has challenged the Fellowships throughout the archdiocese to build a fourth cabin to allow more of our children to attend camp. In addition, the Order provides \$73,750 in financial help to families, through the local churches, whose children might not be able to go to the camp otherwise. Talk to any of the 30 or so children from St. John's that we send to camp each summer and see what they tell you.

In addition to the camp, the Archdiocese has a full time Youth Department and a full time Christian Education Department. Between these two departments, the needs of our youth are well taken care of until their late teens. In addition, the Archdiocese provides church schoolbooks to newly established missions free of charge. Who pays to help educate these children? You do! And don't forget the Festivals that take place at the Parish Life Conferences each summer - Bible Bowl, Oratorical, Writing, and Art - all designed to highlight our children and encourage their development in the Faith.

Parish Needs: Did you know that the Archdiocese provides a workshop for all choir members and chanters at the Antiochian Village every summer? Did you know that the Archdiocese runs a Parish Council workshop every two years to help our lay leaders assist the clergy in the running of our parishes? Did you know that the Archdiocese runs a Christian Education conference each fall designed to help our teachers? Did you know that the Archdiocese sends *The Word* magazine free of charge to every home, so that communication can be kept open between parishes, the archdiocese, and the whole world of Orthodoxy? Did you know that the Archdiocese has four auxiliary bishops to assist the Metropolitan in ministering to us more effectively? Did you know that the Archdiocese has three chanceries in Toledo, Ohio, Wichita, Kansas and Los Angeles, in addition to Englewood, so that the ever-growing flock can be ministered to by her archpastors locally?

Clergy: It may seem obvious but as more parishes are established more clergy are needed. Unlike most other Orthodox jurisdictions, our archdiocese provides a full scholarship to qualified seminarians that study for the Holy Priesthood at the various seminaries throughout the United States. If it were not for this aid (\$153,000 in 2000), one has to wonder how many qualified men would be unable to study and serve you - when you are sick in the hospital, when you need someone buried or baptized, or a myriad of other things our priests do for us. The archdiocese now has 270 priests and 80 deacons.

In addition to scholarship assistance, the Archdiocese, again with help from the Order of St. Ignatius, provides retired clergy with a housing allowance plan, which gets better as time progresses. Don't your clergy deserve to retire with dignity and security after serving our parishes for so many years?

Charity: Did you know that 13.6% of the archdiocese's budget goes to charity? Whether it is the annual Food for Hungry People program or aid for those who suffered due to the events of September 11th, in the Middle East, Venezuela, or the other areas of need your archdiocese always heeds the words and spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

St. John's is not an island and does not, nor should it, exist in a vacuum. It must, as a Christian community, be in communion with the broader aspects of the Church, namely the archdiocese. The archdiocese too doesn't exist in a vacuum. She must respond not only to the needs and desires of the parishes but to the Orthodox world, the moral condition of our country, and to human rights in the Middle East and elsewhere. As the world grows more complex so too must the Archdiocese's response. As more and more people embrace Orthodoxy through our Archdiocese more funding is needed. When you have more "mouths to feed" doesn't your family's budget also increase? How can we turn away those seeking Christ? We just can't! It would be an insult to God and to the memory of our forefathers and mothers who came to this great country and built up our churches and archdiocese.

To respond to the ever-changing needs and growth of the archdiocese, without increasing the burden of the parishes, Metropolitan PHILIP established the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch in 1976. The Order is a growing (about 2,300 members) and vibrant movement in the life of this archdiocese, which is always searching for new members to support "the cause." Despite the fact that much has been written about the Order and its deeds, many still don't know what the Order does. Did you know that the Order contributes 26.3% to the budget of the archdiocese? Did you know the Order, as mentioned above, provides every parish in the archdiocese with a two-week scholarship to the Antiochian Village? Did you know that the Order gives \$10,000 to the youth to help defray the costs of the Special

Olympics camp? Did you know that the Order is the primary source of funding for the Clergy Retirement plan? And the list goes on and on and on. Last year, the Order's total commitment was \$999,000. Won't you consider joining the Order when Metropolitan PHILIP comes to St. John's in December 2001?

I hope this attempt on my part has helped to elucidate you on the importance of supporting the archdiocese through our parish's assessment and has encouraged you to join the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Yes, it is true that the "bishop wants our money"; to help you, your children, your loved ones, the world and the Orthodox Church. I invite you to look at the budget of the archdiocese and examine the pages of the *Word* magazine to see what is being done in the life of this archdiocese. If you do this, I'm convinced that you'll see the fruit of investment.

Wishing you and your loved ones my prayers, blessings, and love during this time of thanksgiving to God, I remain

Your coworker in the Lord,

Fr. John K. Teebagy
Pastor



Liturgical notes . . .

- ❖ Please remember that the Christmas Fast begins on Thursday, November 15th. Like other Lenten periods, the Church calls us to increase (or even start) our efforts in prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor. It is also the perfect time to have your Confession heard. Confessions are heard on Sunday morning from 8:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. or by appointment. Please note, as in past years, confessions will not be heard on Christmas evening. Let's all do something to prepare ourselves for our Lord's birth!
- ❖ To celebrate the Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple on November 21st, a Vespereal Liturgy will be celebrated on Tuesday, November 20th at 6 p.m. at our sister church of St. George, Norwood. Please join us.
- ❖ It is the teaching of the Holy Orthodox Church that only those Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, recent confession, and fasting (and being on time for church) should approach the chalice. It is likewise the teaching of the Church that

our non-Orthodox guests and friends should not approach the chalice or that Orthodox Christians cannot and should not take communion in non-Orthodox Churches.

Orthodox Etiquette...

BEING AROUND A BISHOP



With the arrival of His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP in December for our Feast Day Weekend, it is good to go over proper etiquette in the presence of a bishop.

First of all, we look to the bishop as an icon of Christ in our midst. St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote in his epistle to the Smyrneans, "Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (8.2). We honor Christ through showing honor to the bishop.

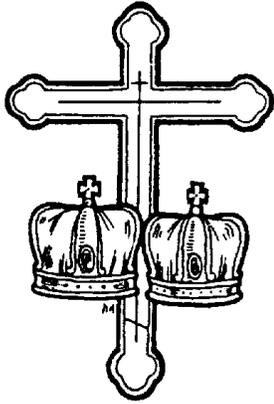
Therefore, here are a few tips of etiquette to follow during Saidna PHILIP's visit to our parish. (Actually, most of these tips of etiquette are also applicable when around a priest, although much of this has fallen out of practice in America.)

- When a bishop enters a room or is introduced, everyone should stand and remain standing until he is seated.
- When greeting the bishop or when being introduced to him, it is proper to kiss his right hand.
- When addressing an Orthodox bishop, one uses his title before his first name (i.e. Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop BASIL, etc.). Orthodox bishops use only their first names, not their last. In conversation, a Metropolitan is addressed as Your Eminence, a bishop as Your Grace. It is also acceptable to address him as "Saidna" (Arabic for Master).

It is important that we show the proper respect to Metropolitan PHILIP. Be sure to teach your children these rules of etiquette, too. They need to know how to greet their bishop as well.

Church Records...

"O Lord our God crown them with glory and honor!"



Robert Klauzinski and Kimberly Cahaly were united in marriage on September 2, 2001. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Westwood.

Andrew Lavigne and Jennifer Kassatly were united in marriage on September 22, 2001. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Cambridge.

Derek Wachtel and Nancy Hallal were united in marriage on September 30, 2001 at St. Mary's, Pawtucket, RI. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Watertown.

Constantine Georgoudis and Denise Hurrell were united in marriage on October 7, 2001. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Andover.

Aaron Knowlton and Dr. Roula Oaqish were united in marriage on October 14, 2001. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in St. Louis, MO.

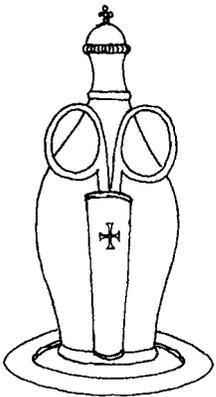
Many Years!!



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

Timothy John Ristano son of Jeffrey and Laura (Cahaly) Ristano was baptized on September 23, 2001

Many Years!!



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



Destiny Morris-Najjar (new born) of Mattapan fell asleep in the Lord on August 26th, 2001. Her parents Kimberly Najjar and Marcus Norris survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

Weedad S. Bunai (99) of Framingham fell asleep in the Lord on September 3, 2001. Her sister and many nieces and nephews survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

Najla A. Salhaney (79) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on September 11, 2001. Her husband, two sons and their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

Charles E. Maloof (69) of Somerville fell asleep in the Lord on September 21, 2001. His wife, 2 sons and 4 daughters survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

Memory Eternal!!



From the Executive Board Chairman...

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in the best of health and enjoying the fall season.

By the time you read this, our Annual Bazaar will be right in front of us ... November 2nd, 3rd and 4th. This year, Cynthia Capobianco, Elaine Sabbag and Olivia Waishek have stepped forward to chair this year's bazaar. I think you will find some new and exciting changes to this year's bazaar ... as well as our traditional fair. This is a parish-wide function, so please help support the bazaar by helping during the weekend, advertising the bazaar, bringing your family and friends ... and just having a great time.

Our Feast Day weekend on November 30th, December 1st and 2nd plans to be another exciting weekend for our parish. There are many wonderful activities planned for the weekend in celebration of the great works of our parish, including a ceremonial "burning of the mortgage." We will be very honored to have His Eminence, Metropolitan Phillip join us

for this very special weekend. Mitch Hallal has very graciously accepted to chair the Feast Day Weekend. Please give Mitch and his committee your full support by helping during this weekend and attending the planned functions.

I have been so pleased at the response of the parish so far this year. It's so rewarding to see parishioners coming forward to volunteer to take on the many projects planned for this year. In my last message, I mentioned that we wanted to work on preserving our precious artifacts and create a St. John's Archive. James Sabbag, Jr. called me with enthusiasm to volunteer to lead that committee. If you would like to help, please contact Jim to work with him on that committee.

There are many other projects on the horizon where we could really use your help. We need to begin to look at the possibility of expanding our Church School for additional classrooms and storage needs. We need to look at expanding our parking lot. These projects take time, research and planning. We have been talking about these projects for many years and now it's time to take action. If you would like to help out by chairing or working on any of these projects, as well as other projects on the horizon, please contact me. My goal is to involve as many parishioners as possible in the upcoming year.

As always, your comments and suggestions are very important to me. Feel free to give me a call during the day at 781.455.3311 or drop me an e-mail at execboard@stjohnd.org.

Thanks for your continued support ...

John M. Haddad
Chairman, Executive Board

From the Church School...

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Church School is in the midst of a very busy and exciting year! We will be implementing many new programs this year, as well as repeating some of our tried and true favorites!

We are very thrilled to be starting up our "Postgraduate Class" for students who have already graduated from church school and would like to participate in a seminar-type class. This once-a-month program will offer diverse subject matter presented by various

individuals from our church community and beyond. The first class will be held on Sunday, October 28, during Church School time.

The overnight retreat will be back, of course! It is scheduled for Friday night, November 16th, through Saturday morning, November 17th -- watch for flyers and registration forms. All students, age 9 and up, are invited to attend this fun and rewarding event.

The annual Church School Christmas Performance is scheduled for Sunday, December 16th, right after the Divine Liturgy. Are you interested in being part of the "Production Team"? We welcome all who are interested in making this year's production the best ever!

If your child is anything like my son, he or she doesn't tell you much about "regular" school, never mind Church School! So for those of you who aren't sure who is teaching your child, here is the list of our very talented and very committed teachers:

Preschool 2 - Debbie Greenstein and Olga Takseriy

Kindergarten - Bertina Kurker and Karen Vachon

Grade 1 - Dianne Mercado and Nicole Mercado

Grade 2 - Sharon Cormier and David Haddad

Grade 3 - Carol Hazerjian

Grades 4 and 5 - Kathleen Tawa and Nicholas Capobianco

Grade 6 - Khouria Joan Teebagy and Emily Vogel

Grades 7 and 8 - Jimmy Sabbag and Debbie Vogel

Grade 9 - Erin Tawa

Grade 10 - George Khouri

As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact me at any time! Thank you for your continued support of our Church School, as well as your enthusiasm and interest!!

In Christ,

Nancy Close, Church School Director

From the Teen SOYO...

The teens are off to a great start this year. Since the first couple of weeks of the new church year, it has been very eventful. Because of the enthusiasm and participation of all the teens, it looks like this year will be very exciting and fun. After our first meeting, we held

some group team building activities. From the fun and laughter created by these activities, we have come together as an organization.

On September 16, due to the tragedies from September 11th in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, the teens held a special collection for the victims. Because of the generosity of our parishioners, we were able to collect \$1600.

Recently, we had a carwash to help the Antiochian Village Camp build a new cabin. During this "wet and wild" event we raised \$427.

During the Bazaar, we will be having our usual Snack Bar. Also, during the Feast Day weekend, the Teen SOYO will take part in the Variety Show, displaying their talents in a few acts.

If anyone 13 and older is interested in joining Teen SOYO, we have our meetings during the 2nd Sunday of each month. We welcome all new members! If you have any questions about Teen SOYO please contact me at david@bisinet.com

David Haddad
President, Teen SOYO

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

❖ The Annual Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon will be held on Sunday, December 9th immediately following Liturgy. Watch for your invitation in the mail!

From the Order of St. Ignatius...

Why Bother Joining the Order of St. Ignatius?



For many years I heard about the Order of St. Ignatius, but thought it wasn't for me, even though I believed the projects funded by the Order were worthy of my support. First of all, as a low-key kind of guy, I would feel awkward going before the Parish during the induction ceremony. Also, I wasn't dying to draw attention to the fact that I decided to donate \$500 per year toward this cause; I figured that donations were a personal thing. I was also cautious of joining another Church related organization, for fear of being over committed.

Over time, as I started to investigate these issues, I realized they were unfounded. Was I going to let a five-minute induction ceremony prevent me from making a Christian commitment I believed in? I eventually convinced myself that I wouldn't. (A few months after joining, I discovered that one could join anonymously...if only someone told me that was an option earlier. ☺) Later on I discovered some of the benefits of joining publicly, and why we are asked to wear the red ribbon and Cross on certain occasions. It enables those who are contemplating joining the Order to know who are members, so they could ask them questions about the organization. It also lets others know that it isn't only a handful of parishioners that are members. (And besides, many of us don't always wear the red ribbon and Cross. Being a low-key kind of guy, I usually opt to wear the lapel pin instead.) St. John of Damascus Church currently has 22 members. Though this appears a fairly high number, it is a relatively low percentage compared to most parishes.

Despite what many believe, the Order isn't comprised of a bunch of rich elitists. I'm a Federal Government employee, who drives a ten-year-old economy car. My wife has been a full time homemaker since we had our first child. (She earns six figures, but doesn't get paid for it!) We live in a large house, but that's because it's a two family (which has a family with four kids running over our heads). Now, are we rich elitists? Many other members in the Order have similar financial situations. \$500 a year (less than \$10 a week) isn't very much in today's money, though it was 25 years ago when the Order was first established.

The Order funds many projects we supported before joining, so now we don't need to make separate donations. A large percentage goes to Antiochian Village, which a lot of our parish's children attend each year. It goes toward Prison Ministries, which brings hope to people trying to turn around their lives. It funds Missionary projects and Orphanages, helping to bring the Orthodox faith to those in other countries and our own. It subsidizes seminarians, who may otherwise have not be able to afford to answer their calling to serve God and the Church. It funds the clergy retirement plan, and who doesn't believe that our priests deserve a comfortable retirement after serving us? The list goes on and on.

And the commitment thing? We sponsor the coffee hours during the month of December (but since that month includes our Feast Day weekend, it means bringing in and setting up a few pastries for no more than three Sundays). Members also do the Epistle readings during that month. The New England Regional St. Ignatius meetings are only about four times a year, and attendance is optional. So as you can see, it's not very taxing.

I realize the Order may not be for everyone, but I hope and pray that many will consider being part of this organization. With increased membership we will be able to accomplish even more good work for God's glory.

Your brother in Christ,

Bob Kurker

From The Long-Rang Planning Committee...

Dear Parishioners:

In the next few weeks, a volunteer questionnaire will be sent out to every family within the parish. One of the goals of the Long Range Planning Committee is to get as many people involved in the daily activities of our church; i.e., office work, baking, helping in Church School, etc. If you have a hidden talent or ability that is not listed on the questionnaire, then please feel free to write a note in the "other" area. When you receive this questionnaire in the mail, please take the time to fill it out and return it to the church office. Your responses are very important. We have several projects that we will be looking for help with soon.

If you have any questions, please contact Paula Hamwey or email her at hamweys@mediaone.net

From the Church Office...

❖ Pledge Forms for 2002 will be sent out in the coming weeks. 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 2002 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 office help you avoid any confusion or misunderstanding by sending this form back. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation!

❖ The deadline for bulletins for Sunday, December 23th and Christmas Eve will be Wednesday December 19th at 10 a.m. These deadlines *must be* strictly adhered to – please plan ahead.



Announcements...

❖ **CHRISTMAS CONCERT:** On Sunday, December 16th at 6 pm, the New England Region Christmas concert will take place here at St. John's. This year marks the 20th anniversary of this annual and much anticipated event. Please plan on joining us!

❖ **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Our church is the host for the 2002 Parish Life Conference (PLC) for the New England Region. The dates for the PLC are Thursday, June 27th – Sunday, June 30th at the Seacrest Resort in Falmouth. More information will follow but please reserve the dates!

❖ **ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE:** If all those interested in attending camp next summer are asked to contact Paula Hamwey or email her at hamweys@mediaone.net

❖ **FYI...**Next year, the date of Orthodox Pascha (Easter) is May 5th (Great Lent begins on March 18th). March 31st is date of Western Easter.

❖ **CAN YOU HELP?** Helpers are needed on Saturday nights during the months of October, November, and December from 6:30 –11:30 p.m. at the ballroom dances. No special training is needed. This is a great moneymaker for the church and a fun night out too. If you are able to help, please see Cynthia Capobianco after church or call the church office.

❖ **FEAST DAY:** On Friday, November 30th, during our Feast Day weekend, there will be a parish wide variety show entitled "Proud to be an American." All those interested in performing are asked to please contact Mitch Hallal at 781.793.9194.

❖ **CHOIR:** The choir invites all, new and current members, to attend their rehearsals. Come as we rehearse new music and prepare for the feast day. Please consult the Sunday bulletin for the rehearsal schedule. Please join us. If you have any questions, please see our choir director Andrea Gabriel Jabbour or email her at AGABJab@aol.com.

❖ **MANY YEARS!** We welcome and congratulate the newly elected officers of Teen SOYO... David Haddad, President; Heather Feldman, Vice President; Ashley Close, Secretary; Rachel Sabbag, Treasurer; PJ Venuti, Sergeant at Arms; Emily Vogel, Chaplain. Kathy Tawa and Don Khouri are the advisors.

❖ **MANY YEARS!** We welcome and congratulate the newly elected and reelected officers of the Parent Guild... Debbie Leotsakos, President, Sheila Tawa, Vice President, Sharon Cormier, Treasurer, and Khouria Joan Teebagy, Secretary

❖ **SCHOLARSHIPS:** If you are a parishioner in your first year of college or an accredited vocational school, you are invite to apply for The Robert P. Zahka Scholarship or The Wedad Spear Scholarship, which will be awarded at the Feast Day Banquet on Saturday, December 1st. Please call the church office for an application. The deadline to apply is Sunday, November 11th.

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A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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

Church Office Hours...Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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

Please plan accordingly.

DEADLINE for the January/February 2002 *Torchbearer* will be December 10th.

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