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# THE TORCHBEARER

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

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002

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## From the Pastor...

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

Since I last wrote to you, in the last newsletter, much has happened in my life and the life of the parish. My spirits have reached both heights and despair. By now all of you have heard "through the grape vine", which in my opinion puts the New York Times to shame, about the very successful bazaar that we had in November. Many thanks go to Cynthia Capobianco, Elaine Sabbag, and Olivia Waishek for chairing this huge and important endeavor. You have also heard about the very successful Feast Day weekend, chaired by Mitchell Hallal, which celebrated our patronal feast and mortgage burning. We were honored to have our chief shepherd, Metropolitan PHILIP, in attendance. What a tribute to the members of this parish family that over 1 million dollars of a 30-year mortgage was paid off in just 16 short years! Thank God that the members of this parish love their church so much and are not afraid of hard work. You have also heard, no doubt, of the sudden and unexpected death of our long time and faithful church sexton – George Ameer, who loved God and this church so much. George was perhaps my closest friend and confidant in the parish and I miss him so very much! May his memory be eternal!

With George's death, I realized that we don't thank the people in our lives enough. Usually when I write to you, it's about news of the parish and/or archdiocese, moral and ethical issues, or it allows me to address issues that I feel should be brought to your attention, i.e. coming to church on time, preparation for the Eucharist, etc. So with Christmas and New Year's quickly approaching here goes.

I am so thankful to God for calling me to the Holy Priesthood. Although there are days that I wish I were a doctor or banker, God quickly brings people into my life to show me His presence or allows me to show God's love to people that are hurting. It reminds me that He chose me despite my sinfulness and limitations and I can't imagine doing anything else! I am so grateful to God for my parents who labored and sacrificed to give me the best of everything that I needed not simply wanted. I am so grateful to God for the wife, who is my pastor, and children He has given me. They live with me when I am up and when I am down. They understand that I cannot always be around to

tuck them in and read to them, help with homework, and attend one of their games or concerts because I am needed in the parish. I am so grateful to God for all of my friends who love me when I am a friend and when I am not that good of a friend. I am so grateful to God to all of those that help me minister to you on a daily basis – Patty our secretary, and both Steves – our custodians, I am so grateful to God for Fr. Nifon, all of the organizations and their leaders of this God protected parish: the Executive Board, VMS, Teens, Fellowship, Guild, Church School, Choir, Altar Servers and our chanter for offering to God and to us their time and talents for the building up of the Body of Christ here in Dedham.

“Great art thou O Lord and marvelous are thy works and there is nothing sufficient to hymn thy wonders.”

On behalf of Khouria Joan, Alexander, Elizabeth Rose, and Nathaniel, I would like to wish you and all those whom you love, a most glorious and blessed Christmas and New Year. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Asking remembrance in your God pleasing prayers, I remain

In Christ,

Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

## Liturgical notes:

❖ ❖ To celebrate the Feast of our Lord’s Theophany, the blessing of waters will take place on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.

❖ ❖ To celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will celebrate a Vespertal Liturgy on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at St. George, Norwood at 6 pm.

❖ ❖ Great Lent starts on Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> and Holy Pascha (Easter) is on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Church Records...

*“As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ”*

James Alexander Topjian son of Carl and Mary (Solomon) Topjian was baptized on October 21, 2001

Philip Johnston Haddad son of Steven and Martha (Bangs) Haddad was baptized on November 17, 2001

*Many Years!!*

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

Stephen E. Mudarri (48) of Newton fell asleep in the Lord on November 21, 2001. His sister, brother and their families survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

George R. Ameer (73) of Roslindale fell asleep in the Lord on November 26, 2001. His wife, two daughters and their families survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

Linda Ghiz (83) of Quincy fell asleep in the Lord on December 1, 2001. Two brothers survive her. Burial was at Pine Hill Cemetery in Quincy.

*Memory Eternal!!*

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

Fayek Zabaneh and Najwa Zabaneh were united in marriage on October 21, 2001. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Newton.

## *Many Years!!*

### **From the Executive Board Chairman...**

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

These last few months have been very exciting and busy for our parish. In November, we enjoyed another very successful Bazaar. Thank you to all who worked so hard for the bazaar and thanks to all who attended over the weekend. A very special thanks to our dedicated tri-chair people ... Cynthia Capobianco, Elaine Sabbag and Olivia Waishek ... for the outstanding job they did in coordinating this fun-filled event.

Recently, we also enjoyed a very successful and fun Feast Day Weekend. Starting with a wonderful Variety Show on Friday, continuing Saturday with a wonderful banquet and mortgage burning ceremony, and concluding Sunday with a glorious Divine Liturgy and extended coffee hour hosted by the VMS. And the entire weekend was graced by the presence of His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP. My sincere thanks goes out, once again, to Mitch Hallal, General Chairman for the Feast Day Weekend, along with his entire committee and everyone who helped make this weekend a success.

As mentioned in my address at the Feast Day Banquet, now that we've officially burned our mortgage, the flames that lit the mortgage should signify a new beginning. We have so much ahead of us. We need to start planning for additional expansion of our Church School classrooms and storage space. We need to start planning for expansion of additional parking. We need to focus on putting together our St. John's archives to preserve our precious artifacts and documents. And let's not forget that we are hosting the 2002 New England Region Parish Life conference in June 2002. If you would like to get involved in any of these projects, please speak to me. As we celebrate the great achievement of the burning of our mortgage, let's always remember that the greatest thing about doing is the opportunity for doing more.

In closing, from my family to yours, I wish all of you a very blessed and Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and Happy New Year.

Your brother in Christ ...

John M. Haddad  
Chairman, Executive Board

## From the Teen SOYO...

As the busiest months in the church year are soon passing, the Teen SOYO has been packed with events as well. In late October, a few of the teens went around a neighborhood in Westwood to collect food cans for the Dedham Food Pantry. Our final collection was a little more than 300 cans! The Dedham Food Pantry was thrilled with the numerous bags of cans we had. In the beginning of November, during our annual Bazaar, the teen ran the snack bar. From the abundance of work we did, we enjoyed serving food as well as the social aspect.

Throughout the month of November, some of the teens were preparing for the variety show, in which we were presenting our own rendition of *West Side Story's*, "I'd Like to be in America." When the night of the show came, the Teen SOYO thrilled the audience with their dance moves and talents. During the Feast Day Banquet, the Teen SOYO presented a check to His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip for \$2500 to help build more cabins at the Antiochian Village Camp. The Teen SOYO would like to thank the Executive Board, Virgin Mary Society, Fellowship, and Parent Guild for their donation in matching our \$500 to present the \$2500.

Recently, the Teen SOYO helped the Fellowship serve at the Senior Citizen Luncheon. Following the luncheon was the Teen SOYO Christmas Party. After these "busy months," the Teen SOYO will be taking it easy. Our upcoming plans will be a dance in February and revising the Teen SOYO Constitution.

On behalf of the Teen SOYO, Happy Holidays!

David Haddad  
President of the Teen SOYO

## 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 woman who gave so many hours of their time in order to achieve the very profitable contribution we proudly added to the success of the 2001 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 2002 Calendar of Events will include our annual Sfeeha Sale and Lenten Dinner. Details are as follows:

Sheefa Sale order forms will be out in January 2002. Please return your forms as soon as possible as the deadline date for all orders is April 7, 2002. The pick-up date is Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. It would be appreciated if all orders could be picked up after Liturgy on that date. Thank you.

Our Annual Lenten Dinner is scheduled for Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm – 7 p.m. Our menu is as follows: M'judarra (Lentils) and Salad, Baked Fish, Spinach Pies, Dessert and coffee. Donation is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children.

Looking forward to your orders and presence at our dinners and wishing you and all a Happy and Health New Year  
Yours in Christ,

Maryann Hamwey, President

## Announcements . . .

❖ ❖ **CAN YOU HELP?** Helpers are needed on Saturday nights during the months of July, August and September 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.

❖ ❖ **DID YOU KNOW?** The church office is covered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by an answering service. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number and a brief message. Your call will be returned. ***If it is an emergency,*** you should inform the answering service and request that they page Fr. John immediately.

❖ ❖ **FELLOWSHIP DAY:** St. George, West Roxbury will host the region for the second "Fellowship Day" on Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. Meetings of the various chapters of the Ladies, Teens, and Fellowship from throughout the region will take place at 10:30 a.m..

**Church of St. John of Damascus**  
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**THE TORCHBEARER**  
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**Damascus**

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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 Lenten issue of ***The Torchbearer*** will be February 10<sup>th</sup>.

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