
THE TORCHBEARER

Vol. 10 ... No. 4

Great Lent, 2002

From the Pastor...



Beloved in the Lord:

On Monday, March 18th, the Orthodox Church begins Great Lent. As we make our way as a family, as a community, toward our Lord's empty tomb let us all strive to return to God, much like the Prodigal Son, and see what good God has to offer to fill the emptiness of the world. Please do something to observe this great gift that God gives to us. Don't let this time go by and fail to see the potential that you have within you to affect a change for the good of your mind, body and soul. Many "extra" liturgical services will be celebrated - become a part of them and become reunited with God and His Saints.

Below please find the most, in my opinion, uplifting, insightful, and hopeful sermon in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Please don't read it! Rather, take

the time to absorb these words and reflect on their meaning in our lives as Christians. You cannot help but see our Lord's Resurrection in a different light and context.

I very much look forward to seeing all of you during this most special time of the year. Please remember that I love you and pray for you. Please remember my family and me in your prayers, and remember that I am just a phone call away if you should ever need me. On behalf of my family, Khouria Joan, Alexander, Elizabeth Rose, and Nathaniel, and in anticipation of the Great Feast, I want to wish each of you and those whom you love a most blessed Pascha, and a spiritually fulfilling Lenten journey.

With much love in Christ,

Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

THE CATECHETICAL HOMILY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

If any are pious and lovers of God, let them delight in this fair and radiant festival. If any are honest servants, let them enter and rejoice in the joy of their Lord. If any are wearied with fasting, let them now enjoy the reward. If any have worked from the first hour, let them accept their just pay. If any have come after the third, let them feast with thankfulness. If any have arrived after the sixth, let there be no doubt, for they shall suffer no loss. If any come after the ninth, let them draw near, let them not waver. If any have arrived only at the eleventh, let them not be fearful for their tardiness, for the Master is gracious and accepts the last as well as the first. He gives rest to those who worked from the first hour. He is merciful to the last and provides for the first. He gives to this one and to that one he shows kindness. He receives their labors and acknowledges the purpose, and he honors the deed and praises the intention. Therefore, let everyone enter into the joy of our Lord, and let the first and the second take part in the reward. Those rich and those poor, join hands together. Those sober and those sorrowful, honor this day. Those who fast and those who do not, be glad today. The table is full, indulge yourselves sumptuously. The calf is ample, let no one go away hungry. Let all enjoy the wealth of righteousness. Let none lament their poverty for the kingdom is revealed to all. Let none deplore transgressions, for forgiveness has dawned forth from the tomb. Let none be fearful of death, for the death of the Savior has set us free. By tasting his flesh, death has been quenched. He who went down to Hades despoiled Hades, and Hades was embittered when he tasted Christ's flesh. Isaiah, anticipating this, cried out and said: Hades was embittered when it met you face to face below. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was cast down. It was embittered, for it was chained. It received a body and encountered God. It received earth, and met heaven face to face. It received what it saw, and fell where it saw not. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons have fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and there are no dead in the tombs for Christ is raised from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who were asleep. To him be glory and dominion to the ages of ages. Amen.



Church Records...

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

Anthony Mark Haddad son of Mark and Cynthia (Haddad) Haddad was baptized on January 26, 2002

Samuel Edward Cahaly son of Ralph and Susan (Serris) Cahaly was baptized on January 27, 2002

Edward Elian Khouri, II son of Elian and Leandra (Anchieta) Khouri was baptized on February 10, 2002

Many Years!!



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

Julia B. Saidnawey (96) of Cambridge fell asleep in the Lord on December 14, 2001. Her two sons and two daughters and their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Arthur E. Nashawaty (74) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on January 30, 2002. His wife, two sons and daughter survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Dimitri A. Homsy (84) of Canton fell asleep in the Lord on January 31, 2002. His wife and daughter and her family survive him. Burial was at Milton Cemetery in Milton.

Memory Eternal!!



From the Executive Board Chairman...

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in the best of health during these winter months.

It is so exciting to see the increased involvement and participation in our parish this past year. So many people have come forward to me with new ideas and excitement about getting involved in new projects. I love to see this enthusiasm, as this spirit is the St. John's I remember growing up with!

Through the work of Paula Hamwey, Don Khouri and the Long Range Planning Committee, we held our first Volunteer Fair in January. Many of you signed up to volunteer to help with various functions and organizations. We will be holding other volunteer fairs in the future for many other planned ministry teams and projects. We hope you can participate. In this newsletter, you will find a form that we are asking each parishioner, young and old, to complete to help volunteer your talents. Please take a minute to complete it. All we ask of each of you is to give an hour or two each month for your parish. Get involved ... have fun!

As you all know by now, St. John's parish is hosting this year's 2002 New England Region Parish Life Conference. Our chair people ... Tom Sabbag, Ed Zahka and Abe Sabbag ... have already done an **outstanding job** in planning this conference. However, there is still so much work to do, so please contact Tom, Ed or Abe if you can help out on any of the committees. The conference will be held at the Sea Crest in Falmouth, June 27th-30th. Information regarding the conference, registration and hotels should be provided soon. You can also visit the conference web site (www.stjohnd.org/conference2002) for all the details. We encourage all to book your hotel and register early.

Your executive board continues to work very hard in all operations of our parish and in the planning of our parish's future. We welcome your comments, your thoughts and of course, your help. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me. You can always reach me by leaving a message at the church office, or e-mail me at execboard@stjohnd.org.

Your brother in Christ,

John M. Haddad
Chairman, Executive Board

From the Long Range Planning Committee...

Legacy Fund Success!

Two years ago, we embarked on a journey to raise \$200,000 for the following items.

What the Funds were used for	Amount	Status
Replenish Capital Improvement Fund dollars expended on Church roof	\$60,000	Completed December, 2001
Replace Church Hall Hardwood Floors	\$20,000	Completed June 2001
New Sound System for Church and Hall	\$15,000	Church Completed Hall in progress
Replace Church Carpeting	\$15,000	Completed
Pay off Church Mortgage	\$70,000	Completed July 2001
Parish Home Renovations	\$15,000	Proposal in Progress

The Long Range Planning Committee is pleased to announce that we have reached our goals. Although, we fell a few dollars short of the \$200,000 we were able to raise enough funds to accomplish everything on the above list. Thank you very much to all those who contributed.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish

From the Virgin Mary Society...

Our ever-popular Sfeeha sale is now underway. We have already started baking in order to fill the many orders that we know we will receive. The deadline date for orders is Sunday, April 7th with a “pick-up” date of Sunday, April 21st. If you have misplaced your order form, please call the church office or pick one up at the bengari. It would be appreciated if arrangements could be made so as all orders can be picked up on April 21st after church in the main hall. Thank you!!

Once again the Virgin Mary Society will sponsor their *Annual Lenten Dinner*, which is scheduled for Friday evening, April 26th from 5:30-7 p.m. The menu is as follows:

**M'judarra (Lentils) with Salad
Baked Fish, Spinach Pies,
Dessert and Coffee**



Donation: \$10.00 per adult/ \$5.00 per child

Proceeds from this dinner will go to the Antiochian Women as our pledge to "Project 02" which will benefit and support many orphanages in Guatemala, Lebanon and Syria. Help us make our pledge rewarding for this very worthwhile cause by attending our dinner! For reservations please call Maryann Hamwey at (781) 326-3417 or Patti in the Church Office at (781) 326-3046. Looking forward to seeing all of you, I am,

Sincerely,

Maryann Hamwey, President, VMS

From The Order of St. Ignatius...

At our Feast Day Weekend, Metropolitan Philip challenged St. John's to recruit 15 new members to be inducted to the Order of St. Ignatius at our Parish Life Conference. The Metropolitan has promised to come if we fulfill this challenge. Won't you consider joining this charitable arm of the church? Information packets are available from the church office and can be sent to you confidentially. For further information, please contact Christine or Jim Bezreh at (781) 449-1230.

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

Each year during the Lenten season, the Archdiocese sponsors Food for Hungry People program. All churches participate. The alms boxes and cans will be available at the Bengari. Everyone is aware that this project is very important. Your dedication and support is depended upon. Please make out your check to the church and earmark it "FFHP". Thank you.

From the Volunteer Committee

Dear Fellow Parishioners: Attached in this edition of *The Torchbearer* is a Personal Profile which the Volunteer Committee is asking each parishioner to take a minute or two to fill out and return to the Church, either by mail, fax, or leaving at the Bengari. One of the purposes of the Personal Profile is to build our volunteer database and to try to match people to where they are best suited for volunteering. We are not looking for big time commitments from people (unless you really want to do that). If every parishioner gave just one or two hours a month to our Church, think of what we could accomplish! There are many different volunteer areas listed, as well as room to write comments and suggestions.

For those of you who were in Church on January 27th and attended our Volunteer Fair, thank you. For those of you who did not attend, our next Volunteer Fair is scheduled for April 7th, immediately following Liturgy. By the time the April Volunteer Fair is held, we hope to have many Personal Profiles filled out and returned to us and our database started. So please, help out our Committee and our Church by filling out your Personal Profile and returning it to us as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Paula J. Hamwey, Volunteer Committee

Lenten Liturgical Notes...

- As is the custom during Great Lent, the clergy of the New England Deanery will celebrate Great Compline at the various churches of the deanery on Monday evenings at 7 p.m. Please see the weekly bulletin for the schedule:
- As is usual the Church calls us to increase and intensify our prayer life. Keeping this in mind, please note that we will celebrate the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings during Great Lent at 6:30 p.m. This year, we will worship with our sister churches of West Roxbury and Norwood for three Wednesdays. All other Wednesdays during Lent we will be here. If you wish to receive the Eucharist that evening please fast (from food, drink, and smoking).

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to receive communion, observe Lent, and break bread with your brothers and sisters in Christ. The schedule is as follows:

March 20th	St. John's (no potluck)
March 27th	St. John's, potluck to follow
April 3rd	St. George, Norwood, potluck to follow
April 10th	St. George, Boston, pot luck to follow
April 17th	St. John (no potluck)
April 24th	St. John (no potluck)

- On Friday evenings, during Great Lent, we will chant the Akathist Hymn to the Virgin Mary at 7 p.m.
 - **LAZARUS SATURDAY COMMUNION BREAKFAST:** The Lazarus Saturday Communion Breakfast will be held on April 27th. The Church School will host this breakfast immediately after the Liturgy, which starts at 9:30 a.m. *Remember that this service is traditionally attended by the entire family.* All are invited to be with us!
 - **NOTE:** If you are planning to be anointed with oil of Holy Unction on Holy Wednesday, May 1st, and participate in communion on Holy Thursday and Pascha, **YOU MUST HAVE YOUR CONFESSION HEARD BEFORE HOLY WEDNESDAY (i.e., Holy Tuesday is the last night for confessions.)** CONFESSIONS during the Lenten Season will continue to be heard before and after all Lenten services prior to HOLY WEDNESDAY, or by appointment. **Please don't wait until Holy Week to have your confession heard. Don't miss out, because of laziness, on receiving the Eucharist!**
 - **KEEPING VIGIL AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST** - Following the Lamentations on Great & Holy Friday, May 3^d, the church, led by the teens will begin to keep watch (vigil) over the tomb of Christ. We will be reading from the Psalms and Gospels all through the night. You are encouraged to sign up for an hour or so to come and keep watch together. Please watch for the sign up sheet in the hall. The youth are especially encouraged to be at the church all night. The vigil will end on Saturday morning, when we will all gather together for Divine Liturgy and partake of the Eucharist.
 - **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE PROGRAM** - Each year at this time our Archdiocese sponsors this program that has helped to feed many hungry people all around the world. Please consider offering a generous donation to this most worthy cause; make your check payable to the Church of St. John of Damascus earmarked "Food for Hungry People." Checks may be mailed to the church or left in the vestibule of the church. We encourage the whole family to share with those less fortunate. God bless you!
 - **A WARM THANK YOU FROM FR. JOHN** - To all those who graciously welcomed me into their homes during this house blessing season, I would like to express my deepest appreciation and thanks for your gracious hospitality!! God grant you all many years!
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Confession...

Great Lent is the perfect opportunity for you to receive Confession, especially if you plan on receiving the Eucharist on Palm Sunday (April 28th) and Pascha (Easter – May 5th). Confession is available before and after all ***Lenten services***, during Matins on Sunday mornings or by appointment. Please don't wait until the last minute to come to confession! In addition, because of the many extra responsibilities Fr. John will have during Holy Week, he **WILL NOT** be able to hear Confessions on Palm Sunday morning or from Holy Wednesday on (i.e. Holy Tuesday is the last chance for Confession for Easter). So please plan accordingly! In addition, please note that being anointed on Holy Wednesday is not a form of Confession. Hence, if you plan on being anointed on Holy Wednesday, please plan on coming to Confession before Holy Wednesday!

Announcements...

- **2001 ANNUAL BAZAAR:** It is our pleasure to present the final figures of the 2001 Annual Bazaar: Gross Income: \$56,000 with a Net Income of \$48,000. We'd like to express our deepest appreciation for all those dedicated, hardworking parishioners who worked diligently during the Bazaar. Our Bazaar is all about parishioners working together for a common goal...our parish. Many thanks go to all who labor and sacrifice for the well being of this community.
- **SYRIAN LEBANESE WOMEN'S CLUB ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP** for high school graduates – applications are now available by calling Laurice Kurker at 781.643.7991 or Rose Maloof at 617. 484.3844.

The Four Preparatory Sundays of Great Lent...

Every year, the Church spends a whole month teaching us about and preparing us for the Great Fast — why we need it, how we should and must approach it, what it will “do” for us in our spiritual struggles — through the passages read from Holy Scripture during services. In fact, the four Sundays preceding Forgiveness Sunday and the start of the Great Fast are known by their Gospel themes. You can use these four preparatory Sundays as a guide to introduce your children to the Orthodox understanding of the right desire to love and follow God, of repentance and forgiveness, and of humility and the “right mind” for spiritual struggle.

The Sunday of Zacchaeus
(Luke 19: 1-10)

February 17th in 2002

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector appointed by the Romans, hated by his own people — the Jews — because he collected money not only for the Empire, but also for himself. He was fabulously wealthy but friendless, and considered the most despicable of sinners. The Gospel tells us that Zacchaeus was very short — in fact, he “fell short” of God’s image! — and had to scramble up into a tree to see the Lord as he passed by in the street. The Lord saw Zacchaeus in the tree, his dignity forgotten in his desire to see Him and repent of his evil, and called out to him by name, saying that He would come to Zacchaeus’ house. The crowds murmured that He was disgracing Himself, socializing with sinners... but the Lord goes to those who need Him, like a Physician to the ill and dying!

The Sunday of the Publican
and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14)

February 24th in 2002

At the time of Christ, there were three Jewish sects: the Pharisees, who thought themselves very righteous because of their “superior” religious knowledge and rigorous observance of Jewish law; the Sadducees, who did not believe in the existence of angels or resurrection from the dead; and the Essenes, who led a very strict ascetic life in the desert. The Lord called the Pharisees hypocrites, because they made a great outward show of holiness in their daily lives, but did not truly repent of their sins. They looked down their noses at others, especially “sinners” like tax collectors and Jewish agents of the Roman Empire (called Publicans) who did not strictly follow Jewish law.

The Lord told a story (called a parable) about a self-righteous Publican and a contrite Publican praying in the Temple to demonstrate that no one should be prideful, even if he commits acts of kindness and righteousness, but should be humble and beg God’s favor with all his soul. Even if he has fallen into the worst evils, he should never lose hope or courage, because he is never far from salvation.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son
(Luke 15:11-32)

March 3rd in 2002

In this parable told by the Lord, the son of a wealthy landowner takes his inheritance and wastes it. When his wealth is gone and he is "down and out", he recognizes his error and returns to his father, hoping for a position as the lowest of servants in his father's house. The father greets him with joy, and welcomes him without reservation: he is give his old position — a son of the manor! The elder son, who had never gone away and had always done as his father asked, is resentful... The father lovingly sets him straight: "You are always with Me, and it is fitting to be glad and to rejoice with your Father. For this son of Mine was dead in sin, and he has been revived by repenting over what he committed...."

The Sunday of the Last Judgment
(Matthew 25:31-46)

March 10th in 2002

The Lord came to earth physically at His nativity, quietly and without glory. At the Second Coming, "He will come from heaven with supernatural wonders and manifest brightness. He will come with His body, so that He will be recognized as the One who has come before and freed the human race, and will come again to judge whether it has well preserved what it has been given.

"No one knows exactly when the Lord's Second Coming will occur. The Lord kept this hidden even from the Apostles, but He did allow for some visible signs to take place in the meantime. Some of the saints have expanded on the description of these signs. In any case, it is said that it will occur after the passage of seven thousand years of human history. Prior to the Lord's reappearance, the Antichrist will come. He will be born, as St. Hippolytus of Rome says, of a defiled woman who will appear to be a virgin and will be from the Jewish race, from the tribe of Dan, one of Jacob's sons. He will live a life imitating that of Christ. He will perform miracles, such as the ones Christ did, and will even raise the dead. Yet, all that he shall do will be an illusion: his birth, his flesh, and so on, as the Apostle Paul says: 'The coming of the lawless one is according to the works of Satan, with all powers, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved' (**II Thessalonians 2:9-10**). But, as St. John of Damascus says, Satan will not himself be transformed into flesh, but a man born of fornication will accept into himself all the activity of Satan. He will suddenly rise up in rebellion. Then he will appear to be kind and accommodating to all. There will be a great

famine and he will supply the people with food. He will study the Holy Scriptures and practice fasting. Forced by the people, he will be proclaimed king. He will greatly love the Jewish race, restore them to Jerusalem, and build their temple.

“According to the Holy prophet Daniel, seven years before the end, St. Enoch and St. Elijah will come preaching to the people not to accept the Antichrist. He will imprison them, torture them, then behead them. Those people who choose to live piously, keeping their true religion, will flee far away. Finding them in the mountains, the Antichrist will tempt them by means of demons, but those seven years will be shortened for the sake of the elect. There will be a great famine, with all the elements undergoing a change, such that almost all living creatures will be obliterated.

“After this, suddenly, like lightning from heaven, the Lord will appear, preceded by His precious Cross. A boiling river of fire will go before Him, purifying all the earth of its defilements. The Antichrist will immediately be captured, together with those who have served him, and will be delivered to the eternal fire.

“When the angels have sounded the trumpets, then the entire human race will at once come together from the ends of the earth and from all the elements to Jerusalem — for Jerusalem is the center of the center of the world. Here thrones will have been set up for judgment. Yet each person will be with his own body and soul, all of which will have been transfigured and made incorruptible, and all will have one appearance. The elements themselves will have undergone an alteration for the better.

“With a single word, the Lord will separate the righteous from the sinners. The workers for good will go to receive eternal life and the sinners eternal torment. We ought to know that when He comes again, Christ will not require fasting or miracles, though these are good, but rather works of mercy and compassion, which are far better. According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, both the righteous and the sinners will be judged according to six requirements: giving food to the hungry, providing drink to the thirsty, showing hospitality to the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and visiting prisoners. By rendering these acts of compassion to the least of our brothers, we perform them for Christ Himself. Since these six requirements can be carried out by everyone, and where on earth, it can be understood why His judgment shall be a just one. Through this realization that God is manifested in love, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.”

*Taken from the **Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion**, edited by Fr. David Kidd and Mother Gabriella Ursache, Rives Junction, Mi.: HDM Press, 1999., pp. 35-37.*

Some Things To Do

- ☞ Read the Gospel for each Sunday at home as a family during the preceding week. Ask younger children to color a copy of the icon, or write their own to illustrate the story, to help them remember the events and people.
- ☞ Ask children to recall events for their own lives when they behaved like the people discussed in each Gospel and share them. For example, did they try to change a habit only to be ridiculed, or look down on someone else for doing the same thing they did (or still do)? Did they whine or become defensive when affection or acknowledgement was given to a sibling or classmate who made a special effort?
- ☞ Choose a family project for the next year that allows you to perform some act of mercy together. You might consider working at (or starting) a community hot meal program, writing to your parish shut-in and hospitalized parishioners every week, etc.

by Nichola T. Krause

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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

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Services: Sunday-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

May/June, 2002 Torchbearer

will be April 10th . This will be the final Newsletter until September 2002.

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

