
THE TORCHBEARER

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

January/February 2003

From the Pastor...

For the last two years in *The Torchbearer*, I have published guidelines for those wishing to be married in the Orthodox Church. From what prospective brides and grooms have told me, these have proved most helpful. Below, please find some excerpted guidelines for those new parents wishing to baptize their newborn in the Church. We thank Fr. Paul Solberg, pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Niagara Falls, NY, for writing these guidelines. As always, please call me if you have any questions.

Over the past few months, we have been blessed with the miracle of new babies. Thanks be to God for these infants who we pray will grow in both their physical and spiritual stature. At times like these, questions arise concerning the naming of the newborn, the churching of mother and baby, the selection and role of Godparents, baptism, and the like. Therefore, I offer some guidelines that we should follow, if possible.

First of all, there is a special "Naming Service", usually celebrated on the 8th day. In many churches across North America, this Orthodox tradition has not been broadly practiced. However, the newborn infant should be given a name of a Christian Saint that will serve as a role model for the child. The saint's name may be the first or second name, but is the name under which the child will receive all the Holy Sacraments. It also is part of our Orthodox tradition to celebrate on the Saint's Day (name day) usually the Saint of the day which the child is born, but not necessarily. [It may be a day associated with the Christian Saint whose name the child receives.] In some Orthodox cultures, the name is not publicly proclaimed until Baptism.

Second, the Churching of the mother and baby, welcomes them into the community after the recovering period from childbirth. Historically, the 40th day has generally been the time period that the baby is nurtured by the mother before journeying outside the home. Traditionally, the first place the mother and child would go was to the church. The 40-day period is based upon the Jewish tradition whereby Christ was presented to the Temple [80 days for girls was the Jewish custom]. The first place that the mother and infant should go should be the church. The forty waiting period is not set

in stone, as most mothers in today's age, leave the home with the baby to do various things. If mom and baby are out and about, they should first be brought to church for this "Churching Service" and received into the believing community of Christians. (While we at St. John's church babies after communion most of the time, the proper time for the churching is just before the Liturgy so that the mother can receive the Eucharist on that particular Sunday).

Third, the proper selection of Godparents, usually termed 'Sponsor' within the Holy Orthodox Church is essential. (At least one of) the 'Sponsor(s)' must be a member in good standing within the Holy Orthodox Church. Only one 'Sponsor' is required, usually the same sex as the child (but most families have two godparents). (When choosing Godparents, please resist the urge to "reward" family members who really are not practicing the Faith).

Fourth, the Mystery of Holy Baptism admits a child into the full sacramental life of the Church. These infants, as well as youth or adult persons who join the Holy Orthodox Church, will not only be baptized, but will also be chrismated and washed, filled with the Holy Spirit, and given the Holy Eucharist, filled with Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, at the same service. All will be able to participate within the full sacramental activities of the Holy Orthodox Church. Thus, in the case of infants or youth, it is assumed that they will be raised in the Orthodox faith and that adults will become members of good standing. We do not baptize, therefore, children whose parents are looking for a convenient location, a compromise church, or for social reasons. The commitment to raise-up a child in the way they should go [as a faithful Orthodox Christian] is particularly required of the parent(s) and sponsor(s), but also is an important responsibility for all members of the believing community.

Let us renew our appreciation and understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism where we and our loved ones are able to "put on Christ.". By doing this, we might be able to recommit ourselves, and ultimately our child, into a greater and deeper love for Christ and His Holy Church. On behalf of K houria Joan, Alexander, Elizabeth Rose, and Nathaniel, I would like to wish you and all those whom you love, a most glorious and blessed New Year full of health and happiness.

Asking remembrance in your God pleasing prayers, I remain

In Christ,

+Fr. John K. Teebagy

Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

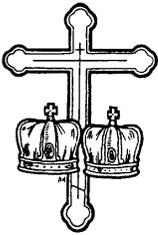


Liturgical notes...

- ❖ To celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Theophany, the blessing of water will take place on Sunday, January 5th.
- ❖ Great Lent starts on Monday, March 10th and Holy Pascha (Easter) is on Sunday, April 27th. More information will follow in the next issue of *The Torchbearer*

Church Records...

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



Derek Tawa and Jennifer George were united in marriage on November 10, 2002. We congratulate them as they begin their new life in Quincy.

Many Years!

"The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit"



James J. Ambrose of Bedford was chrismated on October 27, 2002

Many Years!

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

George Salhaney (85) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on December 7, 2002. Two sons and their families survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!

From the Executive Board Chair...

Although 2003 is the beginning of a New Year, under the church calendar it is only the halfway mark of the liturgical year, which started on September 1st. We have enjoyed our annual bazaar and feast day celebration and now we turn our attention to the anticipation of Great Lent and Holy Pascha, which are just around the corner. On March 1, 2003, we will have an Art and Silent Auction. This, we hope, will not only raise funds for our church but will also provide a fun night out during the cold winter months! Please plan to attend this evening with all of your friends and loved ones and pick up some great artworks, as well as sports tickets, weekend packages, and other exciting items.

Over the past few months, the Board has been trying to bring a more spiritual feel to the bengari area of the church. Over the years, it has become a busy and noisy place for writing checks and making donations, as well as becoming an area to meet and talk with friends and family. A few months ago, we moved the bengari station to the side hoping to minimize the talking and money collecting in front of the altar during service. This has, however, continued and now causes congestion near the side door, which connects to the entrance to the hall area. In order to achieve the decorum necessary to provide the spiritual and religious inspiration needed to prepare oneself for the Divine Liturgy and the Eucharist, the Executive Board, at the December meeting, has decided to move the bengari station back to the front of the church, where it was originally. Shortly, we hope to have a new bengari table to service the parish more effectively, however, the following changes will go into effect Sunday, January 5, 2003. The collection of money for memorial or other contributions to the church will take place on Sundays from 9:45 until 10 a.m. and again from the end of Liturgy until noon when church school ends.

You will be noticing some changes over the next few months as we begin placement of our heritage museum here at St. John of Damascus. Jim Sabbag and his committee have been working very hard collecting and documenting the history of this church, which is now ready to be displayed for everyone to see and enjoy. The Long Range Planning Committee is also getting ready to give us a detailed plan for the future expansion of the church. Please make every effort to attend the annual parish meeting this year. It is scheduled for May 4th, the Sunday after Easter, immediately following Liturgy. There will be some very important issues to be discussed and voted on at that time as well as the usual agenda items.

Remember that this parish is great because of you and all of the parishioners. Please continue to support our church by coming to worship services, giving of your time, talents and resources, and by supporting the various organizations by attending their functions.

We are a family and together we must plan the future for the generations to come. Knowing this parish, this will not be a problem.

My family and the entire Executive Board hope that you and those whom you love have a most blessed New Year full of love, health, and happiness.

Yours in Christ,

Cynthia Capobianco

Cynthia Capobianco

From the Parent Guild...

GOING, Going, gone

The Church of St John of Damascus Art Auction is returning on Saturday March 1st. This year for those not interested in art, we have added a silent auction.

In order to make the evening a success, we are asking you for two simple things

First: Come and Bring Friends for an enjoyable evening. The more people that attend the more money the Church will make.

Second: You or anyone you know are welcome to donate an item for the silent auction. Examples include:

- i. Sports or theatre tickets
- ii. Special creative talents
- iii. Hotel get-away
- iv. Vacation get-away
- v. Jewelry
- vi. Gift certificates.

Tickets can be obtained for \$10 per person, \$15 per couple.

For tickets or if you are interested in helping in making this auction a success or please contact either:

Debbie Leotsakos – 781-762-3110

Linda O'Hara – 508-883-3185

We are looking forward to seeing you all there the night of March 1st at 7:00 pm.

From the Teen SOYO...

The busy months of the Teen SOYO are approaching. So far, the teens have been busy with many events. During October, it was Youth Month. Many of the teens participated in reading the Epistle, delivering their oratorical presentations, doing the baskets, and ushering. Also during youth month, we held a special collection for the Special Olympics, which raised over \$500. We thank all the parishioners, who generously donated to this cause. Then towards the end of October, we headed to a member of the Teen SOYO's house for a barbeque, followed by apple picking. In early November, we ran the snack bar at the Bazaar. Once again, this was another success and contributed to the church.

During Feast Day weekend, on Saturday night at the Banquet Dinner, the teens performed a skit, written by Bob Cardoos. With the whole weekend being a success, the teens enjoyed showing off their acting talents.

Upcoming events for the Teen SOYO are a Christmas Party in December, and we will be having a coat drive throughout the month of December. Then in February, we will be having a Valentine's Dance.

If any teens 13+ are interested in joining the Teen SOYO, we have our meetings during the 2nd Sunday of each month. We welcome all new members!

-David Haddad
President of the Teen SOYO

From the Virgin Mary Society...

We hope that everyone enjoyed the holidays and many thanks go to our parishioners for their continued support. Now that our annual bazaar is over, we will focus on our next project, which is our annual Sfeeha sale in April.

Sheefa Sale order forms are in this newsletter and at the bengari after the New Year. Please return your forms as soon as possible, as the deadline date for all orders is April 7, 2003. The pick-up date is Sunday, April 13st. It would be appreciated if all orders could be picked up after Liturgy on that date. If this is not possible, please make arrangements for someone to pick them up for you.

Our Annual Lenten Dinner is scheduled for Friday, April 18th from 5:30 pm – 7 p.m. Please watch for more details!

Looking forward to your orders and presence at our dinners and wishing you and all a happy and health New Year.

Yours in Christ,
Lillian Khouri

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

❖ The Fellowship of St. John the Divine will be holding their annual Super Sunday Bake Sale on January 26th immediately following Liturgy. Proceeds will benefit the Children's Relief Fund and the sponsorship of Christian Kalash of Beirut, Lebanon. Anyone who is willing to bake, please call Margaret Khouri @ 781 329- 2201 or Linda Hakar @ 781 551-9444.

From the Order of St. Ignatius...



The St. John of Damascus Chapter of the Order, would like to welcome its newest member, Louella Cardoos. Louella was inducted into the Order this fall in Las Vegas, Nevada. Her sponsor was Olivia Waishek. This brings our total number of members to 28.

On December 7, at our Feast Day Banquet, the chapter presented Father John with a gift to celebrate his tenth anniversary as our pastor.

Metropolitan Philip designated December 8, 2002 as Choir Appreciation Day throughout the archdiocese. In gratitude to the choir, the chapter donated an icon of St. Romanos the Melodist. As a deacon of the church, Romanos was not a good singer, and was frequently ridiculed. He prayed to the Theotokos, and on the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity, she appeared to him in a dream and placed a scroll on his tongue. After he awoke, he began to sing in a clear and strong voice. He was singing the Kontakion to the Nativity. The people were amazed. Romanos became a glorious hymnographer and singer after the miraculous intervention of the Theotokos. The icon depicts Romanos holding a scroll of sacred music, and he is the patron of Orthodox musicians. May he always inspire our beloved Choir members!

Church of St. John of Damascus

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A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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Sunday Services: Matins 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10 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 *Torchbearer* will be February 10th, 2003.

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

