
THE TORCHBEARER

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

MAY/JUNE 2003

From the Pastor...

"The earth doth celebrate and dance for joy, and heaven doth rejoice today on the Ascension of the maker of creation, who by His volition clearly united that which was separated" (Canon of the Matins for Ascension)

As I write this, Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and the Feast of feasts – Pascha are right in front of us. This is such a special time of the year when we “go all out.” The church is cleaned to a shine, the choir has extra rehearsals, the church looks splendid, and excitement builds. However, for many people Pascha (Easter) is seen merely as a “holiday” announcing the beginning of spring. We think of Pascha in terms of the Easter bunny and chocolate and the like. Instead of basking in the glow of the Resurrection, Pascha is merely seen as just another day to eat, drink, and be merry. I am reminded of a true story that I love to tell. A friend and classmate of mine, Fr. Nicholas Ceko, a Serbian Orthodox priest currently serving in Los Angeles, was home in Chicago during the Paschal season. As he walked down the street he came across a friend of his from his church. At the top of his lungs, Fr. Nicholas shouted, “Christ is Risen!!!” The man looked at him and said, “that was Sunday.”

Beloved in the Lord, “the earth doth celebrate and dance for joy, and heaven doth rejoice today on the Ascension of the maker of creation, who by His volition clearly united that which was separated.” The Resurrection is about giving us a new beginning, a fresh start. Our goal is to see the gifts that God continues to give to us. No longer are we separated and estranged from God, no longer does sin divide us. Christ “tramples down death by his death and to those in the tombs he bestows life.”

During this Paschal season, let us pause and allow our body, mind, and soul to ascend from the cares and pressures of this fallen and sinful world and think about

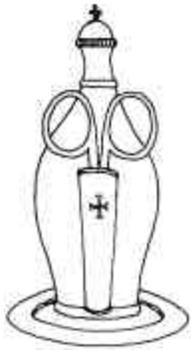
the things that await those who believe in God. The Resurrection is not just “on Sunday” but rather it permeates all that we do, say, pray and think as Christians. Let us seek to continually unite ourselves to God. Let us be like the Samaritan woman and allow our “thirsty soul(s) to drink of the waters of piety; for thou, O Savior, didst cry out to all: Whoever is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Wherefore, O well spring of life, Christ our God, glory to thee.” (*Dismissal hymn of the Vespers of the Samaritan Woman*).

On behalf of my family, I greet you all with the words of salvation and eternal life, Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

With much love,
Fr. John K. Teebagy
Archpriest John K. Teebagy, Pastor



Church Records...



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

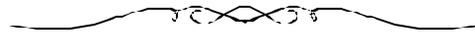
Michael George, son of Demetrios and Deborah (Najjar) Tsillas of Littleton, was baptized on March 9th, 2003.

Erick Robert, son of Robert and Christina (de Medeiros) Roomey of West Roxbury, was baptized on March 9th, 2003.

Matthew Lamar, son Marcus Morris and Kimberly Najjar of Mattapan, was baptized on April 13th, 2003.

Michael Raymond, son of Michael and Brenda (Sabbag) Nardolillo of Newport RI, was baptized on April 13th, 2003

Many Years!!



From the Executive Board Chairman...

To all by brothers and sisters in Christ,

I wish you health and prosperity during this Easter season! Great Lent is always a long journey but one that is rewarding, in that we awaken our faith and hope for our future. This past year has gone by quickly! It has also been a year of implementation. The goals set forth a year ago by the Executive Board are now coming to fruition.

By now you have seen the icons and relics from our past churches go up for display in the bengari area of the church. This was due to the efforts of many people, especially Jim Sabbag. There is more to come, as we proceed with our ongoing task of beautifying and building this parish. The Long Range Planning Committee is going forth with their project of expanding the church school, and a building fund has been set up for this purpose.

This has been a year of purpose but also uncertainty - uncertainty about our world and also the future of the parish. While the Executive Board is made up of 21 members in theory, we have been operating with a board of about 12-15 members in practice. For this reason, the Executive Board voted to recommend a change in the Constitution that will reduce the size of the board from 21 to 15 members. This proposed change will be voted on at the annual parish meeting on May 4th. We hope that this will encourage more dedicated people to run for office. We are also uncertain as to the future financial health of this parish. We have not had any one or group of persons step forth to chair the bazaar for this year. This is a very important money maker for the parish, as is ballroom dancing on Saturday evenings, yet very few members of the parish will volunteer to work even one night a year for this program. Those who love this parish continue to work unselfishly for the parish. It would be nice if more of the people who pay their dues would become more active in the parish and not just company on holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

We need everyone's active participation in order to grow this parish! If you haven't been to church in a while, please come back and join us. Remember that no matter who the priest is, the president of the board, or the head of any organization, these people are only here for a short time compared to the life of the parish. This parish that your parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents built will be here for many generations to come but only if you participate in her growth.

Anyone who would like to run for the board, chair the bazaar, teach in the church school, sing in the choir or give of themselves in any way -please do so. You are not company. This is your church to grow for the glory of God.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Capobianco
Chairman, Executive Board

From Teen SOYO...

As the year comes closer to an end, the Teen SOYO continues to be busy. Back in February, we hosted a dance here at St. John's. With the dancing, laughing, and socializing, it was clear the dance was a success. In the month of March the teens enjoyed a trip to the arcades at Jillian's.

With the last few months before elections for new officers, some events that will be going on are and a service project to clean a parish members yard, Relay for Life to help fight cancer, and the vigil. This year could not have been completed with the great help of our advisors Anthony Hamwey and Don Khouri. The teens greatly appreciate their help and dedication. The year would not have turned out this great without them.

Elections for new officers will be held in June. Anyone entering Grade 7 by next September is more than welcome to join the Teen SOYO. Please see David Haddad for more information.

Once again thank you to the members of the Teen SOYO and everyone who helped us out making the year great and successful. I have enjoyed being President of this organization for the past two years and I would love to see it keep growing and getting better! Thank you.

In Christ,
David Haddad
Teen SOYO President



Announcements...

❖ **THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** will be held on Sunday, May 4th immediately after liturgy. Lunch and childcare will be available. Your attendance and input would be most appreciated. Please plan on participating!

❖ **NOMINATIONS** for serving on the Executive Board are being accepted until May 4th, which is the annual meeting. If you and/or someone you know, would like to offer your name, please send in the name(s) to the attention of the nominating committee at the church office or let any Board member know. Forms have been sent out. You may also e-mail your nominee by writing to execboard@stjohnd.org. We have a very busy and exciting year ahead... so won't you get involved?

❖ **BLESSING OF GRAVES**... As is the custom, Fr. John will be at Fairview Cemetery on Memorial Day, Monday May 26th from 8:50 a.m. to 10 a.m. to bless the graves of your loved ones. Trisagion Prayers will be offered in front of "the shrine" at 8:50 a.m.

❖ **HALL RENTAL POLICY CHANGES** - The Executive Board has approved the following changes to the Hall Rental Policy as of June 1st. The small hall can only be rented to parishioners, and the rental is increased from \$100 to \$150. Large hall rentals for parishioners shall be increased (due to increased expenses) to \$475.00, except for Saturdays, which is \$575.00. For non-parishioners, the large hall rental fee will be increased to \$1,000 (one thousand). A 45-day cancellation notice is required for the rental amount to be refunded: otherwise, none of the amount is refunded. This policy change will go in effect on June 1st, 2003.

❖ **FELLOWSHIP LOBSTER DINNER** - Make plans to attend the Fellowship's Lobster Dinner on Wednesday, May 28, 2003 from 5-7:30 p.m. Donation will be market price. For reservations, please call Linda Hakar at 781.551.9444. Please make reservations by May 25, 2003.

❖ **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE PROGRAM** - The Food for Hungry People Program is underway. Please remember the homeless throughout the world as we approach the holiest time of the year. The alms boxes and cans will be available at the bengari. We depend upon your support. Please consider offering a generous donation to this most worthy cause; make your check payable to the church and earmark it "FFFP" and return it by June 1st. Thank you

❖ **NICHOLAS G. BERAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION** announces their Annual Scholastic Achievement Awards Program for all concerned high school seniors. Applications are available at the Church office. The deadline is June 1st.

❖ **SUMMER CHURCH HOURS** – As usual, the Divine Liturgy will start at 9:30 a.m. from June 15th through August 31st inclusive. Please mark your calendars. **The church MIGHT be closed on Sunday, June 30th, due to the Parish Life Conference in Maine.** Please consult the weekly bulletin for further clarification.

❖ To observe the **Feast of the Ascension** (40 days after Easter), we will celebrate a Vesperal Liturgy on Wednesday, June 4th @ 6 pm at St. George, Norwood.

❖ **THE DORMITION FAST** begins on August 1st through August 14th. Please do your best to observe this fast to the best of your abilities. This fast in honor of the Mother of God's "Dormition," is one of the four major fasting periods of the Church.

❖ We will observe the **Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ**, which the Church observes on August 6th, on Sunday August 10th with the blessing of the grapes

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

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THE TORCHBEARER

is the Bi-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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Sunday Services: Matins 9:00 a.m.; Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
(Summer hours from June 15th – August 31st: Divine Liturgy at 9:30 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.

The deadline for the September/October issue of *The Torchbearer* will be announced

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