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# THE TORCHBEARER

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

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January/February 2004

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From the Pastor...

Some Things You Should Know while in Church (**part 1**)

by Father David Barr

***Standing vs. Sitting*** The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church has been to stand. In the Orthodox "old countries," there are usually no pews in the churches. Chairs or benches on the sidewalls are usually reserved for the elderly and infirm. In North America, we have tended to build our churches with pews, and since we have them, we need to figure out when we may sit and when we should stand. First of all, it is fully acceptable (even preferable) to stand for the entire service. If you prefer this, it would be better to find a place closer to the back or side of the church so as not to stand out or block someone's view. When should you definitely stand? Always during the Gospel reading, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora, the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal. In many parishes, the Divine Liturgy books in the pew have suggested times when sitting is acceptable. Follow those instructions (it's probably safer than to follow what the people are doing in the first couple of rows). When in doubt, stand. It is never wrong to stand in church.

***Lighting Candles*** Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the church - and that is usually the best time to light them, but there are times when candles should not be lit. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle or Gospel readings, during the Little or Great Entrances, the sermon, and most of the times when the faithful are standing. If you

find yourself arriving to church after the Liturgy has begun, a good rule of thumb to remember is - if everyone is standing, wait until they are sitting to light a candle (unless they are sitting for the sermon, of course). Other than that it is probably all right to light a candle.

***Entering the Church (Late)*** The time to arrive at church is before the service starts, but for some unknown reason, it has become the custom - or rather the bad habit - for some to come to church late. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly - and observe what is happening. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished to quickly find a seat. If Father is giving the sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded. If in doubt, check with one of the ushers to see if it is a good time to seat yourself. Try not to interrupt the Liturgy with your entrance. By the way, the best way to avoid this problem is to arrive on time - then you don't have to wonder if it's okay to come in or not. People who come late to the Liturgy should not partake of the Eucharist!

***Crossing those Legs?*** In some Orthodox cultures, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered to be very disrespectful. In our North American culture, while there are no real taboos concerning crossing one's legs, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable while sitting. Should we cross our legs in church? No. Not because it is "wrong" to ever cross legs, but rather because it is too casual - and too relaxed - for being in church. Just think about it, when you get settled in your favorite chair at home, you lean back, cross your legs, and then your mind can wander anywhere it wants to. Remember that sitting in church is a concession, not the normative way of prayer. You surely don't want to get too relaxed and let your mind wander off too much. In fact, when you do sit in church, you should sit attentively - and not too comfortably. When sitting in church, keep those feet on the floor, ready to stand at attention (which is what "Let us attend" means). Cross yourself with your fingers and hand - but don't cross your legs!

***In and Out*** In and out? It's a hamburger place in LA, but shouldn't be the traffic pattern by the back door during services. On some Sundays, it almost seems like we have a revolving door in the back of the church - and it is used by both children and adults. Use the restroom before coming to church. You shouldn't need to get a drink

of water during the service (especially if you are taking Communion!). Don't come to church to go to the fellowship hall - come to pray. **(To be continued...)**

Father David Barr is rector of Holy Resurrection Antiochian Orthodox Church in Tucson, Arizona appeared in **The Word**, January 1997, pp. 4-7.



### Liturgical notes...

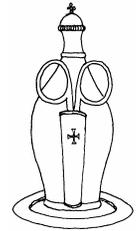
- ❖ To celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Theophany, the blessing of water will take place on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Great Lent starts on Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> and Holy Pascha (Easter) is on Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. More information will follow in the next issue of *The Torchbearer*. Please note the Lenten services on the February calendar.

### Church Records...

#### ***"The seal of the Holy Spirit"***

Nicholas George Mardo and Alexander Edward Mardo were chrismated on October 26, 2003

***Many Years!***

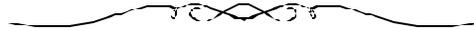


#### ***"Blessed are they whom thou has chosen and taken O Lord!"***



Robert M. Hamwey (70) fell asleep in the Lord on October 23, 2003. His wife, two daughters and two sons and their families survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

***Memory Eternal!***



## From the Executive Board Chair...

Seasons Greetings,

On behalf of the Executive Board I would like to wish each and every family a Joyous Holiday Season.

Well we have the Bazaar behind us and hopefully you all enjoyed yourselves as much as I did. It was a lot of work for all of us and I would like to thank all that participated and all that attended, without all of your help in any way that you could it would not have been the great success that it was. The final numbers are not in yet but we did very well.

Unfortunately with the weather our Feast day had to be postponed but we will reschedule it for another Sunday this month. Hope you all made it through the blizzard without incident. Although I do not have much to report I didn't want this opportunity to thank you all for your participation to pass without at least expressing my thanks and to again wish you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Alan Cardoos

## From the Virgin Mary Society...

We hope that you all enjoyed the Holiday season with your families.

As we begin the New Year, our next project is the annual "Sfeeha Sale" in March. The order forms are in this newsletter and at the bengari in January. Please return our forms as soon as possible. The deadline date for orders this year is March 14th, 2004. Pick up date is Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Due to the inclement weather we are having, we cannot accept orders after March 14<sup>th</sup>. (It would be greatly appreciated if your orders are picked up after Liturgy on March 28<sup>th</sup> or before. Our annual Lenten dinner is scheduled for Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. More details to follow.

Wishing you a Happy and Blessed New Year, I remain

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 Bowl Sunday Bake Sale on February 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch...

In December 2004, St. John of Damascus Church will be blessed with a visit from His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip. The Order would like to honor his visit with the induction of as many new members as possible. Over the course of the year, the Order would like to let the parish know about the many great programs supported by the Order, to "separate fact from fiction," as Fr. John says. Please look over the budget for this year, and see for yourself where the money goes. And, please be receptive to a visit or call from a member of the Order from St. John's, who will be asking for your membership.

***The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch  
Statement of Project Contribution  
Fiscal Year ending Jan. 31***

<b>Project</b>	<b><i>FY2004</i></b>	<b><i>FY2005</i></b>
Antiochian House of Studies	\$ 25,000	\$25,000
Antiochian Village Camp		
a. Cabins		150,000
b. Renovation of Kitchen	100,000	100,000
<b><i>Antiochian Village Heritage &amp; Learning Center</i></b>		
a. Library Books	15,000	15,000
b. Museum Operations	15,000	15,000
c. Building Fund - Phase III	50,000	50,000

Archdiocesan Administrative Services	115,000	115,000
Assistance to Proposed Missions	5,000	
Balamand Theological Academy	30,000	30,000
Christian Education Endowment Fund	25,000	25,000
Christian Education Fund	40,000	40,000
Clergy Symposium & Convention Assistance	24,000	24,000
College Conference	20,000	25,000
<i>Departmental Grants</i>	10,000	10,000
IOCC	25,000	25,000
Marriage and Parish Family Ministries		30,000
Missions and Evangelism	125,000	125,000
Missions and Evangelism Endowment Fund	25,000	25,000
Orthodox Christian Prison Ministries	10,000	10,000
Parish Development Fund	25,000	25,000
Project Mexico	15,000	15,000
Retired Clergy Housing Allowance	140,000	150,000
St. Romanos Chorale		5,000
Summer Camp Scholarships	80,000	80,000
Task Force for Jerusalem	30,000	30,000
Teen SOYO Special Olympics	8,000	8,000
Theophany School	10,000	
The Treehouse Orthodox Family Ministries	10,000	
Youth Ministry	115,000	115,000
Youth Ministry Endowment Fund	25,000	25,000
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<i>Total Project Contributions</i>	<b>\$1,117,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,292,000</b>

**Church of St. John of Damascus**

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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 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

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