
THE TORCHBEARER

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

November/December 2004

From the Pastor...

Home Improvement

By

Fr. Ted Pulcini

This past summer, on the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, I based my homily on the Epistle reading from 1 Corinthians 3, where St. Paul compares the Christian life to the process of building an edifice: “You are God’s building”(v. 9), he asserts. The most important part of the building, the foundation, has been provided for us; it is none other than Christ himself. But on that foundation each of us is required to build: “Let each man take care how he builds upon it” (v. 10). The work each of us does will be judged. Then the whole world will see whether we have built with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble (v. 12). It is important, therefore, that we build well.

I would have little trouble convincing any of you to build your house well, with the best materials and the finest craftsmanship. Businesses like Lowe’s and Home Depot, popping up all over the country and doing a steady business wherever they open their doors, are a testimony to our concern with our physical dwellings. But are we even remotely as concerned with building our spiritual dwelling, that edifice in which God wishes to dwell? I dare say few of us are. Even if our home is palatial, our spiritual edifice is often a ramshackle, verging on collapse, easily blown over by even the slightest storm that hits it.

What St. Paul says applies both to individuals and communities. Each of us individually makes himself or herself a temple of the Spirit; and all of us jointly, as a local congregation, build an arena in which the Spirit operates. Now is the time for all of us, both individually and communally, to engage in some serious “home

improvement.” The beginning of the ecclesiastical year (1 September) is a great time to undertake this new project.

The Church has all the materials you will need. As I said earlier, the foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, has been provided through the ministry of the Church. And the building blocks and furnishings are the constitutive elements of our parish life:

1. study of the Faith, especially the Scriptures
2. liturgical participation
3. fellowship
4. service to others
5. ascetical discipline, especially fasting
6. personal prayer

These building materials are abundant. Come take all you need to build a worthy edifice for the God who, though the heavens cannot contain him, deigns to dwell in and among us!

This fall, therefore, tend to your spiritual dwelling. If it needs repair, provide it. Avail yourself of our parish’s various opportunities to study, to pray, to serve, to discipline your spiritual energies. Start your children and grandchildren on their “spiritual building project”; help them to build for eternity – especially through your example of how seriously you take the matter of your own spiritual “home improvement”!

Liturgical notes . . .

- ❖ Please remember that the Christmas Fast begins on Monday, November 15th. Like other Lenten periods, the Church calls us to increase (or even start) our efforts in prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor. It is also the perfect time to have your Confession heard. Confessions are heard on Sunday morning from 8:40 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. or by appointment. Please note, as in past years, confessions will *not* be heard on Christmas Eve. Let’s all do something to prepare us for our Lord’s birth! (Liturgy for Christmas will be December 24th @ 6 pm).

❖ It is the teaching of the Holy Orthodox Church that only those Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, recent confession, and fasting (and being on time for church) should approach the chalice. It is likewise the teaching of the Church that our non-Orthodox guests and friends should not approach the chalice or that Orthodox Christians cannot and should not take communion in non-Orthodox Churches.

Church Records...

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

Alexander C. Sahely and Donna Kiley were united in marriage on September 18th, 2004. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Framingham.

Many Years!



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

Marcus Morris of Hyde Park was baptized on September 19th, 2004.

Evan James, child of Scott and Marilyn (Maloof) of Westwood, was baptized on October 3rd, 2004.

Many Years!



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

Joseph S. Ayoub (87) of Boston fell asleep in the Lord on August 25th. His wife, two sons and their families survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Nicholas A. Derany (66) of Needham fell asleep in the Lord on September 17th. His wife, two daughters, and their families survive him. Burial was at Needham Cemetery in Needham.

Mary Kurko (92) of Boston fell asleep in the Lord on October 4th. Her nieces and nephews survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!

From the Order of St. Ignatius...

"Where there is no vision, the people perish"

Proverbs 29:18



Have you ever thought that God may be calling you to participate in the good works of our beloved Archdiocese through The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch?

The generosity of the more than 3,000 men and women already involved has greatly advanced Orthodoxy and strengthened the Archdiocese for a new century of service. For example, The Order of St. Ignatius has made funds available to assist missions and small churches in the seven regions to enable the Pastors of such small communities to attend the their regional conferences, the clergy symposium and conventions. This is a real and concrete help for Priests who are struggling to build mission parishes and simply cannot afford to participate. Yet, these Priests are the ones who most need to be together with their brother Priests for inspiration and encouragement! Now this has become a possibility for them.

The Order also donates to "The Village", Project Mexico, Prison Ministry, Campus Ministry and many other worthwhile ministries in and out of our Archdiocese. The Order virtually touches all of us in some way. Since its inception in 1976, The Order has donated over \$14 million to various charities and departments of the Archdiocese.

Our Metropolitan PHILIP's goal for 2004 is that there will be over 3,000 members in the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch! I hope you will consider this kind of investment in the future. Certainly, we at St. John's have been blessed

abundantly by Metropolitan PHILIP's vision and leadership and by our being part of this God-protected Archdiocese.

His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP will be receiving commitments from those interested in The Order when he is at our parish for our Feast Day during the weekend of December 3-5, 2004.

If **YOU** are interested and would like to go forward, then I'm inviting you to get in touch with me for more information.

Fr. John K. Teebagy

From the Church Office...

Please read...Please read...Please read...Please Read...Please read

Pledge Forms for 2005 will be sent out in the coming weeks. As in the past, we ask that everyone who considers St. John's "their church" to return this form. As always, the amount you pledge is confidential. It is from your response, that the Finance Committee can prepare the year 2005 budget. **Failure to return the Pledge Form will result in your pledge being *automatically* set by the computer at a default pledge of \$421 per year. Please help the church office help you avoid any confusion or misunderstanding by sending this form back. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation!**

Please read...Please read...Please read...Please Read...Please read

From the Choir...

I would like to thank the many new choir members who have joined us this year and to those who have continued this ministry with dedication and faithfulness. It is delightful to be their choir director.

On behalf of the choir members, we hope that your participation in the Divine Liturgy has been spiritually uplifting with the new hymns and the return of some old ones. We have been working diligently in weekly rehearsals to continue to

expand the music in the Divine Liturgy as well as preparation for the Christmas Pageant and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in December.

Additionally, many choir members have been rehearsing for the New England Region Christmas Concert and recording that are taking place under the direction of our regional choir director, David Franciosi.

If you have even the slightest desire to sing, please do not hesitate to join us. **We need at least 7 new members to reach our enrollment goal this year.** All voice parts are welcome. Rehearsals are on Sundays before Liturgy. With many new opportunities to sing in the next few months, won't you join us? Please feel free to contact me after Liturgy or call me at (617) 489-9456.

Mark Haddad

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

The Annual Senior Citizen Christmas Luncheon, for those 65 and older, will be held on Sunday, December 12th, immediately following Liturgy. Watch for your invitation in the mail. Please call *Barbara Khouri at 617.323.4463* if your invitation hasn't arrived by mid November. The Fellowship of St. John the Divine would like to thank those who helped make their Lobster Dinner on October 6th the success that it was.

From the Teens...

All teens are welcomed and encouraged to attend our meetings, which are held once a month. We have a great group of kids and do many fun things. We would welcome you! For more information, please email me at bhawks43@yahoo.com. On behalf of the teens, I want to wish all of you a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas!

Tim O'Hara

Announcements...

❖ **FYI...** In 2005, the date of Orthodox Easter is May 1st Great Lent begins on March 14th.

❖ **BULLETIN** The deadline for the November 28th bulletin will be *Tuesday, November 23rd at 10 am*. The deadline for the bulletins for Christmas Eve and Sunday, December 26th will be *Tuesday December 21st at 10 a.m. SHARP*. These deadlines must be strictly adhered to – please plan ahead. The office will close at noon on December 24th and will reopen on Monday, December 27th. The deadline for the January 2nd bulletin will be *Wednesday, December 29th at 10 a.m. SHARP*.

❖ **ROBERT P. ZAHKA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:** Attention college freshman. Applications are now being accepted for the Robert P. Zahka Memorial Scholarship. The purpose of this Scholarship is to recognize and acknowledge those students who have excelled in service to the Church of St. John of Damascus and their Orthodox Faith. Each year a scholarship award is presented to that student who has been most exemplary in his or her Church participation and commitment. Awards are presented in conjunction with the Annual Feast Day Celebration in December. Any college freshman that is a member of the Church of St. John of Damascus is eligible to apply. Applications are available at the Church Office. **Application deadline is November 21st, 2004.**

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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 January/February 2005 *Torchbearer* will be **November 19th**.

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



KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY

Today the virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent in essence; the earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One; the angels with the shepherds glorify him; and the Magi with the star travel on their way; for a new child hath been born for our sakes, God before the ages.

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world for they that worshipped the stars did learn therefrom to worship thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest thou didst come O Lord, glory to thee.