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# THE TORCHBEARER

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

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January/February 2005

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From the Pastor...

## **Why do bad things happen to good people?**

**By**

**V. Rev. John Memorich**

Someone asked this question recently: "Why do bad things happen to good people; especially with regards to small children and babies. The answer is rather simple but I am afraid that simple answers are not always acceptable to some. The reason these bad things exist in life is because way back in the Garden of Eden when life itself was created man chose to turn away from God. It's as simple a fact as that, unfortunately. In the very moment of that first sin, mankind, by his own choice, was cut off from a perfect union/communion with God again, by man's own doing. It never meant that God loved us any less or that God somehow keeps punishing us by sending diseases, accidents, and other forms of ruination to rain down upon us! God created man and wanted His children to be in communion or in perfect harmony with Him always but, of our own free choice and decision rather than by conscription. However, we/us/man chose to disobey those rules God set before us, and we have been continuing to do this ever since that fateful day in the garden with that fate-filled bite of forbidden fruit! Bad things happen because we live in a fallen world riddled with sin. And there will continue to be bad things that happen - even to those who really, really love God, say their prayers, or go to church. This is simply just a consequence of the sinful, fallen nature of our corrupted world as it has come to exist. Loving God, saying prayers, and going to church doesn't mean that you will have any type of special force field protecting you from bad things such as disease, accidents, or death. It does mean, however, that you are indeed doing what mankind is expected to do to trust in God, giving Him continued glory, honor and praise, all the while bearing your cross honorably, keeping steadfast in the Faith, and sustaining your hope in a life hereafter. It is a shame that we see such terrible distress, sadness, sickness, and disaster in the world of today; which, by the way, has become even more magnified because of a global media. And it truly tugs at our heartstrings to know that

such things even happen to small children and innocent babies. These realities are not pleasant in the least, but they are the realities of sin, none-the-less. Perhaps this is why the French philosopher and theologian, Pascal, once wrote that, As Christ wept at the tomb of His beloved friend Lazarus, our Lord continues to weep for each of us [in our fallen state] until the Day of His Second Coming (Note: I paraphrased this quote from memory). Never the less, we must remember and maintain that all of this badness comes to us through the prompting of the Devil himself. And every time someone loses hope, forsakes their faith, leaves the Church, gets angry with God or blames Him for what has happened in essence miserably failing the acid-test of true faith the Devil wins yet another convert to his legions. The stakes of our eternal salvation are way too high to allow the Devil to make an end run around our spiritual barricades. We simply cannot afford to let this happen. Unlike the body, the soul is an eternal being and there is indeed much beyond the narrow scope of this physical life, as we know it. Never allow Satan the opportunity to gain yardage, let alone to win points in his favor! Keep fighting the good fight and strive to forever entreat God with this simple prayer: Lord, I believe - but in my moments of doubt, suffering and feelings of utter helplessness and abandonment have mercy on me, let me know you re there, and help me!

*(Fr. John Memorich is the pastor of Archangel Michael Church in Cleveland, Ohio)*



## Liturgical notes...

- ❖ To celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Theophany, the blessing of water will take place on Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Great Lent starts on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> and Holy Pascha (Easter) is on Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. More information will follow in the next issue of *The Torchbearer*.

## Church Records...

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

Edmund "Ted" Clark and Lauren George were united in marriage on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Medford.

*Many Years!*



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

Jacqueline Grace, child of Joseph and Mirna (Battikha) Zelic of Mansfield, was baptized on October 24, 2004.

Jessica Ann, child of James and Marlene (Ahto) of Dedham, was baptized on November 21, 2004

*Many Years!*



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

Constance Affsa (77) of Weymouth fell asleep in the Lord on November 4<sup>h</sup>, 2004. Her husband, two daughters and two sons and their families survive him. Burial was at Pine Hill Cemetery in Quincy

***Memory Eternal!***



From the Executive Board Chair...

Hello

It is hard to believe just how fast this year seems to be flying by. The bazaar has come and gone and Feast Day with the Metropolitan is just around the corner. The bazaar was another great success, thanks to all who participated in any way you could, with a special thank you to the co-chair women who organized this year's affair Paula, Sheila and Kathy. And to each and every person who attended the affair, thank you for your support and we hope you enjoyed yourselves. The only good thing for me that the year is moving so fast is that spring is right around the corner.

Again, our Feast Day weekend will be upon us before you know it and I know the women running that, Debbie and Gail, would love to hear from you in the form of plans for the afternoon festivities with the children and our Hufli Saturday evening. Please help out and make your reservations as soon as possible. Look for information in the weekly bulletins.

Come out, enjoy yourselves and spend a little time with Metropolitan Philip, I am sure he would love to see us all.

Many people have been concerned about the sound system for the hall. I will let you know what I know about it. We hope to have it in before the Feast Day celebrations but if not it should be installed shortly after. Arthur has been working diligently on this project to assure us that we are getting what we need for the hall and I believe he has narrowed it down so that it is only a matter of installation now. I have to apologize for the delays on the sound system but shortly it will be complete and the last of the tasks involving that fundraiser will be done. Time to move on to bigger and better things to come!

We have been tossing around ideas about the Churches 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which will be coming soon, 2007. I am also open for suggestions from anyone who has any ideas of what they would like to see happen for this particular celebration. I know I have mentioned it before and have had a little response, very little response, but I would love to hear from anyone. We are not sure what exactly is going to be done for this event but hopefully it will be a weekend, week or day worthy of the past 100 years. Nothing like setting too high of an expectation!

To all of you going south have a safe, healthy and Happy Holiday Season and we will see you in the spring. For those of you not going away and toughing the winters out here, also have a great Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, and New Years and I am sure we will see each other soon. Thank you again for all the hard work you do to insure we are here for the 100<sup>th</sup> year and beyond.

Sincerely yours,

A Ian Cardoos

From the Virgin Mary Society...

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

As we begin the New Year, our next project is the annual "Sfeeha Sale" in April. The order forms will be in the next newsletter and at the bengari in February. Please return your forms as soon as possible. The deadline date for orders this year is April 3<sup>d</sup>. Pick up date is Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. (It would be greatly appreciated if your orders are picked up after Liturgy on April 10<sup>th</sup> or before. Our annual Lenten dinner is scheduled for Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Watch for more details.

Wishing you a Happy and Blessed New Year, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Lillian K houri

## 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 6<sup>th</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.

## From The Choir...

Our annual fundraiser, the Choir Christmas Card, was a huge success. Members of the choir greatly appreciate all of the donations made as it gives us the funds to continue to enhance our music library and purchase more music stands as the choir continues to grow in membership.

The much anticipated regional recording of The Divine Liturgy is available for sale at the Religious Articles booth. All proceeds from the sale of the recording benefit the IOCC.

As always, we continue to welcome new members to the choir. Rehearsals are Sunday morning before liturgy and is a 3-week per month commitment. Please contact Mark Haddad for more information at (617) 489-9456 or [choir@stjohnd.org](mailto:choir@stjohnd.org).

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**THE TORCHBEARER**  
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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 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

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

