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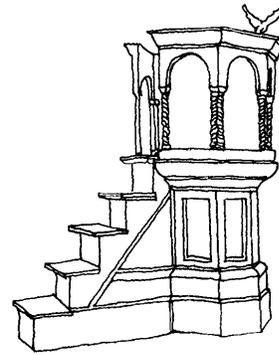
# THE TORCHBEARER

Great Lent, 2005

## An Introduction to Great Lent

Excerpts from Fr Alexander Schmemmann's *Great Lent*

When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Easter, "the Feast of Feasts." It is the preparation for the "fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Easter, for it reveals something very essential, very crucial about our Christian faith and life.



Is it necessary to explain that Easter is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens *to us*. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift, which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a *passage* — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory. [...]

Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? [...] We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and

ultimately meaningless — a meaningless journey toward a meaningless end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

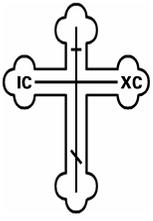
If we realize this, then we may understand what Easter is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that *new life* which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. [...] This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new." [...] For each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Easter; it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our Lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!"

*Great Lent* is published by St Vladimir's Seminary Press. *Great Lent* is available from the Bookstore, by calling 1-800-204-2665 or [svspress.com](http://svspress.com)

## Church Records...

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



Robert Cahaly, son of Robert and Kimberly (Cahaly) Klauzinski of Westwood was baptized on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Connor Fareed, son of Phillip and Stephanie (Murphy) Lynch of Stoughton was baptized on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005.

Daniel Michael, son of Derek and Jennifer (George) Tawa of Quincy was baptized on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

***Many Years!***



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

Mary S. Cardoos (85) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Two sons, a daughter, and their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

***Memory Eternal!***



From the Virgin Mary Society...

Once again, the Virgin Mary Society will soon begin baking for our annual sfeeha sale. Order forms are in this issue of *The Torchbearer* and at the bengari; you may also call the church office for the forms. The deadline for orders is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the pick up date is April 10<sup>th</sup>.

The Virgin Mary Society will sponsor our *Annual Lenten Dinner*, which is scheduled for Friday evening, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 5:30-7 p.m. Proceeds from this dinner will go to AOCWNA's 2005 project, which is the Clergy Retirement Fund. The menu is as follows: Emjudarra (Lentils), Salad, Baked Fish, Spinach Pies, Dessert and Coffee. Donation is: \$10.00 per adult/ or \$5.00 per child. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

For reservations please call Lillian Khouri at 781.237.1655 or Mary in the church office at 781.326.3046.

Yours in Christ,  
Lillian Khouri, President, Virgin Mary Society

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

Thank you to all who baked for our Super Bowl Sunday Bake Sale to benefit the Children's Relief Fund and the sponsorship of Christian Kalache of Beirut, Lebanon.

The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch...

We would like to welcome our new members to the Order, inducted in December 2004 by Metropolitan Philip during St. John's Feast Day Weekend: Loretta Borghi, sponsored by Laura Veo, Nancy Close, sponsored by Lillian Cronin, Michele Gallelo, sponsored by Louella Cardoos, Cynthia Haddad, sponsored by Karen Winstanley-Noonan, Diane Kaleel, sponsored by Olivia Waishek, Marilyn Kurban, sponsored by Christine Bezreh, Elizabeth MacNeil, sponsored by Cynthia Capobianco, Ghada Massabni, sponsored by Joan Teebagy, Brenda Nashawaty, sponsored by Elias Ede, and Carolyn Nashawaty, sponsored by Ernestine Ede. One member was anonymous, for a total of 11 new members. The total membership from St. John's is 42.

The Village Campers, with the assistance of The Order, presented Metropolitan Philip with a check for \$1,000 for the Antiochian Village building fund.

We were happy to also welcome Dan Abraham, Vice Chair of The Order and his wife Kathy, Membership Co-Chair, to the Feast Day Weekend. Metropolitan Philip, Dan and Kathy, and Father John Teebagy, newly appointed Spiritual Advisor to New England Region, joined us for the annual regional Christmas Dinner and Meeting.

On December 18, St. Ignatius Sunday was celebrated with a coffee hour. Members proudly wore their crosses that day.

As you may know, International Orthodox Christian Charities was very active in raising funds for tsunami relief. What you may not know is that the Order of St. Ignatius is one of the single largest contributors to IOCC. The Order is also a major

sponsor of the annual College Conference, which allows participants to be with other Orthodox college students. The Order provides an annual grant, which covers the cost of speakers and special activities, and also provides over \$10,000 for scholarships to Antiochian students who, without that assistance, may not have the opportunity to attend.

Complete information about the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch is available on the Archdiocese Web Site ([www.antiochian.org](http://www.antiochian.org)) including detailed information about where the budget is spent.

From the Choir...

Make music ministry part of your Lenten journey by joining the choir. If you have even the slightest desire to sing, please do not hesitate to become a member. All voice parts are welcome. Regular rehearsals are on Sundays before liturgy. Holy Week rehearsals will take place on three consecutive Wednesdays, April 6, 13, 20 from 7:00-9:00 in the choir loft. 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

Lenten Liturgical Notes & *Announcements*...

❖ **Confession** - *Great Lent* is the perfect opportunity for you to receive Confession, especially if you plan on receiving the Eucharist on Palm Sunday (April 24<sup>th</sup>) and Pascha (May 1<sup>st</sup>). Confession is available *before* all Lenten services, during Matins on Sunday mornings (8:40 –9:40 am) or by appointment. Please don't wait until the last minute to come to confession! In addition, because of the many extra responsibilities Fr. John will have during Holy Week, he **WILL NOT** be able to hear Confessions on Palm Sunday morning or from Holy Wednesday on (i.e. Holy Tuesday is the last chance for Confession for Pascha). So please plan accordingly!



**Church of St. John of Damascus**

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**THE TORCHBEARER**

**is the Monthly Newsletter of the Church of St. John of Damascus**

*A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*

The Very Rev. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

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**Services:** Sunday-Matins 9:00 a.m.,  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 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 **May/June, 2005 Torchbearer**  
will be April 12<sup>th</sup> . This will be the final Newsletter until September 2005.

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