
THE TORCHBEARER

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

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005

From the Pastor... As I write this, I have just returned from the archdiocese convention in Detroit and am preparing to go on vacation to visit Khouria Joan's family in Canada. Summer time at St. John's is quiet in one sense yet busy in another. Church school graduation in May was a wonderful "end" to the church year. Rachel Sabbag was the first recipient of the "St. John's scholarship." We saw first hand the fruit of the labors of the church staff and teachers and the incredible work of the students. Special note must be made of the parents who bring the children each week. Thank you for taking your responsibilities so seriously.

In June, St. George, Lowell, hosted the annual parish life conference. St. John's was very well represented! Matthew Bezreh and Shannon O'Hara represented us in the oratorical festival; Tim O'Hara, Elizabeth Teebagy, and David Hazerjian represented us in the bible bowl; Ghada Massabni, Laurie Bradley, and Joan Teebagy represented us in the bible bowl in the adult division. Of the six scholarships that were given, *three* went to St. John's. The recipients were: Greg McGowan, who will attend Vanderbilt, Nicole Leotsakos, who will attend Salem State, and Rachel Sabbag, who will attend Westfield State. Finally, congratulations go to Christine Bezreh, who was elected regional chair of St. Ignatius and Marilyn Kurban, who was elected vice president of the Antiochian Women.

In July, we welcomed the new members and officers of the Executive Board and thanked the outgoing members and officers. Below, you can see the names of the new officers and members of the board. I also have met with and have been in constant contact with Nancy Close, as we prepare for church school in the fall.

Now it is August and the church's and pastor's calendars are filling up with events. Soon, the devoted women of the VMS will start their cooking and baking for our bazaar, the choir will again sing at the liturgy, the church school and altar servers will be present, and things will be "back to normal." This is good because it shows that this parish family is alive not dead.

As I begin my 14th year of service to you, I want to thank all those who labor and sacrifice for the well being of this God protected parish. Where has the time gone? When Khouria Joan and I came here on August 5th, 1992, Alexander was 2; he is now 15 and entering the 10th grade; Elizabeth was 2 months; now she is 13 (*PLEASE* pray for me!) and entering 8th grade, and Nathaniel, now 11, wasn't even born yet. St. John's is only church they have ever know. I came here when I was 29 years old and a priest

for only 3 years. Now I am 42 and in my 17th year as a priest. I have grown so much as a husband, father, priest, and person. I can only hope that God will judge my priesthood with love and mercy and allow me to enjoy eternal life with Him in His heavenly kingdom with you my fellow sojourners.

With my love and prayers, I remain

Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

Liturgical notes:

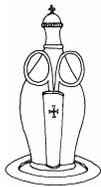
❖ We will return to our regular liturgical schedule on Sunday, September 11th, which is the observance of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, with Matins at 9 a.m., the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. Confession is offered from 8:45-9:40 a.m. or by appointment. As a reminder, confession is *NOT* available after Liturgy.

❖ To celebrate the Nativity of the Virgin Mary on September 8th, we will join St. George, Norwood for liturgy on Wednesday, September 7th at 6 p.m. In addition, for the Elevation of the Holy Cross on September 14th, we will again join St. George, Norwood for liturgy and procession on Tuesday, September 13th at 6 p.m. The procession of the Holy Cross will also take place on September 18th here at St. John's.

❖ **MANY YEARS** to the new officers and members of the Executive Board; they are: Gail Kurker, Chair, Mike O'Hara, Vice Chair, Dan Capobianco, Treasurer, Robert Kurker, Recording Secretary, Christine Bezreh, Corresponding Secretary, Christopher Bradley, Debbie Greenstein, Debbie Leotsakos, Abe Sabbag, Debbie Vogel, and Olivia Waishek. They, along with the returning members of the Board, will be formally installed on September 11th.

Church Records...

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



Madison Alexandria, daughter of Nick and Andrea (Hadge) Saber of Medfield, was baptized on May 8th, 2005.

Sophia Mary, daughter of David and Nancy (Kaaz) Shagoury of Dedham, was baptized on May 15th, 2005.

Many Years!

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



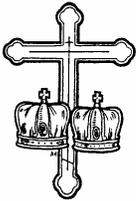
Thomas C. Teebagy, Sr. (73) of Arlington fell asleep in the Lord on May 18th 2005. His wife, two daughters, and two sons survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Kamel Mudarry (83) of Brighton fell asleep in the Lord on June 14th, 2005. His sister, nieces, and nephews survive him. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Nora Hamwey (79) of Roslindale fell asleep in the Lord on July 10th, 2005. Her brother and his family survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!

“O Lord our God crown them with glory and honor!”



Joseph Kirby and Catherine Dufresne were united in marriage on June 10th, 2005. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in West Roxbury.

Raymond and Claire Haddad were united in marriage on June 19th, 2005. We congratulate them as they continue their life together in Cohasset.

Timothy Larkin and Andrea Hamwey were united in marriage on July 16th, 2005. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Walpole.

Michael Roberts and Nicole Rawan were united in marriage on July 30th, 2005. We congratulate them as they begin their new life together in Jamaica Plain.

Many Years!

From the Executive Board Chair...

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For the past several years I have enjoyed the pleasure of membership on the Executive Board. This year I was graciously nominated and elected to the position of President of the Executive Board of St. John of Damascus, a role I am privileged and honored to assume and one I take very seriously.

Before I start, I wish to acknowledge the former President, Alan Cardoos for the many accomplishments achieved under his direction of the Executive Board. We have benefited greatly from his guidance and leadership. I look forward to his continued guidance and support as a member of the Executive Board and participant on the Advisory Committee to provide continuity with board issues. I respectfully offer my gratitude to Alan and all of the past Presidents and board members for the continued growth and prominence of our Church, a product of intensive work over nearly 100 years.

The coming year offers many new and exciting challenges for the Board and the Parish membership. We are looking forward to beautifying the front of our church, while enhancing safety for the parishioners and providing improved access for the handicapped. Further we are embarking on a kitchen renovation that will ensure a safe, clean, and efficient kitchen that will be ready in time for our annual bazaar. Clean, cost effective propane will power not only the kitchen, but also many of the heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems of our church, church school and halls, providing significant utility cost savings to the church. This year's Feast Day will be celebrated through an extended coffee hour on December 4th. Additionally, the board is sponsoring a coffee hour on September 18th to honor our ladies of the VMS.

I welcome Mike O'Hara as my Vice President. We have established goals and will constitute and charge committees to advise and recommend the proper path forward to the board in their selective areas of interest. For instance, we will constitute and charge a committee with the preparation of our upcoming 100th year anniversary. Under the leadership of Tom Sabbag and with support of all the parishioners, the celebration of our 100th anniversary will have both the dignity and prestige deserved by its membership. We welcome each of you to participate on this or one of the many other committees to help improve our church. We are currently looking for support on all of our committees, especially for the 100th Anniversary Committee and a chairperson for the bazaar committee. We are also looking for volunteers to assist with the ballroom dancing. If interested, please contact Gail Kurker or Mike O'Hara.

Mike & I will communicate with the parish members on a regular basis via newsletter and e-mail to keep you apprised of the progress of activities and to mark key accomplishments of the parish.

On behalf of the Executive Board, we thank you for taking the time to read this letter and look forward to a successful year forged by your attendance at church and participation on one or more of our committees.

With eternal love in Christ,

Gail Kurker and Mike O'Hara

From the Virgin Mary Society... Now that summer is almost over, we hope that everyone had a most enjoyable and relaxing one. The ladies of the Virgin Mary Society are once again in the kitchen cooking and baking for our upcoming bazaar. We are in urgent need of your help. If you are able to volunteer a few hours a week on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday from 9 am to 1 pm it would be

greatly appreciated. We also want to sincerely thank all of our parishioners who picked or donated grape leaves. This helps us tremendously. The bazaar is our biggest moneymaker for the year. If anyone has extra grape leaves, please contact Lillian Khouri at 781.237.1655 or Mary at the church office (781.326.3046). ***Yours in Christ, Lillian H. Khouri, President***

From the Church School . . . Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's "**Back to School Time**" once again at St. John of Damascus Church School! We are eager to work with you towards the spiritual education of your children. Classes begin on September 11th for grades Preschool 2 through Grade 10.

We also offer a Preschool 1 class for children who will be three years old by September 1, 2005. This class is organized as a "Parent Cooperative" – all parents of Preschool 1 students help out on a rotating basis. There will be a brief parent meeting on Sunday, October 2nd (during Church School time) to explain how this class operates, set up the parent volunteer schedule, and distribute the curriculum. The first class will be held on October 9th.

Classes begin immediately after Holy Communion. Children will be dismissed from their pews into the Communion line, and then will proceed directly to their classrooms. Adults will be ushered into the Communion line after all children and Church School staff have gone, so that we may start our program as quickly and smoothly as possible. School will be in session until noon each Sunday, at which time children will be sent into the hall area where you can meet them.

In order for children to benefit from our Church School program, regular attendance at the Divine Liturgy and in class is essential. The continuity provided by weekly attendance makes it possible for students to understand, appreciate and embrace our Orthodox faith. **All students who have attained at least 50% attendance during the school year will be awarded a certificate of completion and will be eligible for other awards at graduation on May 21, 2006.** If you have any questions concerning our attendance, please contact me at any time. We have a busy, productive year planned – make sure your kids are part of it! **In Christ, Nancy Close, Church School Director, 978-692-0857 / school@stjohnd.org**

From the Fellowship . . . Mark your calendars for now for the Fellowship's annual Lobster Dinner, which will be held on Wednesday, October 5th from 5-7:30 pm. Details to follow so watch the weekly bulletin and/or the web site.

Order of St. Ignatius... I have just returned from the St. Ignatius General Assembly, held during the Archdiocese Convention in Detroit, Michigan, where I assumed duties as Chairman of the New England Diocese. It is an honor to serve in this capacity.

2006 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Some of you will remember the early years of this organization. How it has grown! We now stand at well over 3,000 members. Since its inception, the Order has contributed over 15 MILLION dollars to Archdiocesan projects. The Order is growing and thriving, and providing resources that make many of these programs possible. In reviewing the statement of project contributions, I am impressed by the number of projects that relate to the future of our church, our young people: Antiochian Village, of course, but also Christian Education, Teen SOYO Special Olympics, Youth Ministry, Missions and Evangelism, Project Mexico, College Conference, Orthodox Youth Outreach, and on and on. Detailed information about project contributions can be found at the archdiocesan web site: <http://www.antiochian.org/Order/projects.htm>

2007 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Church of St. John of Damascus. A goal of "100 by 100" has been set for our parish membership in the Order. A bulletin board with information about the Order will be maintained for the next two years, a wealth of information will be distributed, no stone will be left uncovered in letting you know how important this organization is to the future of our church. If you would like more information about joining, please contact me or any other member of The Order.

Christine Bezreh

From the Parent Guild... We hope this letter finds everyone enjoying the last days of summer. Boy does it go fast. Don't forget that the first day of church school is a welcome back with a BBQ. The cost is \$5 per person or a max of \$20 per family. ***Reservations are a must.*** Please call either the church office or Debbie Leotsakos at 781-762-3110. Hope to see you all there. There will be a Parent Guild meeting on Sept. 25th at 12:00. The calendar for the year and new officers will be discussed. Please make an effort to join us this year. ***See you soon, Debbie Leotsakos and Bertina Kurker co-presidents***

Announcements . . .

- ❖ **MANY THANKS** to all who donated to the Food For Hungry Program. Because of your generosity, the church was able to send \$2,160 to the Archdiocese to help those in need.

- ❖ **ST. GEORGE, WEST ROXBURY** announces their 29th annual bazaar and food fair on October 21st -23rd at their church hall. For more information, please call 617.323.9861.

ANNOUNCING
St. JOHN' S BAZAAR AND AUCTION 2005
November 4th, 5th, and 6th

Thank you St. John's!

Dear Parishioners of St. John's,

Thank you so very much for your overwhelming support that enabled me to spend my Spring Break in Guatemala City at the Hogar Rafael Orphanage. My Real Break team was composed of other Orthodox college students from everywhere from Alaska to Iowa to Arizona. Our very diverse group spent the week painting, playing, and praying.

Our Real Break Team spent most of the time sanding and repainting the playground including the jungle gym, slide, and teeter-totters. We also painted hopscotch and 4-square areas for them. The joy and thankfulness shown by the children over their beautiful playground was indescribable.

The children were, of course, the highlight of being there. Whenever we were not working with the oil paints for the playground, we were divided and sent to help out with various age groups. I was usually with either the infants who wanted to be fed, held, and loved, or the toddlers who wanted the undivided attention of someone to play with them or do their hair.

The week that we were there was coincidentally the first week of Lent. In a monastic community Lent takes on a whole new meaning, including an increase in services to about five hours a day. To see the intensity and joy that filled these children during services, one could see God's healing powers working. Our first day there was Forgiveness Sunday, where each person approaches each other person, prostrates, and asks forgiveness of the other. It was a truly humbling experience to go through this in a church filled with innocent sweet children, and selflessly caring nuns.

Thank you so much for giving me this very deeply spiritual experience. Although I left for the orphanage with the intention of serving, I feel I received so much more than I gave. This week gave me once again a clear vision of God's ability to work in any situation. This would not have been possible without you. As a small thank you for all of your help, there is a photo album filled with pictures, comments, and notes from that phenomenal week in the bengari for you to flip through at your convenience. Thank you. **Yours in Christ, Sarah Jabbour**

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Sunday Services: 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 November/December 2005 Torchbearer will be October 7th.

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