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# THE TORCHBEARER

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

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January/February 2011

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*Some Things You Should Know while in Church* 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.

*Father David Barr is pastor of St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church in Austin, Texas*

## *Church Records...*

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

Philip J. Venuti, Jr. and Melanie Tomeo Venuti were married on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010. We wish them well as they begin their new life together in Dedham.

**Many Years!**



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

+Saleem Hamwey (82) of Roslindale fell asleep in the Lord on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010. He is survived by 1 son and 2 daughters, along with their families. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park

**Memory Eternal!**



*From the Executive Board...* Greetings Fellow Parishioners, We are finishing up a very busy two months in the life of our parish community. At the beginning of October, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the consecration of St. John of Damascus Church in Dedham MA. There was a full house on Saturday night with a delicious Middle Eastern dinner and outstanding parish entertainment. Another full house on Sunday after church with a beautiful extended coffee hour accompanied by some encore acts. And, as I write this, we just completed another successful bazaar which did very well financially supported by one of the best auctions ever. There were some innovative ideas and some old ones back again. A special thank you to Mitch Hallal for chairing the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and to Nancy Close, Sheila Hamwey, and Carol Hazerjian for chairing the bazaar again this year.

Underlying all of this is the community spirit we have when we come together as a parish family. When you think about a community, think about people who spend quality time together, hold a concern for all the members of the community, communicate appreciation for each other, who can be themselves, have fun along the way, laugh at themselves, and crisis and stress are viewed as opportunities for growth. This is what comes to mind for me when I think about St. John's community.

As well as the bazaar did financially, it is equally important for us to be together as a community, helping with the workload and showing up to support the event. That community spirit was there during the Silver Anniversary weekend as well, and so many functions that we enjoy together.

At the same time, we continue to encourage all the members of the parish to help out in some way with your time and talents. There is much to do to support our beautiful complex, and help is always welcome.

May God Bless you and your family as we begin the Advent Season in anticipation of the birth of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Enjoy! Don Khouri II, Chairman, Executive Board

*From Teen SOYO...* St. John of Damascus Teen SOYO is off to a great start this year. This past June, I, Emily Sabbag was elected as president of SOYO and Caitlin Bradley was elected as vice president. Advised by Rachael Sabbag and Erin Daley, this SOYO year is going to be quite eventful. So far, we have performed in the St. John's Silver Jubilee weekend, gone apple picking in Stow, MA and have run the Annual Bazaar Snack Bar. Thanks to everybody who donated food and volunteered their time, the SOYO Snack Bar was quite a success. It turned out to be a very profitable weekend. Brian Hazerjian (SOYO Treasurer), Andrew Hazerjian (SOYO Secretary), Caitlin Bradley, and I expressed our musical talents at the Silver Jubilee weekend, representing SOYO. St. John of Damascus Teen SOYO has also donated several boxes of food to the Dedham Food Pantry thanks to the generous donations of our fellow parishioners.

Teen SOYO has big plans for 2010-2011. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, members of our SOYO will be attending Village at Home in Worcester. This is a day where people who have been to the Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA or want to know what it is like get together and live a day like they are at camp. Here they can perform daily AV activities such as Christian Ed, sports, and Carnival Night. On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011 our Teen SOYO will be holding an in-house retreat at St. John's. This is a night where teens that are in SOYO will be able to bond and get to know each other a little bit better. Although we know each other's names, there is a lot that we do not know about our fellow SOYO members. This in-house retreat will help us learn about the people who could end up being some of our best friends. St. John of Damascus Teen SOYO is off to a great start and we are eager to see what this year will bring.

*From the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch.....* The St. John chapter would like to invite you to participate in its annual fundraiser which will support our sponsorship of

10 year old Tony Srour of Lebanon. During Lent, members will collect donations for our annual Pascha greeting card. This will be an opportunity for you to share Easter greetings with friends and family, as well as support the Children’s Relief Fund. We truly appreciate your support.

In 2011, St. John of Damascus will host the Parish Life Conference. At this time, we hope to induct a large group of members to the Order of St. Ignatius. Membership, which is a lifetime commitment, starts at \$500 per year (\$42 a month which can be automatically deducted from your bank account.) Please consider joining us in this charitable arm of the Archdiocese. One of the most outstanding features of The Order is that almost every dollar collected goes directly to charitable purpose. Only 2% is used for administrative purposes. The Order spends over \$1 million a year to fund many programs in the Archdiocese, including Christian Education, Antiochian Village, College Conference, Youth Department, Married Seminarians, and Clergy Retirement. The Order also helps those in need around the world through International Orthodox Christian Charities, Project Mexico, and others. Since its start in 1976, the Order of St. Ignatius has distributed over \$20 million and now distributes \$1.4 million annually: 38% of the archdiocesan annual budget. For further information, visit <http://www.antiochian.org/order>

*From the Stewardship Committee...*

As Stewards of God we have so much to be thankful for. We are asked to search our hearts each year and give back in gratitude and Thanksgiving for all that God has bestowed upon us. Below is a guideline to help you decide what you are able to provide this year.

| Annual Income    | 1%      | 2%      | 5%      | 10%       |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| <b>\$10,000</b>  | \$ 100  | \$ 200  | \$ 500  | \$ 1000   |
| <b>\$20,000</b>  | \$ 200  | \$ 400  | \$ 1000 | \$ 2000   |
| <b>\$30,000</b>  | \$ 300  | \$ 600  | \$ 1500 | \$ 3000   |
| <b>\$45,000</b>  | \$ 450  | \$ 900  | \$ 2250 | \$ 4500   |
| <b>\$60,000</b>  | \$ 600  | \$ 1200 | \$ 3000 | \$ 6000   |
| <b>\$75,000</b>  | \$ 750  | \$ 1500 | \$ 3750 | \$ 7500   |
| <b>\$90,000</b>  | \$ 900  | \$ 1800 | \$ 4500 | \$ 9000   |
| <b>\$105,000</b> | \$ 1050 | \$ 2100 | \$ 5250 | \$ 10,500 |
| <b>\$120,000</b> | \$ 1200 | \$ 2400 | \$ 6000 | \$ 12,000 |
| <b>\$135,000</b> | \$ 1350 | \$ 2700 | \$ 6750 | \$ 13,500 |

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|------------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>\$150,000</b> | \$ 1500 | \$ 3000 | \$ 7500   | \$ 15,000 |
| <b>\$165,000</b> | \$ 1650 | \$ 3300 | \$ 8250   | \$ 16,500 |
| <b>\$180,000</b> | \$ 1800 | \$ 3600 | \$ 9000   | \$ 18,000 |
| <b>\$200,000</b> | \$ 2000 | \$ 4000 | \$ 10,000 | \$ 20,000 |

**When Enough of God's People Return Enough of His Money to Do His Work - Good Things Happen!**

*Notes...*

❖ **Theophany** To celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Theophany, the blessing of water will take place at the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. For those unable to attend, the blessed water will be available after church on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

❖ **Adult Education** The next adult education series will begin Tuesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 7-8 pm. It will conclude February 15<sup>th</sup>. The topic will be St. Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians.

❖ **Great Lent** starts on Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> and Holy Pascha (Easter) is on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. More information will follow in the next issue of *The Torchbearer*. The deadline for this issue is Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.

❖ **Deadline** for the Lenten issue *Torchbearer* will be February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

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