

THE TORCHBEARER

**The Newsletter of the Church of St. John of Damascus, Dedham, MA
September/October, 2011**

This past June at the Parish Life Conference, hosted by St. John's, our church was ably represented by Caitlin Bradley, Brian Hazerjian, and Paul Cardoos (Junior Division) and Laurie Bradley and Nancy Close (Adult Division) in the Bible Bowl; in the Oratorical Festival, we were equally represented by Elizabeth Teebagy and Caitlin Bradley, who was also the judge's choice. Elizabeth's oratory will be in the next newsletter. Below, please find Caitlin's. Enjoy!

The Orthodox Christian clergy are more than just supporting members of our spiritual communities. They are our friends, our advisers, our fathers. They help us to strengthen our relationships with God, but they also help us to unite with each other on our journey to discovering how God works in our lives and through our lives.

At my home parish, I am grateful that my priest is so encouraging not only to the parishioners in general, but especially to the young people, who are the future of the Church. He is very supportive of our Teen SOYO, and prompts us to hold Vesper services on Friday nights for the parishioners to attend, and he encourages us to stay at the Church over night for the Good Friday Vigil each year. In addition, he sits with our Sunday school classes to answer questions, and gives chapel tours to the students. I have learned so much from him in all my years as a student, and continue to learn from him as I become an adult member of my parish.

Our Orthodox clergy have always been a large part of my spiritual life, from the time I was very young. My first religious Orthodox Christian experience outside my home parish was Vacation Bible School, run by one of our sister parishes in a neighboring community. The priest and his family opened the Church facilities for children to spend a

few weeks during the summer at a day camp. Each day we learned something new about our faith and our lives as Orthodox Christians. I recall those summers surrounded by God's love as well as the love of the pastor and his wife. Whether we were painting scenery for our end-of-session presentation or just sharing a bucket of beads, we campers were immersed in God's love. Each year the priest and his wife chose a different story around which to base the camp activities. One year they taught us all about Noah's ark, another year we learned about Jonah and the whale, and another year the theme was Peter walking on the water with Jesus. The lessons I learned at Vacation Bible School, formally and informally, have stayed with me ever since. I will always remember the experience and the nurturing sense of the Orthodox Christian community that this selfless pastor and his wife fostered.

As I grew older, I was blessed to be able to attend a different type of Orthodox Christian summer camp, the Antiochian Village. At this camp I have been surrounded by clergy who were and continue to be eager to help me with the new spiritual challenges we face as young adults. Day camps and overnight camps are different experiences entirely. At overnight camp, your parents are not with you every night. At ten years old, I

was in a foreign state and away from home for the first time, and I was petrified. But when I stepped out of the car after the ten-hour drive, I saw a priest, easily identifiable in his black clothing with his white collar and warm, reassuring smile. I was comforted by the familiarity, and I *knew* I was somewhere safe.

At the Village, my favorite part of the session is "Ask Abouna". In small groups, we meet with one of the camp priests for an open question-and-answer session. If I have any questions about my faith, gray areas in morality, or the Church's teachings on issues I encounter as a young adult, I feel free to ask in a relaxed, no-pressure environment. I can clear up my confusion while I'm with people my age who are seeking the *same answers*. The priests at the Village are always encouraging, and no question is ever considered dumb or awkward. The clergy are here to help us understand God better. They have studied Theology in order to have a clearer picture of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. I asked a moral question of a priest from camp during this school year, and he responded with a detailed explanation of *why* he gave the answer he did, not a simple "yes" or "no". He wanted to help me, and he wanted me to really understand.

All our priests have descended from Jesus Himself, through the Laying on of Hands, called Apostolic Succession. Jesus sent down the Holy Spirit in tongues of fire onto the Twelve Apostles at Pentecost, who in turn laid their hands on their successors, and so on until the clergy we have with us today. In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus says to Peter: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Here He founds the Church with

Peter as her keeper. In Acts 6:3-4 the Apostles say to the other disciples of Jesus, "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men **of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." A footnote in The Orthodox Study Bible for 6:3 states that these three criteria listed by the Twelve are the qualifications for deacons. Acts 6:5 names seven men chosen to be the first deacons, and 6:6 states "...and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them." Thus began the Laying on of Hands and the start of the wonderful Church Authority we are blessed with as Orthodox Christians today.

Many Orthodox priests I have encountered tailor their sermons to their audiences, because they know it's not "one-size-fits-all". The Orthodox Christian priests I know give interactive "family sermons" to keep the kids involved. Recently, in one of his sermons, my parish priest compared Lent to Spring Training in Major League Baseball, and another priest has made a few references to Jedi, due to the number of Star Wars fans in front of him.

I am blessed to be a member of the Orthodox Christian Church, where our priests are permitted to have families, as my priest does. Priests with children can directly relate to other families. They know what children expect from their parents, for example compassion, patience, or money to go to the mall or to go out to eat. They also know what parents want from their children; to be honest, to help with chores, to work hard in school, and to be back home by curfew. These priests understand what families struggle with, because they have faced the same issues, and may still be facing them. And on a larger scale, the Church is a big

family, and the priest is the father of his parish.

If a child does not obey and respect his parents, he finds himself in trouble. For example, if his parents say to study for the big English test and go to sleep early enough, but the child stays awake playing Wii until 2:30 in the morning, he probably isn't going to do well on his English test, and his report card will reflect that. The *same thing* happens in our spiritual lives. The priest suggests we incorporate more prayer and fasting into our daily lives, and if we do, the rest of our lives will fall into place. But if we don't, and we stray off the path, we'll find ourselves lost. Thankfully, there are deacons, priests, and bishops standing on the path sending up signal flares to help light our way back to the path.

The priests are here to help us, but we're here to *help them help us*. We can show our appreciation for all they have done for us by paying attention to their sermons, attending functions at the Church and especially attending special services held during the week, such as the services throughout Lent and Holy Week. We also show them respect and consideration by making the effort to go to Confession, which can only help us, and by attending Bible studies offered by the priest, or by asking for a Bible Study if it is not already offered. If we show interest in involvement in the Orthodox Church, our clergy will realize that we do not take them for granted. Bring questions to

them about your faith. Remember, the clergy is here for *you*.

In addition to helping our spiritual lives, the clergy help us at work and school. Our spiritual lives interlock with our daily lives, of course, and the clergy observe the way we conduct ourselves in the Church building, and they know how we are capable of behaving, so they are the perfect people to write recommendations for us. Your parish priest may have known you since you were baptized. He has watched you grow, and can testify on your college application that in your Teen SOYO chapter, you were a dedicated member, and gave 110% of your energy at every function, or that as Chairman of the Board, you made certain that no details were overlooked, which is why you would be the best applicant for a business position that you are pursuing.

The clergy is here to help us improve our relationships with God, ourselves, and our brothers and sisters in Christ, because we are a family. Our Orthodox priests help us to grow, just as our own fathers do, and they are our fathers through the appointments made by Jesus, sent to us by our Heavenly Father. Therefore, the Orthodox clergy are truly among our greatest gifts from God. "Be mindful, O Lord of the priesthood, the diaconate and every priestly rank..." (The Anaphora of Basil) and be mindful, fellow parishioners, of all the clergy does each day to help us grow in Christ.

Church Records

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

+ Rose J. Haddad (111) of Natick fell asleep in the Lord on April 29, 2011. She is survived by 3 sons and 1 daughter, along with their families. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

+ Eleanor Ayoub (89) of Milton fell asleep in the Lord on May 25, 2011. She is survived by 2 sons, along with their families. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

+ Diana R. Abdelahad (56) of Roslindale fell asleep in the Lord on August 6, 2011. She is survived by her father and 2 sisters. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!



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

Isaiah, son of Wesley Garvin, Jr. and Corey Lee Porter of Pawtucket, RI, was baptized on June 12th, 2011.

Lucas Daniel, son of Daniel and Lori (Spada) Dirienzo of Franklin, MA was baptized on June 12th, 2011

Many Years!



From the Executive Board Chair Hello, I'm back! For those who have not heard the new executive board chairman, Alan Cardoos, Vice Chair repeating performance Rick Ahto, another repeating performance from Heather Feldman as recording secretary and last but not least David Haddad as our new Treasurer.

I want to thank those who stepped forward both for the position of executive board officers and those who stepped forward as executive board members. We will accomplish much and hopefully we will have fun doing it.

There is so much to do and we will be asking for help. I want to say I look forward to serving the Church again. I will see you soon, look for information on upcoming events in our Sunday bulletins, such as the Remembering the Crusaders Night of food and entertainment, the beginning of our Sunday School year and our Annual bazaar to name a few. Shouldn't we have fun doing what we love to do, socializing with the people we love to be with and worshipping in the church of our choice. God Bless, Alan Cardoos , Executive Board Chairman

From the Virgin Mary Society The members of the Virgin Mary Society are busy preparing for the bazaar. It would be most appreciated if you, male or female, could offer a few hours a week to help. Cooking for the Bazaar has already begun; we work on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

From The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch Welcome to our new members of The Order of St. Ignatius, who were inducted by Bishop Thomas at the Parish Life Conference in June: Christopher Bradley, sponsored by Laurie Bradley; Jimmy Chalhub, sponsored by Jamil Samara; Timothy Gwinn, sponsored by Dennis Rawan; Helen Hamwey, sponsored by Paula Hamwey; Donald Khouri, sponsored by Don Khouri II; and Kathleen Tawa, sponsored by Laurie Bradley.

We also would like to welcome Rt. Rev. Archimandrite John Abdalah, who will serve as the auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Worcester and New England. We look forward to working with our bishop elect to promote The Order.

At the 50th Antiochian Archdiocese Convention in Chicago in July, the following officers were elected to the North American Governing Council of The Order: Mary Winstanley O'Connor, Chair; Elais Hebeka, Vice Chair; Bill Tsoukalas, Treasurer; and Christine Bezreh, Secretary. We warmly and proudly congratulate Mary for being the first woman elected Chair of The Order.

The Order membership nationwide stands at over 4500. Metropolitan Philip has directed Chair Mary Winstanley O'Connor to reach a goal of 5,000 by the 2013 convention. St. John of Damascus parishioners can help by joining The Order, or current members might consider upgrading to Commander or particularly to Life Member. Keep in mind that Life Membership dues of \$15,000 are never spent and generate interest for projects every year.

The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch spends \$1.5 million each year, awarding grants to programs of the Archdiocese as well as needy projects throughout the world. 40% of the Archdiocese budget is provided by The Order. In addition, The Order spends more than \$175,000 per year on camp scholarships, and contributes to Youth Programs, Christian Education, Missions and Evangelism, Prison Ministries, and the IOCC, to name a few. The complete list of grants awarded can be seen at <http://www.antiochian.org/order>

From the Fellowship Many thanks to all who donated to the 2011 Food for Hungry Program campaign. Because of your generosity, the church was able to send \$3,192.38 to the archdiocese to help those in need.

Adult Education A six week session will begin on Wednesday, September 14 at 7 pm. We will continue our study of Clark Carlton's book *The Faith*. All are welcome; please contact Fr. John if you plan on attending for information and to get the reading for the first week.

September Feast Days Two feast days are celebrated in September. To celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Mary (September 8th) and the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross (September 14th), we will gather at St. George, Norwood on September 7th and 13th at 6 pm.



ABBA is delighted to announce that they have had an unprecedented, overwhelming response to "Dancing with the AABA Stars". We should all be proud that the good deeds of AABA and especially our new "Cheriton Heights" has inspired "unity and spirit" in all our people. This event is the first of its kind - having representatives from our sister churches participate as one. We have changed the venue to a new location. The event will be held - same date, same time but at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church Auditorium.

St. George, West Roxbury announces their 35th annual bazaar and food fair on October 21st – 23rd at their church hall. For more information, please call St. George at 617.323.9861.

Snowbirds Before leaving for Florida, please give the office your temporary address and the dates of your stay. This ensures that you get the church's mail in a timely manner and reduces postage costs for the church.

Liturgy We will return to our regular liturgical schedule on Sunday, September 11th, with Matins at 9 a.m. and the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m. Confession is offered from 8:45-9:40 a.m. or by appointment. *On a trial basis, confession will also be offered on the **last Sunday of the month after church.***

Church Office During Bazaar season, the church office will be closed on Wednesdays; after the bazaar, the office will be closed on Mondays. The new office hours are 8 am -2:15 pm. The bulletin deadline remains Thursday at 10 am.

Let's celebrate the start of a new Church School Year with a

BACK TO CHURCH SCHOOL BARBECUE

Sponsored by the Church School Parent Guild



Sunday, September 11, 2011

Directly after Divine Liturgy and Church School
Donation: \$10 Adult/\$5 Children ages 5 – 16 years old

For reservations, please contact:

Carol Hazerjian at 508-660-0072 or chazerjian@verizon.net

Bertina Kurker at 781-721-1647 or email the Church Office

Volunteers needed!

Please contact Carol Hazerjian if you can help.

All are welcome!

Save the date.....

Remembering the Crusaders



*An old fashioned
Smorgasbord
Saturday, October 8th,
2011*



*6 pm sharp in the church hall
Come for a night of.....
delicious Arabic food and mazza, song and
dance by our own artists and many, many other
surprises!*



SAINT JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
Annual Bazaar

NOVEMBER 4TH, 5TH & 6TH 2011

Experience the finest in authentic Middle Eastern cuisine,
including rolled grapeleaves, shish kabob and baklava.

Also featured will be:

- * American food * Snack bar * Middle Eastern & American Pastry
- * Christmas Crafts * Hidden Treasures * Religious Articles
- * Country Store * Almost New Boutique * Patriots Tickets & Money Raffles
- * Used CD's * Children's Games & Crafts

Live Auction on Saturday: Silent Auction all weekend.

Treat yourself to a weekend of culinary delights and enjoy the
excitement that this social gathering is sure to provide.
(Take-Out Available)

Please Join Us..... Don't miss out on the fun!

BAZAAR HOURS

Friday, November 4rd 12:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday, November 5th 10:00am - 9:00pm
Sunday, November 6th 12:00pm - 2:00pm



Legacy Walkway . . .

Paving the way for future generations.

Here's your opportunity to make a lasting impression that will become a permanent part of St. John of Damascus Church. Bricks can be donated by an individual, family or corporation and can recognize, honor or memorialize our loved ones.



All proceeds will go directly to the Building Preservation and Improvement Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Pavers will be laid from the church steps towards the parking lot based on space availability (specific placement not guaranteed). Each brick contains two OR three lines of print with a maximum number of 17 characters per line. Payment must accompany your order form. **Please use one form for.** Please staple forms together for multiple brick orders paid with one check.

____ Brick(s) with 1 or 2 lines of print @ \$200 each for a total of \$ _____

____ Brick(s) with 3 lines of print @ \$300 each for a total of \$ _____

Total of check enclosed \$ _____

Please print clearly with one character per block. Spaces and punctuation count as characters.*

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!
The Church of St. John of Damascus
Centennial Cookbook

We are proud to announce the reprint of the St. John of Damascus Centennial Cookbook. With all of your favorite Arabic and American recipes, this is a treasure to hand down through the generations. There is a limited supply, and our first printing in 2008 was a total sellout: don't be left out!

This is a beautiful, padded hardcover, three-ring binder book. The durable metal binding easily snaps open to allow pages to be added. Each book comes with a bookstand for propping while you are following a recipe. It contains eight categories of recipes: Appetizers and Beverages; Soups and Salads; Vegetables and Side Dishes; Main Dishes (Arabic, other ethnic, and American;) Breads and Rolls; Desserts (including Arabic sweets;) Cookies and Candy; and This and That. There are 350 total recipes from over 100 contributors. Each recipe includes the contributor's name.

The cookbooks will arrive in time for the St. John of Damascus Silver Jubilee as well as the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. This cookbook makes a wonderful gift!

Place your order NOW!

For further information, contact:

Chris Bezreh, 781-449-1230 OR Elaine Sabbag, 617-254-4037

OR cookbook@stjohnd.org

All proceeds from cookbook sales benefit St. John of Damascus Church

Cookbook Order Form
\$25.00 each (Add \$5.00 for shipping)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Number of Books _____

Total _____

Shipping (\$5.00 per book) _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ (Orders MUST be pre-paid)

Mail this form with your enclosed check to: St. John of Damascus Church, 300 West St. Dedham, MA
02026

(All proceeds benefit St. John of Damascus Church)

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THE TORCHBEARER

*is the newsletter of the Church of St. John of Damascus
A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*

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*Church Office Hours...
Tuesday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.
The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is Thursday at 10 a.m.
Please plan accordingly.*

*The deadline for the November/December newsletter is October 5th
Please consult the weekly Sunday bulletin for any changes, corrections, etc.*