
THE TORCHBEARER

The Newsletter of St. John of Damascus Antiochian Orthodox Church of Dedham
300 West Street, Dedham, MA, 02026
781.326.3046/www.stjohnd.org
Archpriest John K. Teebagy, Pastor

November/December 2016

CHRISTMAS MORNING *by St. John Chrysostom*

St. John Chrysostom's homily on the Nativity was delivered during a period of great theological pluralism and fierce debate over the identity and work of Jesus Christ. In this sermon, St. John enlists the words of Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 382-444) to place us securely before the mystery of the one who is both fully God and fully human: "Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man." This view would find normative expression some fifty years after Chrysostom's death in the Chalcedonian Formula faith (451 AD). In our own time of pronounced theological fluidity, may Chrysostom's words help us appreciate the stunning force of the news that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Behold a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed, He had the power, He descended, He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.



Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have

learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech. For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature'. For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.



What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He who cannot be touched, who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infant's bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been 'in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. *Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive.* He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infant's food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.



Church Records...

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

Robert John, son of Keith and Jennifer LaFace of Needham, was baptized on September 18th.

Many Years!



From The Executive Board... Autumn is here, the leaves are changing, the days are getting shorter, and our church calendar is full of events.

For more than 30 years, autumn also means that many of our parishioners have been working tirelessly to prepare for St. John's Annual Bazaar and Auction, which will be held on November 4, 5, and 6. If you look at the church calendar, you will appreciate the many days, evenings, and weekends that the Bazaar Committee, the Virgin Mary Society, and other members of our parish have committed to cooking and working together to make this event a success. There are still many things to do, so if you have not already done so, please volunteer to help in any way; or at least join us for delicious ethnic food and fellowship that weekend.

Our upcoming Christmas season is already full of events. To kick off our feast day weekend and to get us into the Christmas spirit, the Metropolitan Wind Symphony presents the Holiday Pops and Christmas Sing-Along on Saturday, December 3, from 6 to 9 pm. Bishop John will celebrate Liturgy with us on December 4, followed by an extended coffee hour. Over the following weeks, we will enjoy the Senior Christmas Luncheon on December 11, and the Church School Christmas Pageant on December 18.

We are looking forward to a visit from His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph over the weekend of January 28. He will celebrate Liturgy with us at St. John's on January 29. The final schedule for this weekend is being prepared; we will keep you updated.

As you can see, our organizations and committees work very hard to make your church a place to meet with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. Their success is measured by parish participation. So please join us for these events and help our parish grow spiritually and socially. We look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of your Executive Board, I would like to wish you and your families a bountiful Thanksgiving, a Blessed and Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year! *Yours in Christ, Abe Sabbag, Executive Board Chairman*

From the Virgin Mary Society... The VMS would like to thank all those who worked tirelessly cooking for the bazaar.

The Antiochian Women are excited to announce the theme of our 2017 Project: "Strengthening the Ministries of our Church."

The Antiochian Women are always ready to "Encourage, Support, and Fund" the godly ministries of our Archdiocese. This year's Project gives us an opportunity to make a significant contribution to *strengthen the fundamental ministries* of our Archdiocese.

The funds we raise this year will go to strengthen the following ministries in our Archdiocese: planning senior housing projects; founding missions; supporting seminarians; encouraging youth ministries; protecting the unborn; teaching the Faith; caring for the elderly and those in prisons, nursing homes and hospitals; helping to feed, house, and clothe the poor; and inspiring monastic vocations.

The Virgin Mary Society will plan projects and events that will raise these much-needed funds. In the meantime, donations may be made at any time. Please make checks payable to "Virgin Mary Society" with the notation "Ministries"

From Teen SOYO... Hi all! We are very excited for this year! We are already a few weeks in and we have a lot coming up for our Teen SOYO. We welcome anyone to join, if you are ages 12-18. Thank you for your support! *In Christ, co-presidents Marissa Esty and Rachel Bradley*

From the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch... In January, His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH will visit St. John of Damascus Church. At that 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. Contributions from The Order make up 38% of the archdiocesan annual budget, so you can see that perpetuating the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch is vital to the well-being of our Archdiocese. For further information, visit <http://www.antiochian.org/order>



From the Visitation Ministry... Hopefully you have recently received a letter and brochure describing the Visitation Ministry. At this time, I am seeing three individuals on a regular basis. I hope to hear from more people. If you know anyone who would benefit or enjoy a visit, please contact me at Visitations@stjohnd.org or the church office. Hope to hear from you! *Yours in Christ, Donna Sabbag*

Announcements...

❖ **FYI** In 2017, Great Lent begins on Monday, February 27 and the date of Orthodox Easter is April 16.

❖ **Bazaar Traffic Alert** According to *The Boston Globe*, a section of Rt. 128 in Needham will be closed and rerouted during the bazaar weekend. Please allow extra time or travel a different route. Those coming from the South Shore should not be impacted. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/09/21/transportation-officials-plan-shut-route-for-two-weekend-days-november/imMgLNC1fs7ukqePCUAeNL/story.html>.



❖ **Fall Back** Before going to bed on Saturday, November 5, move your clock(s) BACK on hour.

❖ **Advent** Please remember that the Christmas Fast begins on Tuesday, November 15. Like other Lenten periods, the Church calls us to increase (or even start) our efforts in prayer, fasting, and giving to the poor. It is also the perfect time to have your confession heard. Confessions are heard on Sunday morning from 8:40 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. or by appointment. Please note, as in past years, confessions will *not* be heard on Christmas Eve. Let's all do something to prepare us for our Lord's birth! (Liturgy for Christmas will be on Saturday, December 24 @ 6 pm; no services will be held on December 25).



❖ **Bulletin** The deadline for the November 27 bulletin will be Tuesday, November 22 at 10 am., and the office will be closed on Friday, November 25. The deadlines for the December 25 and January 1 bulletins will be the regular deadline, i.e. Wednesday @ 2 pm. These deadlines must be strictly adhered to – please plan ahead.

❖ **Feast Day** Please join us on Sunday December 4, as we celebrate the feast of our patron saint, John of Damascus. His Grace, Bishop John will lead us in prayer that day, and the Executive Board will host an extended coffee hour. Please join us.

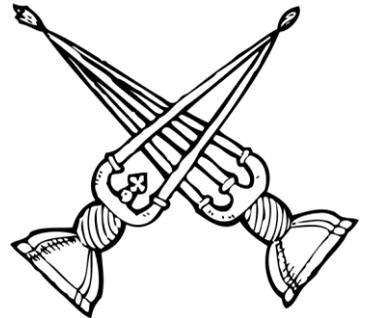
❖ **Senior Dinner** Be on the lookout for invitations to the Senior Citizens' Christmas dinner, which will be held on Sunday, December 11 after liturgy.

❖ **Church School Christmas pageant** The pageant will be held on Sunday, December 18 immediately following liturgy; following the pageant, the Guild will host an extended coffee hour. Please join us.



❖ **Christmas Service** The Liturgy for Christmas will be on Saturday, December 24 @ 6 pm. Please join us as we celebrate our Lord's birth; no services will be held on Sunday, December 25.

❖ **Theophany** Bishop John and clergy of our diocese will gather here at St. John's on Thursday, January 5 to celebrate the Feast of Theophany. Matins will begin at 5 pm, followed by a Hierarchical Liturgy at 6 pm; the blessing of the waters will follow. The Executive Board and VMS will host an extended coffee hour. All are welcome.



❖ **Metropolitan's visit** We will have the pleasure of welcoming Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop John to St. John's on January 28-29, 2017. More details will be forthcoming but please mark your calendars.

❖ **Coffee Hour** Many open dates are available. Please consider asking your friends and family to join forces in hosting the coffee hour, which is a vital part of our fellowship. To reserve a date, please call or email the church office (churchoffice@stjohnd.org). Thank you.

❖ **Donations** After making donations to the church or its organizations please do your best to pay for them at your earliest convenience. This would be *very much appreciated!* Thank you.

❖ **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. Thank you.

❖ **Bulletin Deadline** Please remember that the deadline for the Sunday bulletin is Wednesday at 2 pm, unless otherwise noted.

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS

ANNUAL BAZAAR

November 4th, 5th, & 6th 2016

AUTHENTIC MIDDLE EASTERN CUISINE!

Including ALL your favorites,

Rolled Grape leaves, Kibbee, Shish Kebab, Sfeeha,
Hummous, Tabooleh, Baklava and more...

TAKE OUT AVAILABLE

FEATURING

- Middle Eastern and American Food & Pastries
- Almost New Boutique
- Christmas Corner - Gifts & more...
- White Elephant Table
- Country Store
- Gift Baskets
- Snack Bar
- Raffles
- Take A Chance
- Kids Games
- Bounce House and more...



LIVE & SILENT AUCTION

Live auction, Saturday Nov., 5th at 2 PM
Silent auction, bidding from Fri., & Sat., until 2 PM
Vacation get-a-ways, sports tickets,
gift certificates and more ...

Bazaar Hours:

Friday 12 noon - 9 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 9 PM
Sunday 12 noon - 2 PM



300 West Street (Exit 17 off Rt. 128) Dedham

www.stjohnd.org/bazaar | 781-326-3046

*Metropolitan
Wind Symphony
presents*



*Saturday,
December 3, 2016
6 pm - 9 pm*

*Holiday Pops and
Christmas Sing Along*

*To benefit St. John of Damascus Church
Cocktail Hour and Hors d'oeuvres
Concert with 50 piece Symphony
Coffee & Pastry*

\$15/Adult

\$5/Children

Purchase tickets online at www.stjohnd.org/pops

*This event is also being promoted by the Symphony and was a sell out
last year so don't delay - purchase your tickets online or
call the church office at 781-326-3046 for mailing instructions.*



Church of St. John of Damascus Parish Christmas Card



In keeping with the Yuletide spirit and with what has become a St. John's tradition, we ask that you join with us in support of our parish community Christmas Card. All proceeds from the card will benefit the choir fund at the Church. Please fill out the form below so that we may include you among the subscribers of this year's card.

.....

I have circled the donation amount:

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$20 \$10 other \$ _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____

Name(s) to be printed

Phone _____ *Email* _____

_____ *I am not a member of*
St. John's. Please mail my card to :

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please make check payable to:
Church of St. John of Damascus
300 West St.
Dedham, MA 02026-5594

Deadline: November 20, 2016

**ST. GEORGE LADIES' SOCIETY
ANNUAL PENNY SALE**

**ST. GEORGE CHURCH
55 EMMONSDALE RD.
WEST ROXBURY, MA**



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2016

6:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.

FREE ADMISSION & REFRESHMENTS

**SMALL APPLIANCES
LINENS
FOOD BASKETS
BATH ACCESSORIES
TOYS
ETC.**

SPECIAL DRAWINGS

What is a Penny Sale?

*It's a fun social evening of Raffles and Prizes for all ages!
Imagine...for as little as \$5 you may be going home with very
valuable prizes! A variety of snacks, coffee and cake is always
available.*

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

**FOR FURTHER INFO OR INQUIRIES CALL CHAIRPERSON GLADYS LAHAM,
617-469-0223; GSL28@AOL.COM**



REAL *break*

THESSALONIKI I
FEBRUARY 17-25, 2017

PROJECT MEXICO
MARCH 4-8, 2017

ROMANIA
MARCH 10-18, 2017

THESSALONIKI II
MARCH 10-18, 2017

ALASKA
MARCH 11-18, 2017

CLEVELAND
MARCH 13-16, 2017

JERUSALEM
MARCH 17-25, 2017

NEW ORLEANS
MARCH 20-25, 2017

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS
THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD DEEDS
AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.
MATTHEW 5:16

 **OCF**