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THE TORCHBEARER

Vol. 10 ... No. 5

Spring/Summer 2001

From the Pastor...

As I write this, we are in the midst of Holy Week. It is always a wonderful and exciting time of the year. Spring is trying its best to make us forget winter, flowers are blossoming, the days grow longer, and the church is a beehive of activity.

There exists a natural rhythm to our parish's year at this time of the year. After all of our efforts during Great Lent, with the extra services and what not, we had a brief respite with the VMS Lenten dinner, which, as always was, wonderful. As each day gets closer to Holy Pascha (Easter) the church gets more and more crowded. In fact, Palm Sunday this year saw the most people ever in recent memory. People flock to receive their Easter confession and be anointed with the Holy Unction. It is so gratifying, as a pastor, to see the enthusiasm of this holy time of the year. But what about our enthusiasm after Easter?

As we have a Lenten rhythm, we too have a post Easter rhythm. As we get closer to Memorial Day church attendance drops. After church school graduation, when the summer service schedule goes into effect, church attendance drops off even more. In fact, one young parishioner once told me that when she was young, she thought, because her parents stopped taking her to church after church school graduation, that the church was closed for the summer!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, Christ's love for us is not present some of the time or available to us only on the odd months of the year. On Holy Thursday and Holy Friday, we see so clearly God's love for us. On Easter night, we see the results of this love. As all of us know that love needs to be responded to, reacted to, and acknowledged. We can acknowledge God's love by responding to the invitation that He offers us on Easter night; for you see the world, and sometimes even our own lives, are full of hurt, despair, hurt, and separation from Him. God invites us to "come receive light from the Light that is never overtaken by night."

Show God your light by your own way of living. Show God that His resurrection has affected you in such a way that He is part of your life year round. Too often we succumb to the hype of the moment before we get bored and move on to something else. Remember the excitement of “Cabbage Patch” dolls or “Tickle me Elmo” dolls or “Power Rangers” or “Pokemon”? Don’t let your faith be one of hype. Rather, pray that your faith’s roots are so deep that nothing can move them.

This is the last issue of the newsletter until the fall; I want to wish all of you a most pleasant summer. This summer, I will be traveling to Los Angeles, at the end of July, to attend the Archdiocese convention, as well as visiting Khouria Joan’s family in Canada. Please keep my family and me in your prayers. As many of us will travel to vacation destinations near and far, I pray that we will **all** be able to gather once again as one parish family in September.

Asking God’s blessings on all of you, I remain

In Christ,

Fr. John K. Teebagy, Pastor

From the Chairman..

As we approach the summer months and the end of the church year, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in the best of health. I can’t believe how fast this year has gone by. Overall, I have been extremely pleased with the outstanding progress and achievements we’ve had this past year.

Starting with one of our most successful Annual Bazaar’s in many years... to a wonderful and enjoyable Feast Day celebration with the elevation of Fr. John to Archpriest ... to a beautiful and most reverent Holy Week ... we really pulled together as a parish to work and support our church.

Many other major achievements were in the maintenance and upgrade of our church complex. We replaced the carpets in the church, installed a beautiful new hardwood floor in our hall, restored and hung our gorgeous chandelier from Museum Road and complimented it with 8 brand new chandeliers.

We also implemented some creative and innovative programs this year. With the establishment of the Long Range Planning Committee, we tried a couple of new ideas. We created focus groups and asked all of you to participate and tell us what we were

doing well, what we needed to improve and what we needed to move our parish to the future. These focus groups were very well received, and because of the information we received, we can put together a series of programs for the future. In addition, we established the Legacy Fund, with an overall goal of achieving \$200,000 in two years by the end of 2001. We are well on our way to achieving that goal. Last but not least, we established an ongoing money making function, where we now host Ballroom Dancing on Saturday evenings. All of these programs have been extremely successful.

There are many, many people to thank for all these successes. I would fill up the entire newsletter writing about each and every one of them. I would like to thank our terrific church organizations ... the Church School, Virgin Mary Society, the Choir, Parents Guild, Fellowship and Teen SOYO ... and the great and tireless work they do throughout the year. I would especially like to thank Fr. John for his spiritual guidance, teamwork and friendship. He has made my job this past year pleasurable.

I would like to thank the wonderful members of our Executive Board. I have been very blessed to have 20 incredible men and women working with me this year. I have found working with these dedicated members one of the most rewarding experiences for me. Each and every one of them is always willing to step up and volunteer when needed. To each and every one of our board members ... thank you.

In closing, I would like to thank you, the entire parish, for the support and confidence you've had in me. It has been my honor to serve as your Executive Board Chairman this past year.

Your brother in Christ,

John M. Haddad
Chairman, Executive Board

Church Records...

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

Audrey Elizabeth Brightbill daughter of Jerry Brightbill and Lauren Hallal of Newton was baptized on March 11, 2001

Richard Dennis Guinn son of Timothy and Rita (Rawan) Gwinn of West Roxbury was baptized on March 18, 2001

Cassandra Helene Najjar daughter of Michael and Michelle (Krazmien) Najjar of New York City, NY was baptized on March 18, 2001

Emillee Alison Aswad daughter of Gary and Tina (Meehan) Aswad of Dracut was baptized on March 25, 2001

Christina Marie Tsillas daughter of Demetrios and Deborah (Najjar) Tsillas of Arlington was baptized on April 1, 2001

Many Years!!

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

Elizabeth “Emma” Tawa of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on February 5, 2001. Three sons and two daughters, and their families, survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!!

Liturgical Notes...

☞☞ **SUMMER CHURCH HOURS** – As usual, the Divine Liturgy will start at 9:30 a.m. from June 17th through September 2nd inclusive. Please mark your calendars.

☞☞ To observe the **Feast of the Ascension** (40 days after Easter), we will celebrate a Vespereal Liturgy on Wednesday, May 23rd @ 6:00 p.m. at St. George, Norwood.

☞☞ **BLESSING OF GRAVES...** As is the custom, Fr. John will be at Fairview Cemetery on Memorial Day, May 28th from 8:50 a.m. to 10 a.m. to bless the graves of your loved ones. Trisagion Prayers will be offered in front of “the shrine” at 8:50 a.m.

☞☞ **THE DORMITION FAST** begins on August 1st through August 14th. Please do your best to observe this fast to the best of your abilities. This fast in honor of the Mother of God’s “Dormition,” is one of the four major fasting periods of the Church. As usual, we will join our sister church in Cambridge on Tuesday, August 14th to celebrate this feast. Please consult the weekly bulletin for more details as they become available.

✂✂ We will observe the **Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ**, which the Church observes on August 6th, on Sunday August 5th with the blessing of the grapes

✂✂ When planning your wedding, please keep three things in mind...

1. **Book the church** before the reception facility.
2. **Book the church** before printing the invitations
3. **Book the church** before ...

✂✂ Please consult the Sunday bulletin or the web page for any changes, additions, etc. that may occur during the summer months.

Announcements...

✂✂ **THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** will be held on Tuesday, May 22nd at 6:30 p.m. (a light dinner is tentatively being planned). Your attendance and input would be most appreciated. Please plan on participating!

✂✂ **NOMINATIONS** for serving on the Executive Board are being accepted. If you and/or someone you know, would like to offer your name, please send in the name(s) to the attention of the nominating committee at the church office or let any Board member know. Forms have been sent out. You may also e-mail your nominee by writing to execboard@stjohnd.org. We have a very busy and exciting year ahead... so won't you get involved?

✂✂ **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE PROGRAM** - Each year during the Lenten season, our Archdiocese sponsors this program that has helped to feed many hungry people all around the world. We depend upon your support. Please consider offering a generous donation to this most worthy cause; make your check payable to the Church and earmark it "FFFP" and return it by June 1st. Thank you

✂✂ **FELLOWSHIP OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP LOBSTER DINNER** - Make plans to attend the annual Lobster Dinner in May, 2001. Watch for more details.

✂✂ **LEGACY FUND UPDATE:** Goal: \$200,000. Raised thus far: \$162,000. To those who have given...thank you. To those who have not yet given... can we count on your support? The church has always been there for you and your family; we now need you. For more information, please call the church office. Can you help us meet our goal? We are so close.

✍️ **NICHOLAS G. BERAM VETRANS ASSOCIATION** announces their Annual Scholastic Achievement Awards Program for all concerned high school seniors. Applications are available at the Church office. The deadline is June 1st.

✍️ **ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE CAMP**...Join the celebration as we mark 20 years of faith, fellowship and fun. Last year's two-week sessions were filled to capacity, so an extra week was added to make sure there'll be room for everyone. Camper registration forms are now available in the church office of your parish. Sessions begin filling in early spring, so it's not too soon to fill them out. Also available are applications for volunteers, staff and counselors, and counselors in training. Please call the church office for more information.

✍️ **45TH ARCHDIOCESE CONVENTION:** Make your plans now to attend the archdiocese convention from July 23rd - 29th at the Century Plaza Hotel & Tower in Los Angeles, CA, hosted by St. Nicholas Cathedral. For more information, please look at www.antiochian2001.com or call the cathedral at 213.382.6269.

✍️ **63rd ANNUAL PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE, New England Region Fellowship of St. John the Divine, hosted by St. George Cathedral of Worcester will be held June 20-24, 2001** at the Sheraton Hynannis Conference Center. The plans have been confirmed! Activities will include: Oratorical Festival, Parish Council Dinner, Antiochian Women's Meeting and Luncheon, Teen SOYO Meeting, Bible Bowl, St. Ignatius Meeting and Dinner, Grand Hafli and MORE! More details to follow. To make your reservations or for more information, you can call the hotel at 1-800-598-4559 or St. George Cathedral at 508-752-9150

**Feast Day, 2001 with
His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP on
November 30th & December 1st & 2nd
Please join us!**

**You can submit donations to your favorite church organization fund to be printed in the Sunday bulletin,
On-line - 24 hours a day - from your PC!
www.stjohnd.org**

?? **Donation Request Form** - now you can submit donations to your favorite church organization fund on-line - 24 hours a day - from your PC. Your donation will be automatically sent to the church e-mail box. You can submit up to 3 donations per form. You will receive a confirmation immediately of the donation information. In testing this with several parishioners, we have received very positive feedback. Give this simple to use form a try to see how easy it is to submit a donation on-line!

?? **E-Mail addresses for Church** - You can now reach us at the church via e-mail. Several mailboxes have been set up and more are coming. Feel free to send e-mail to these individuals directly. All these addresses are listed in the Contact Us section of the web site.

Fr. John Teebagy	frjohn@stjohnd.org
Church Office (Patty Pizzano)	office@stjohnd.org
Executive Board President (John Haddad)	execboard@stjohnd.org
Church School Director (Nancy Close)	school@stjohnd.org
Webmaster (John Haddad)	webmaster@stjohnd.org

?? **Other Features** - There are many other features on this web site that you may or may not have known existed ... History of Our Church, Church Bulletin Board, The Torchbearer (past and present issues), Church Calendar, Organization's web pages, Altar Boy Teams and Schedule, Constitution and By-Laws of St. John of Damascus, Directions to our church ... and more.

We encourage everyone who has access to the Internet to take a look at this site. Please feel free to offer any comments and suggestions for improving our church web site. You can submit comments via the Feedback form on the web or by writing an e-mail to the webmaster (webmaster@stjohnd.org).

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THE TORCHBEARER
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A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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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 ten a.m.

Please plan accordingly.

Please watch the weekly Sunday Bulletin for any changes or exceptions.

DEADLINE for the September/October 2001 *Torchbearer* will be August 6th.

