
THE TORCHBEARER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS,
DEDHAM, MA

MAY/JUNE 2005

The catechetical homily of Saint John Chrysostom

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!



If any are pious and lovers of God, let them delight in this fair and radiant festival. If any are honest servants, let them enter and rejoice in the joy of their Lord. If any are wearied with fasting, let them now enjoy the reward. If any have worked from the first hour, let them accept their just pay. If any have come after the third, let them feast with thankfulness. If any have arrived after the sixth, let there be no doubt, for they shall suffer no loss. If any come after the ninth, let them draw near, let them not waver. If any have arrived only at the eleventh, let them not be fearful for their tardiness, for the Master is gracious and accepts the last as well as the first. He gives rest to those who worked from the first hour. He is merciful to the last and provides for the first. He gives to this one and to that one he shows kindness. He receives their labors and acknowledges the purpose, and he honors the deed and praises

the intention. Therefore, let everyone enter into the joy of our Lord, and let the first and the second take part in the reward. Those rich and those poor, join hands together. Those sober and those sorrowful, honor this day. Those who fast and those who do not, be glad today. The table is full, indulge yourselves sumptuously. The calf is ample, let no one go away hungry. Let all enjoy the wealth of righteousness. Let none lament their poverty for the kingdom is revealed to all. Let none deplore transgressions, for forgiveness has dawned forth from the tomb. Let none be fearful of death, for the death of the Savior has set us free. By tasting his flesh, death has been quenched. He who went down to Hades despoiled Hades, and Hades was embittered when he tasted Christ's flesh. Isaiah, anticipating this, cried out and said: Hades was embittered when it met you face to face below. It was

embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was cast down. It was embittered, for it was chained. It received a body and encountered God. It received earth, and met heaven face to face. It received what it saw, and fell where it saw not. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons have fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and there are no dead in the tombs for Christ is raised from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who were asleep. To him be glory and dominion to the ages of ages. Amen.



Church Records...

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

Alec Michael, son of Glenn and Debbie (Chaiton) Medwar of Darien, CT (members of St. Nicholas, Bridgeport, CT), was baptized on February 13th, 2005.

Joseph Louis, son of Michael and Brenda (Sabbag) Nardolillo of Newport, RI, was baptized on March 13th, 2005.

Eric Paul, son of Paul and Cindy (Knights) Aswad of Needham, was baptized on March 20th, 2005.

Jacqueline Marie, daughter of Ralph and Susan (Serris) Cahaly of Wayland, was baptized on April 3rd, 2005

Christopher Dylan, son of Justin and Elizabeth (Zarras) MacNeil of Needham, was baptized on April 3rd, 2005

Many Years!

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

Lillian Shalhoub (83) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on March 11th, 2005. Four sisters, along with their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Mary Shalhoub (93) of West Roxbury fell asleep in the Lord on April 3rd, 2005. Three sisters, along with their families survive her. Burial was at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

Memory Eternal!

From the Executive Board Chairman...

Hello again,

By the time this letter comes out, Easter may have come and gone; I hope you all had a great and spiritual Easter season.

It has only been a short time since my last make up letter to you and not too much has transpired since, but we have done a little that I will talk about. First and foremost, I would like to make another plea from the nominating committee of Executive Board. It's that time of year again that we need parishioners willing to volunteer and be nominated to run for the board and serve the church. The annual parish meeting is set for May 11th at 7 pm and is quickly approaching, hopefully you have all sent in your nomination letters by now so that we may prepare the ballot and can get the voting done. Please take the time to do so and talk with any one you feel may be good for the church or have an interest in serving on the board and get in those letters, as time is running short.

We will have a St John of Damascus Scholarship this year to be awarded at the end of the church school year, which is May 22nd. I think this is another great thing the church is doing for our children and hope you take advantage of this opportunity and support it too. We have to thank all the generous people who have contributed to the scholarship fund and to those who will donate in the future to expand the program and keep it going. If any of your children are eligible please look for the information on the church web page or call the office to get an application.

We have decided to go the route of liquid propane to heat the classrooms and to remodel the kitchen. A lot of time and effort on Tom Sabbag's part has been taken to investigate the best way to move forward and this seemed to be the most cost effective. We should save a great deal over the cost of electricity and hopefully, not right away, replace the existing units on the roof, as they eventually become too old to cost effectively repair. You should be seeing some work being done with this in the not too distant future. Hopefully, we can also move forward with the remodeling of the kitchen and make some room and efficiently use the space we have.

We also have started the planning of the 100th anniversary of St. John of Damascus Church, which will be in 2007. This is something not to be missed and I don't even know what it will be like yet. All I know is that I have confidence in the people who will be planning this to make it great.

We as a group have decided to support the idea of a regional youth director. The work for this is not complete and too much to talk about in this letter but I will be discussing it at the annual meeting, if you are interested in hearing about it. It was, by no means, a unanimous decision to support this program, so I figure there may be others who will have questions about it and hopefully we can answer them all for you at the meeting.

Hope all is well with you all,

Alan Cardoos

From the Virgin Mary Society...

The Virgin Mary Society would like to thank everyone for patronizing our Annual Sfeeha Sale, which was very successful. We wish you all a Blessed Pascha.

Lillian Khouri, President

From The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

As many of our children go off to Antiochian Village this summer, consider the many young lives touched by God and turned around through the love of dedicated camp counselors. Years ago, that summer camp was just a plot of land in the Pennsylvanian hills. Because of the generosity of the Order, it is now heaven on earth for young people from Mexico to Canada. In addition to funding the camp itself, St. Ignatius offers scholarships so that all those who desire can have the experience of attending. Those who return give tremendous encouragement to teenagers and adults alike in our parish. St. Ignatius also supports Project Mexico and other orphanages in Central America, often attended by the young people of our parish. These students also return profoundly transformed.

In 2007, St. John of Damascus will celebrate its centennial. This proud event will be celebrated throughout the year, culminating in our Feast Day Weekend in December. Please consider joining the Order of St. Ignatius at that time. There are currently 42 members from St. John's. Just as Metropolitan Philip challenged the Order to attain 3,000 members by its 30th anniversary in 2006(a goal already met,) we would like to challenge the parish to reach "100 by 100." This is not an impossible task! Please talk to any member of The Order to learn more about the ways it benefits our parish as well as Orthodox churches and people worldwide. More information about The Order, including its annual budget (every penny goes towards programs,) can be found on the Antiochian Archdiocese website (www.antiochian.org/Order)

Have a wonderful summer!

Christine Bezreh

From the Church School...

Hello Everyone-

We have had an extremely busy year here at St. John's Church School, and believe it or not, we have already begun planning "Graduation 2005"! Graduation will be held on Sunday, May 22, 2005. On that day, we will not have class for Church School students, but rather students from Preschool 2 through Grade 10 will sit with their classes during the Divine Liturgy. Graduation exercises will take place directly after the Divine Liturgy, in the Church. In accordance with our attendance policies, all

students who have attained at least 50% attendance during the Church School year will be awarded a certificate of completion, and will be eligible for other awards at graduation. Third graders who have achieved this attendance criteria will receive their own personalized Bible as well. If you have any questions concerning your child's attendance, please contact me at any time. Graduation will be followed by the annual "St. John's Parish Picnic." The picnic will take place at St. John's, with traditional barbecue foods and desserts. Please plan to attend, as this picnic promises an afternoon of fun and fellowship with your parish family! (Please see flyer in this newsletter.) Although we only have a few Sundays left with your children, they will be busy and industrious. Students are finishing up creative arts projects, writing thought-provoking essays, and collaborating on studies of the Sacraments, Feast Days, and Divine Liturgy. Finally, many thanks to all the wonderful people who have come forward this year to help us out in so many ways! The support from our parish is always so generous and invaluable. Have a blessed Easter!

Nancy Close

Announcements . . .

❖ **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE PROGRAM** – The Food for Hungry People Program is underway. Please remember the homeless throughout the world during this holiest time of the year. The alms boxes and cans will be available at the bengari. 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!

❖ **THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** will be held on **Wednesday, May 11th @ 7 pm**. Your attendance and input would be most appreciated. Please plan on participating!

❖ **NOMINATIONS** for serving on the Executive Board are being accepted until May 11th, which is the annual meeting. 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. 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?

❖ **SUMMER OFFICE HOURS** During the months of July and August, the church office hours will be Monday-Thursday from 8 am –2:15 pm. The bulletin deadline will remain *the same*.

❖ **PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE** The 67th Parish Life Conference, hosted by St. George, Lowell, will take place from June 23rd – 26th at the Sheraton Ferncroft in Danvers, MA. For more information, please call the church office at 978.452.4816 or go to <http://www.saintgeorgelowell.org/>.

❖ **CHURCH CLOSED** As we have done in the past, the church will be *closed* on Sunday, June 26th due to the conference. Please join His Grace, Bishop THOMAS and the clergy of this area for church that Sunday at the Sheraton Ferncroft in Danvers, MA.

❖ **SUMMER CHURCH HOURS** – As usual, the Divine Liturgy will start at 9:30 a.m. from **May 29th through September 4th inclusive**. Please mark your calendars. The church will be closed on Sunday, June 26th, due to the Parish Life Conference in Plymouth.

❖ **PLEASE NOTE.....PLEASE NOTE.....BLESSING OF GRAVES...** As is the custom, Fr. John will be at Fairview Cemetery on SUNDAY, May 29th from 11:45 am to 12:45 p.m. to bless the graves of our loved ones. Trisagion Prayers will be offered for all the dead of our church family at the church at the conclusion of liturgy that morning, which begins at 9:30 a.m. We all will then go to Fairview together.

❖ **ST. GEORGE, LAWRENCE** will have its annual Hufli on May 21st at the Guest House Inn in Methuen. For more information, call Michelle Touma at 978.373.1316.

❖ **NICHOLAS G. BERAM VETERANS 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**.

❖ **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.

❖ We will observe the **Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ**, which the Church observes on August 6th, on **Sunday August 7th** with the blessing of the grapes.

Church of St. John of Damascus
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A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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Sunday Services: Matins 9:00 a.m.; Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

(Summer hours from May 29th – September 4th: Divine Liturgy at 9:30 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.

The deadline for the September/October issue of *The Torchbearer* will be announced

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