

The St. George CHAMPION

The Parish Newsletter of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Little Falls, NJ

Nov/Dec 2010

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Stewardship on a Personal Level — Ten Commandments of a Church Steward

By Very Rev. Fr. Elias Bitar

1. Thou shall be inclusive. Being a family, the church requires that we do not form clicks within the church. As children of Christ we belong to each other and just a few. The church was never a place for those who are blood relatives, close friends or those whom we like. The church is always inclusive. Though we talk the talk, we find it hard to include all people in our circle. We cannot force people in, but we should not prevent them if they want to come in.

2. Thou shall Invite people you don't know well people to your coffee table or your home. People who are searching for God, normally find Him in the other person before they can find Him in the icon or the chalice. People can say "Welcome" "I love you" or give you a hug. All these things make you feel special in church.

3. Thou shall Introduce a new person to the priest. Introducing new pew people in the church to the priest is always a good beginning. Through the priest people may find information about the church and its organizations. The new family may have children to baptize or be in Sunday School or belong to the teen or fellowship. Adults may want to be involved. Don't let them leave unnoticed.

4. Thou shall not be possessive. We belong to the church, the church belongs to God. We take care of it, pay its bills and maintain it, but it is God's house. When we claim ownership in a physical sense, the church could become like a club(only those who pay can pray)

with humility and love. We say *we* belong to the church and not the church belongs to *us*.

5. Tell someone or call them to tell them that you missed them when they miss Church. Since we are a family, it is always good to reach out to each other in love. They say "home is the place where you are missed if you are absent". It would make someone feel good that he or she is being missed. You can even send a card.

6. Thou shall tell people that you appreciate them (especially the priest). It is our human nature that requires praise. Even though you may be doing things for the glory of God, a word of thanks does not hurt, but helps. An encouraging word may do wonders. People in leadership positions need to know that they are doing OK — let them know. When they are not doing a great job, don't be quick to criticize, but be gentle, loving and caring in your criticism.

7. Thou shall not criticize people behind their back. This is called GOSSIP. It shows lack of love, respect and concern for the other person's reputation. We are to support each other for the building of the church. We love each other in the name of Christ.

8. Thou shall not wait to be asked in order to offer your help to the church. Ask the priest and the church if you can do something in the service of the church. Whatever talent God gave you, don't withhold it from the church, but be generous in your offering of yourself to God.

Therefore stewards take care of God's house

(Continued on page 2)

• **Community News** •

BAPTISMS

- Avery NeiberlineApril 24, 2010
- Matthew PizanieApril 24, 2010
- Elie Eskaf.....May 30, 2010
- Rose Kalyoussef.....June 5, 2010
- Emma Mary BitarJune 13, 2010
- Joseph IueleJune 27, 2010
- Emma Dalloul.....August 15, 2010
- Talia HaddadAugust 21, 2010
- Christopher Kabbash.....September 25, 2010
- Matthew MalkiSeptember 26, 2010
- Nathan BalonzeOctober 3, 2010
- Penelope KaufmanOctober 9, 2010
- Luca AbboudOctober 9, 2010
- Wafia Chalet.....November 7, 2010

MARRIAGE

- Eskandar Bitar & Lona ChabaMay 1, 2010
- John Balonze & Alexandra De VitoMay 23, 2010
- Stephen Potter & Cheri Malouf.....June 26, 2010
- Rabih Kashouty & Noor Yono.....August 27, 2010
- Gregory Abbate &
Cynthia Ting ChiuSeptember 11, 2010
- Joseph Giammarella &
Karen BalonzeSeptember 18, 2010
- Thomas Trunzo &
Geraldine Oliver.....September 19, 2010
- Hany Hammam &
Anna Marie SienkiewiczOctober 16, 2020

FUNERALS

- Alice Kabbash.....June 4, 2010
- Nicholas ChaletJuly 3, 2010
- John JosephJuly 26, 2010
- Robert KasheyAugust 12, 2010
- Mona KhouryOctober 23, 2010
- Martha Abbassi.....November 1, 2010

Fellowship Raffle

Win two of the hottest tech-devices around, just in time for Christmas!

An Apple iPad
or a
SONY Reader
Touch Edition



Drawing will be
Sunday, Dec. 19th at 12 Noon

Tickets only \$5 each and will be sold every Sunday following Liturgy. See Michael Kabbash or any Fellowship Member for tickets.

Ten Commandments of a Church Steward (continued)

9. **Thou shall love the church without reservation.** Love does not differentiant between people. God loves everyone and we must do the same. Believe it or not God speaks all kind of languages and loves the white as much as the black , the brown and all other colors. He loves all His children without discrimination and I believe we should. “I love you” is a universal terminology that everyone understands. A hug is just the same. Should we hug or love only those who love us?

10. **Thou shall come to worship God on Sunday.** Without worship, the Liturgy, confession, Holy communion, everything we do is an empty, meaningless act. Unless the Lord builds the house, the laborers labor in vain.

Why It's Cool to Go to Church Again

Norris J. Chumley, Ph.D. Posted: July 23, 2010 on the HuffingtonPost.com

As a little kid I always thought that church was cool. I liked the choir at my hometown Episcopal church, and going up to get wafers and juice. But the Scripture reading, prayers and sermons always seemed really boring. As I got older, I began to not feel God in church. Then I was forced to go to confirmation classes once a week as a teenager, for an entire year. The priest made those classes excruciatingly boring and tedious — so bad that the day after my confirmation, I announced I was an atheist, and I never went to church again. I unconfirmed myself immediately, and lost my Christianity in a big way. I just thought being a Christian was irrelevant.

Before my return to graduate school (to Union Theological Seminary in New York) a decade ago, I went 30-something years attending various eastern meditation groups. I'd do my yoga, chant mantras and ruminate on the nothingness of existence. The deeper I got, the closer to myself I became, the emptier I felt. Yet I loved God, although the God-concept didn't fit with my yogic practices. The Jesus Christ concept really didn't fit, and I spent decades thinking the "Jesus freaks" were real losers, or even brain-washed. I couldn't stand the proselytizing and guilt-tripping that Christianity seemed to offer. I told people, "I don't need a mediator between me and God."

Then, in seminary, taking classes on monasticism and ancient Christianity, I began to strongly feel the presence of God. I got inspired to visit monasteries and very ancient churches, first in the U.S., then researching and filming hermits in Egypt, then in Greece and Eastern Europe, and finally in Russia. I met hermits and monks, and they let me film their descriptions of the inner Christian life. My studies in Christian mysticism and ancient texts grew deeper and deeper. I discovered a prayer, the Jesus Prayer, or Kyrie Eleison — "Lord have mercy," or "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me." (Some add "a sinner" at the end.) I loved ancient church so much that I'm making a movie and writing a book about them, coming early next year (Mysteries of the Jesus Prayer is a not-for-profit feature film, the result of my studies and renewed love-affair with Jesus Christ and church).

Now, 10 years later, I've returned to Christianity and go to church as often as possible. Here are my top ten reasons why I think church is cool. Please keep in mind each one of these points is enough to write a book about, or many volumes, as they have been in play for thousands of years:

1. The Eucharist, or Holy Communion. The bread and wine as the body and blood of Jesus Christ, God in human form, is a physical uniting with God inside. After all the prayers, chants and setting aside the self, I feel a tangible connection, a

bond made between Heaven and Earth, when partaking of the Eucharist.

2. The Holy Trinity. All I can say is that the three-in-one, separate-yet-whole-at-the-same-time reality explains my continual human feeling of being separate from God, yet connected. I had learned in yoga that "All-Is-One," and that extends to Christianity in the Trinity.

3. God is human in Jesus Christ. This is also the Holy Trinity, incarnated, which means "in the flesh." The Holy Spirit, from God, becomes human in Christ. With the Eucharist or Communion, my humanness unites with God, too. Church gives me that. The experience is indescribably wonderful.

4. Love. Christ's teachings center in love for God and humanity. Despite years of problems, even wars, the central teaching of Jesus Christ is about love. I feel that love in the community of the church. I see the love of God and humanity in the service programs my church provides: homeless shelters, food and assistance for those who are in need, counseling, education, and other projects.

5. God is present in Creation. I see His infinite excellence everywhere the more I pray and attend church. Using the Jesus Prayer helps me connect to God in everything and everyone.

6. Community. After years of solitary meditation on emptiness, I love the fellowship of church. It's so cool and fun to get together with others who also love God. I've made a lot of lasting friendships at church, people who truly care, and we help each other, and we have many great times.

7. Singing hymns and chanting. Music feels like God in the form of sound waves.

8. Religious symbols. The church icons, books, candles, incense, the Cross — all are tangible reminders to look to God, and to connect with His presence. Others in church are like living icons reminding me of God in Christ.

9. Prayers. To me, prayer is a portable connection to God. In prayer, I feel the presence of God. The Jesus Prayer particularly, used by monks and nuns, and in some churches, is especially powerful.

10. Church suppers. I love to cook, and I love to eat -- community church meals are especially fantastic. There's nothing quite like a church potluck or picnic.

I write a weekly free e-newsletter about the Jesus Prayer, ancient churches and monastic practices, with chants, meditations, and stories that you may like. Sign up at www.mysteriesoftheJesusprayer.com/ mailing.html

Fellowship News

by Michael Kabbash

The Fellowship of St. John will be holding a Raffle to help raise funds for future guest speaker events. This November, we will be raffling off an Apple iPad and a Sony Reader Digital Book (which would make a great Christmas gift). As we do not often hold fundraising events, we ask you all for your support in selling tickets.

We are also looking into a group trip to see CS Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" on Broadway, which was actually a book that we had held small study groups on two years ago.

Lastly, we are planning on assisting the Teens in preparing sandwiches for their annual NYC homeless shelter visit on December 5th. Another Coffee House/Family Night will be held in December as well. As always, we try to make our events open to all regardless of age and hope that you would join us for all events, be they educational or social.

Parish Council News

by Elie Saade, Parish Council President

St. George had its annual General Parish Meeting on 10/24/2010. During this meeting:

- The budget for 2011 was presented and approved by the parishioners attending the meeting.
- Reports from the Parish Council, Charity Committee, Membership & Stewardship Committee, Ladies Society, and the Fellowship of St. John the Divine were presented.
- The officers of the Parish Council fielded questions and listened to feedback from many parishioners about different topics that are of concern to parishioners.
- Introduced a fund-raising opportunity for the church that entails parishioners signing up with the Viridian Energy Company with the church being their distributor.
- Three (3) new members of the Parish Council were elected for two-year terms. The elected members are: Souhel Shehady, Danny Haddad, and Rima Bandeli.

The Ladies Society News

by Fadia Juzdan

The Saint George Ladies Society is having their Thanksgiving Pastry Sale, Please place your order by calling the church office at 973-256-8961

The Ladies Christmas party is at the Brownstone on December 27th at 12 noon. If you would like to go please see or call Fadia Juzdan at 973-220-3687

Teen SOYO

The Teen SOYO does so many things to make the Christmas season what god intended to be, a joyous and giving one. The teens have been extremely busy as usual this year. Please visit our web page at stgeorgesoyo.com

We are having a retreat on November 20 the speaker is Khouryie Gigi Baba Shadid, our topic is FAITH BOOK, we encourage all the teens to attend.

We are collecting coats, hats, sneakers, long johns, new socks, gloves etc. to take to NYC on Dec. 4th to give out to the homeless. We are also taking sandwiches to feed the hungry.

December 11th we are inviting the Boys Orphanage for a Christmas party, we will be putting together a wish list that they chose and hopefully many families will be able to purchase a gift for the boys to give those gifts on that day!

December 12th we are decorating the Church and having our Christmas party. December 18th we are going to St. George in Allentown PA to attend a retreat. December 19th we are visiting the nursing home in Montville.

January 16th meeting and ice skating. January 28th we are hosting our 2nd annual Fashion show.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 25, 2010

Metropolitan

QUICK BITE | WOODLAND PARK

King of Shish Kabob (With Mother-in-Law's Help)

Ask Michael Ibrahim why he's the King of Shish Kabob, as he calls his Middle Eastern restaurant in Woodland Park, and he laughs.

"Well, I chose that name, actually," said Mr. Ibrahim, 48, who opened this unassuming spot in 1995, six years after he moved here from Syria. "But I mostly learned all the recipes from my mother-in-law."

There are many Middle Eastern restaurants in this part of New Jersey, but the food here has a fresh, homemade quality. The dishes include favorites like homemade hummus with tahini (\$3.99), creamy baba ghanouj (\$4.50) and fresh tabbouleh (\$4.99), along with stuffed grape leaves, soups and salads.

His falafel, with a mix of chickpeas, garlic, onion, parsley and spices, is flavorful; if you decide to sit down at one of the tables — there's room for about 30 in the simply decorated space, with a few posters of Syria — you might like to or-

der it as a vegetarian platter served with toppings and a side salad (\$6.99). If you're on the go, try it in a pita (\$3), which Mr. Ibrahim gets from a bakery in Canada because it is made "really thin," he said.

Tasty kebabs offer a choice of beef, chicken, kufta (ground beef) or lamb skewers. The King Combination platter includes a variety of meats, along with rice pilaf, salad and a bowl of hummus (\$14.99). "Usually we marinate the meat overnight with special spices, mostly black pepper," Mr. Ibrahim said.

Dessert is not his domain; he brings in baklava and other sweets, which are good with the cafe's Turkish coffee.

KELLY FEENEY

King of Shish Kabob, 932 McBride Avenue, Woodland Park; (973) 812-9888. Open Monday to Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Closed Sunday.

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
■ <i>Light shaded dates represent days of Fasting</i>			1	2	3	4 Teen NYC Visit
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Teen Boys Orphanage
Teen Decorating Church 12	13	14	Parish Council Meeting 15	16	17	18
Teens Visit Nursing Home Fellowship Raffle 19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
26	Ladies Christmas Lunch 27	28	29	30	31	

January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
■ <i>Light shaded dates represent days of Fasting</i>						1 Happy New Year!
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Teen Meeting 16	17	18	Parish Council Meeting 19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28 Teen Fashion Show	29



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