

**August 28,2009**

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

The family of St. Basil the Great has been blessed with strong and ambitious forefathers who emigrated to the United States many years ago and not only provided their community with a place of worship but also with a resting place for their deceased. Thus the family remains together to pay tribute to the memory of their loved ones.

Ours is the only Melkite Church in the diocese which has its own cemetery, and was chosen as the final resting place for Bishop Justin Najmy, Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Rev. Timothy Jock, Rt. Rev. Peter Capucci, and Rt. Rev. Maximos Chalhoub.

In order to follow in the footsteps of our forefathers, we have initiated the Cemetery Expansion Project as we are close to depleting the remaining graves at our cemetery. As our founding Fathers did for us, so it is our duty to plan ahead for the next 100 years.

The Parish Council studied the layout of the Cemetery and engaged Robinson Green and Beretta (RGB) to survey the boundaries and mark them with Granite bench marks, perform flood studies to determine the limit of the 100 year flood plain, and outline the wetlands to determine the extent of land that can be used for future expansion.

Several on-site meetings were held. Our application was submitted to R.I. Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) in early August 2009, for review and approval.

The engineering studies showed (see Sketch) that we can add 192 grave lots and an area reserved for future Bishops, Clergy and Assistants on land around and towards the Creek.

Furthermore, we met with Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC), facilitated by Mayor Thomas Lazieh, to discuss granting the Cemetery 30 feet (from the road towards the rail line). NBC agreed, on the condition that St. Basil performs the survey of land of 80 ft. from the road to the rail and sewer line and eventually relocate the road 30 ft. into that direction. RGB is in the process of performing the survey and the drawing for road relocation. This will add another 100 grave lots.

With the additional 300 grave lots, the Cemetery can serve St. Basil Community for over 100 years more, without the necessity of purchasing more land. We were able to achieve this goal utilizing the land we presently own. This is based on experiences of last 40 yrs.

I would like to thank Fr. Joe for his input and guidance. I would like to thank the Cemetery Committee of: Elias Deeb, Rosalyn Capaldi, Anthony Najjar, Ann Marie Ramos, and Thomas Lazieh and the fund raising committee of Ken and Anne Sabbagh, Georgeanna Deckey, Terry McMichael, and Joseph Massud for their support and efforts, Also, many thanks to the Social committee Chairperson, Georgeanna Deckey, and Co-chairperson Bill Haddad, for designating the profits from the October 3 Annual Hafla to benefit this project.

**Yusuf Mussalli, PhD. P.E.  
Chairman, Parish Council**