

# *DIAKONIA*



December 2005



*Christ is Born! Glorify Him*

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America  
A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others*

# The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan PHILIP  
Founder

The Right Reverend  
Bishop JOSEPH  
Overseeing Hierarch

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V. Rev. John Abdalah, Spiritual Advisor

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### *Antiochian Women's Prayer*

*In the Name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
O Christ our God, we are all pledged to  
serve Thee with our whole being.  
Help us to continue to work for Thee  
through our Church, without seeking praise,  
without seeking personal gain,  
without judging others, without a feeling that  
we have worked hard enough  
and now must allow ourselves rest.  
Give us strength to do what is right and  
help us to go on striving and to remember  
that activities are not the main thing in life.  
The most important thing is to have  
our hearts directed and attuned to Thee.  
Amen.*

**DIAKONIA** is a Newsletter of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women, an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and is published quarterly in the months of September, December, March and June.

### **PUBLICATION GUIDELINES:**

#### **Deadlines**

- Please submit your articles by the first of the month prior to the month of publication so we can be sure they are included.

#### **Preferred Methods of Submission**

- E-mail as an attachment to:  
teta.of.9@sbcglobal.net
- Submit your article on a CD or floppy disk to Lucy Hanna, 1853 Kensington Road, Corona, CA 92880.
- FAX typed, double spaced articles to (951) 736-0800.

#### **Submission Details**

- Please include your name and the phone number where you can be contacted for questions.
- Attach a hard copy for reference.
- Keep a copy. Articles will not be returned. Photos will be returned if requested.

#### **Content**

- All articles must be of interest to or regarding NAB, Diocesan or local Antiochian Women.
- All articles may be edited for length and clarity.

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In this issue of the DIAKONIA we highlight the  
**Antiochian Women of the East.**

In each issue, we highlight one of the Dioceses. We encourage everyone however, to submit news and articles from all Antiochian parishes of North America for publication in every issue so we may keep in touch with each other.

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### **What is DIAKONIA**

The word **DIAKONIA** is a Greek word meaning *Service*, usually pertaining to service in the Church. The purpose of the Antiochian Women's organization is primarily spirituality and humanitarian service. In the words of our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP it is "**Theology in Action**".

## ‘AWE’

### The Antiochian Women of the East:

*In awe of our Creator, and His work in us and through us.*

*By Ina O’Dell*

AWE is found along the Mid-Atlantic seaboard of the US where many immigrants landed and established homes and parishes. Thus we have some of the oldest parishes in the archdiocese with a predominantly ethnic base. However, sprinkled in between these long-established parishes are many new parishes and missions established by people who were not born into the faith, but were converted to Orthodoxy through conviction, study, and prayer. Most of our parishes are a blend of cradle and convert parishioners. Our parishes range in size from a handful of hopefuls starting new missions, to a couple of thousand at our largest parishes in Charleston, WV and the Washington DC metro area.

AWE actually represents two dioceses mostly from the former ‘Eastern Region’, with our total parishes, missions and mission stations numbering 47.

**The Diocese of NY and the Archdiocesan District** includes 13 parishes and 2 missions (in NJ, NYmetro, CT, Washington DC metro/MD, and The Antiochian Village) and 1 mission station, in Vernon, NJ all under His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP serving from the Archdiocesan Headquarters in Englewood, NJ, just outside New York City. The St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, NY is both the cathedral of the diocese, but also the ‘mother’ cathedral of the whole archdiocese. St. Nicholas also happens to be oldest Antiochian parish in America (110 yrs) and was founded by our newly canonized (May 2000) St. Raphael (Hawaweeny) of Brooklyn.

**The Diocese of Oakland, PA and the East** includes 26 parishes and 3 missions (in PA, WV, VA, DE, and parts of MD), and 2 missions stations at Port Matilda/ State College, PA and in Ocean View, DE under His Grace Bishop THOMAS who makes his home at the Antiochian Village. The diocesan cathedral is St. George, in a suburb of Pittsburgh known as Oakland, hence the name of the diocese. *(There are a number of other ‘Bishops of Pittsburgh’ in other jurisdictions so the name ‘Oakland’ was chosen to avoid confusion—we apologize for those who thought we were trying to extend our territory to California! )* St. George Cathedral is also the home of Fr. John and Kh. Joanne Abdalah, co-editors of the archdiocesan magazine *The Word*. *(Please allow us this forum for a special prayer request for our beloved Kh. Joanne who was recently diagnosed with ovarian cancer.)*

We have a chance to get together a couple of times a year as a whole group at our Parish Life Conference and at our Annual Lenten Retreat held at the Antiochian Village. We have sought out ways to spice up our **Parish Life Conference** ‘meetings’ and now have visual presentations of interest along with exhibits, parish ideas displays, a Sister Parish Gift-basket exchange, and hands-on activities to try at our “Ideas Fayre.” These ideas, held in conjunction with a brunch, an inspirational message, and more routine business, have helped keep our audience clear to the end at 4pm. This year we even had to ask them to leave as they diligently tied quilts for seriously children and dyed Pysanky style Easter eggs!!



Our Annual **Lenten Retreat**, is held at the Antiochian Village usually one weekend in April. When Pascha comes very early, the retreat becomes a Paschal Retreat since we don’t want to face the heavy snowfall that can bring things to a stand still in western Pennsylvania. The retreat is always open to ladies of all jurisdictions and dioceses and is advertised in the Antiochian Village calendars. Regardless of whom we have as the guest speaker, participants have commented that it is a perfect time away for spiritual growth and quiet fellowship during lent and we don’t even have to cook!

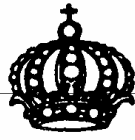
Our **Sister Parish** program encourages our parishes to develop relationships outside their own parish community. It begins each year at the PLC, with one parish either selecting at random, a gift basket prepared by another parish or choosing another parish that they would especially like to get to know. Any parishes not in attendance are assigned a sister parish. We leave the contents of the basket up to the creativity of the ladies, but recommend that it represent their home parish and community. The contents have ranged from baked goods, a patronal icon, cookbooks, an ornament, the story of a patron saint or church history, and any other small items that are unique to their area. But the most important thing in the basket is a group photo of women of the parish and a list of first names, so each Antiochian Woman can be lifted up in prayer by her sisters for the year. Some sister parishes arrange visits or exchange bios or pen pal style letters. Again, the nature of the relationship is left up to the creativity of the ladies.

In the recent past we have had a quarterly newsletter that was mailed out to the parishes. This fall we launched a **new 'AWE' newsletter** in a bulletin insert format. The goal will be not only to distribute administration type information, but also inspirational material, and practical items. We have also included suggested prayer or study materials that we in turn post on our archdiocesan website. During this current Nativity fast we have posted copies of the Akathist for Thanksgiving divided into 40 daily meditations for the Fast. The newsletter will be posted on the web and at first be sent out about every six weeks, both electronically and through snail mail. We hope to encourage parishes to help us defray costs and agree to have the newsletter sent out via e-mail to their e-mail list and to the person in their parish who does the weekly bulletin. We have had great comments on the new format, and hope that it helps us to communicate with more people, more frequently, for less money. We also think it will help us become more familiar to everyone in the parish regardless of whether they are able or inclined to attend Antiochian Women meetings. We even get positive comments from the men!

Finally, we are endeavoring to make a **Visit to all 47 parishes** and missions in AWE. The visits range from very informal gatherings to full day spiritual retreats, depending on the desire of each parish. These visits help us to know what they are all about, but also allows us to share their good ideas with others and trouble shoot any problems. Experience has shown that most parishes start out telling us they are not doing anything really special, then they slowly begin to list of the things they have done for years that seem mundane to them---but amazing to us. One group uses special electric drills to core cabbage for 10,000 cabbage rolls. Another parish has held a pasta supper for their community every week for many years. It is especially popular with area seniors since \$6 gets you a complete meal including a choice of about 5 kinds of pasta and several sauces served on glass plates at lovely settings. We were amazed to hear that it nets this parish about a \$1000. a week! Other parishes have adopted children or schools overseas. One church has become the only place that the retarded adults from area group homes ever get to go out to when they serve them a Thanksgiving meal. Another parish does tutoring for school kids. The list of ideas is as amazing as the ladies that we have met in our parishes. Thus we developed our names and slogan : AWE- Antiochian Women of the East: In awe of our Creator and His work in us and through us.



AWE enjoying a tea following a spiritual Retreat



**H. G. Bishop JOSEPH's remarks to the 2005 Northern California Ladies Retreat**  
November 12, 2005 - Danville, California



I would like to begin by thanking our guest speaker for this retreat, Mother Gabriela, for being with us for this very special retreat. As one raised in monasticism, I know how difficult it is for a monk or nun to leave the monastery and be in the world. And so, I thank her for the sacrifice she is making to serve us here.

When we speak of illness, we often think of symptoms: a cough, a pain, a discoloration. Yet, these are only signs that an illness has already taken hold of our bodies. An illness runs deeper than the symptoms, and it is only through careful examination that a physician can discover an illness before the symptoms develop. This is true of both the body and the soul. Our souls and minds can become infected with very real and very deadly diseases, which result in a variety of symptoms. St. Paul refers to them as works of the flesh. In Galatians, he wrote:

*"Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal 5:19-21)*

The Holy Apostle warns us that symptoms indicate that the disease of sin is so great that we cannot enter the Heavenly Kingdom. Just as an unhealthy body prevents us from going places, so an unhealthy soul prevents us from going into spiritual places, foremost of which is the Kingdom of God. Let us also remember our Lord's words recorded in the Gospel:

*"For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" -- he then said to the paralytic -- "Rise, take up your bed and go home." (Mt 9:5-6)*

Sin is a greater affliction to man. Though physical sickness may cause us great suffering, sin keeps us removed from God's presence and sets us in a place of eternal suffering. Physical wellness is of no value to a suffering soul, wracked with a guilty conscience and angry unforgiveness. Our Lord offers us forgiveness first, that might be healed of soul, so that we can join in the Mystical Union of Christ and the Church.

If we are to enter into the Bridal Chamber, we must be healthy. The diseases that afflict us must be cured. From the example of the saints, we know that physical diseases afflicted people close to God. Yet, we also know that many diseases are brought about by what we now call 'lifestyle decisions.' The alcoholic suffers from the disease of cirrhosis brought about by his drinking, and the coal miner suffers from black lung because he worked too long in the mines. Therefore, to live a peaceful and joyous life, we must be mindful of how we live. We must have a 'healthy lifestyle.' We listen to the advice of doctors in caring for our bodies, and we should listen to the teachings of the Church if we desire to have a healthy soul. However, I know that many of you are coming here to this retreat with much suffering. You are in pain and seeking healing. I promise that what you hear this weekend can be, for all of you, a new beginning on the road to healing. What I hope all of you will find here is hope, a hope and faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, which will give you the strength to change. For the solution to all illness is found in our willingness to take the cure. The sick person who refuses the medicine will not receive its benefits, and those who reject the teachings of the Church also reject the cure of the soul which the Church offers.

For some of you, this will be a long road. My hope is that the friendships you build here will become a means



of support as you journey along the way. It may be difficult to return from here to places we know are sick. Perhaps we do not think that our homes or parishes are healthy places. Never forget that the medicine is always stronger than the disease, and that your own healing will heal all those around you. You do not need to rely on the spiritual health of others to be healthy yourselves. Our Holy Faith has survived centuries in the hearts of people surrounded by those who hated them. We must strengthen ourselves by truly realizing that the God of the Universe is the God who dwells within us. When we begin to enter into our interior universe, we will find how close we are to our healing. God has given us all things, we need only remove from our inner selves what is not of God.

I hope that all of you find in this retreat a renewed confidence in our Lord, Jesus Christ. Never forget the inseparable bond we have in the Church, and let us aid one another in this marvelous journey to the Kingdom of Heaven.

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### **Northern California Annual Women's Retreat**

The weekend of November 11-13, 2005, marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gathering of Antiochian Women, presided over by His Grace Bishop JOSEPH, for a retreat weekend at the San Damiano Retreat Center in northern California. The theme this year was "Cure of the Soul, Cure of the Body... The Causes of Illness and the Path to Healing" presented by Mother Gabriella, the Abbess of Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan.

The retreat center is a lovely place, on 60 acres in wooded hills of the San Ramon Valley bordering Las Trampas Regional Park with a spectacular view of Mt. Diablo. The peaceful and beautiful gardens and trees were in full fall color when we all arrived greeted by several deer. On Friday we began our retreat with Vespers, dinner and an introduction of Mother Gabriella. Mother was born in Romania and entered the monastery under Mother Benedicta Braga. She took monastic vows at age 29 and helped found the monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God. She became the abbess in 1992 where she continues to work and she also travels to lecture and conduct retreats.

Mother Gabriella spoke of how important it was that we all gathered as a group to focus on the heart during a retreat like this yet, the challenge and hard work was how we would apply it to our lives once we left. Salvation is not about knowing a lot of things but about knowing God. Mother continued by giving us many insights on how we became sick as human people and our need to find wholeness in God.

On Saturday we began with morning prayer and ended with vespers, with time for many things in between. Bishop JOSEPH addressed the ladies and Mother Gabriella gave two more sessions. The ladies had time to rest, eat, visit the book store, talk with friends and take hikes throughout the reflective and refreshing day. We were also blessed to have our Spiritual Advisor, Fr. David Hovik, among us telling us about his visit to Greece and hearing confessions.

Sunday morning began with many walking and looking at deer, packing up our rooms and of course, as we have all come to love and cherish most, the celebration of Orthros and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH, thanked Mother Gabriella, Rev Father Patrick Jackson and his lovely wife Kh. Maria for their service. He especially thanked Tamara Northway who worked so hard on the little details of this hugely successful, filled to capacity, retreat weekend.





Beloved Antiochian Orthodox Women of North America,

May God bless and keep you!

It is important that you understand what it means to be an Antiochian Orthodox Christian woman. To be an Antiochian Orthodox Christian woman is to experience the Apostolic Faith. People know that there is something different about Christ. Christ speaks with authority. Christ cleanses lepers; Christ raised the dead; and though Christ suffered crucifixion and death, He rose again from the dead and appeared to His followers. And now, my sisters in Christ, nothing seems the same. Death has been trampled down by death. Sin and corruption no longer have dominion. The early followers of Jesus of Nazareth realized this because they experienced it. It is for the women of this Archdiocese to develop faith that is not a byproduct of systematic logic. You are gullible people. You are also not to be arrogant “moderns”, complacent with self-proclaimed sophistication. It is the convincing experience of the risen Christ that moves the women of this Archdiocese to put their work for Christ in the forefront. It is the convincing experience of the risen Christ that moves the women of this Archdiocese to put security aside and put their lives on the line for a life in Christ.



Now that Christ has returned to the Father, how do the women of this Archdiocese convey this message to future generations of women? Christ recognized this problem, so he promised that He would not leave us as orphans. Jesus sends us the Spirit of Truth, who bears witness to Him conveying His presence among those who believe. And this Holy Spirit, of course, is the advocate Whom the exalted Christ, having ascended in glory, asked the Father to send the community of believers that had gathered around the Apostles. This same Holy Spirit, comes to you, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America. And so the advocate was sent to the Apostles, and to the Theotokos in the city of Jerusalem. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Orthodox Church from its inception lacked nothing. You being women in that Church have all that you need. The experience that forged the Faith of the first believers can now be had by you, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America as long as you continue to confess Christ, and through incorporation into His Body by baptism, enter into the life of the Spirit. Your experience as women of the Church is an experience of the Apostolic Faith.

This is what makes an Antiochian Orthodox Christian Woman. This is why the Church is important to all of us. We do not claim to be a wealthy or powerful Church. You should not claim to be a powerful or wealthy organization. What you do claim as women of the Church is to possess the indwelling of the Spirit who bears witness to Christ, the advocate Who fosters the experience of the risen Lord that enables the women followers of Christ to believe. To be an Antiochian Orthodox Christian Woman is to have access to this experience in an unmitigated form.

My beloved sisters, I pray that you will continue to do your work without impugning the goodness and sincerity of our Orthodox Christian Faith. I pray that you will continue to affirm that it is in the Orthodox Church that the fullness of Christian Truth and the fullness of the Spirit that bears witness to this Truth are to be found. May God bless and keep you.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop THOMAS  
Diocese of Oakland, PA and the East

**Introducing  
The 2005—2007  
Board of the Antiochian Women of the  
Diocese of New York and the Archdiocesan District  
And the Diocese of Oakland, Pennsylvania and the East**

**THE OFFICERS**

*The Most Rev. Met. PHILIP - Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America*



**Born:** June 10, 1931 in Abou Mizan, Lebanon

**Name Day:** November 14

**Educated:**

Balamand Orthodox Theological Seminary, Tripoli (Lebanon), 1945-47

Orthodox Secondary School, Homs (Syria), 1947-49

Assiyah College, Damascus (Syria), 1949-51

Kelham Theological School, Nottinghamshire (England), 1953

University of London, (England), 1954

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary, Boston/Brookline, MA, 1956

Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 1956-59 (B.A. in History)

St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY, 1964-65 (M. Div.)

**Ordained:**

Deacon, August 6, 1949

Priest, March 1, 1959, by Metropolitan Antony Bashir

Archimandrite, June 1966, by Metropolitan Ilyas Kurban

Archbishop, August 14, 1966, at St. Elias Monastery, Lebanon, by Patriarch Elias VI; enthroned in New York on October 13th.

**Ministry:**

Secretary to Patriarch Alexander III (1949-53)

Dean of Students and Lecturer in Arabic Language and Literature, Balamand Seminary, Tripoli, Lebanon (1952)

Deacon, St. George Church, Detroit, MI (1956-59)

Pastor, St. George Church, Cleveland, OH (1959-64)

Archbishop of New York and North America (1966-), overseeing some 218 parishes

Founds Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOWCNA 1973)

Founds Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch (1975)

Purchases Antiochian Village property, Ligonier, PA (1978)

Founds St. Stephen's Course of Theological Studies (1980)

Accepts into Orthodoxy the Antiochian Evangelical Orthodox Mission (1987)

Founds Antiochian House of Studies (1992)

Leads the North American Antiochian Archdiocese to Self-Ruled status (2004)



***The Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS - Diocese of Oakland, PA and the East***

Of Arab-American heritage, Thomas Joseph was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1952. He attended John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, graduating in 1970. He went on to college at William Paterson College, graduating in 1974. After college, he worked in the Department of Community Improvements in Paterson, then served as a teacher for the Paterson Board of Education. When the Antiochian Village camp opened in the late 1970s, he was recruited by Fr. John Namie to serve as one of the original camp counselors from 1979 to 1982.

In the fall of 1979, Thomas began part-time study at St. Vladimir Orthodox Seminary, and was made a subdeacon by Metropolitan PHILIP in July of 1982. He continued his studies until the spring of 1983, when he was assigned to Virgin Mary Church in Yonkers, New York.

In 1984, Metropolitan PHILIP assigned him to St. George Church in Houston, Texas, where he served as Director of Christian Education and Youth Services. While in Texas, the Archdiocese also assigned him to oversee Christian Education and then later teen activities for the churches in the Southwest Region (now the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America). In July of 1988 Thomas was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop MICHAEL (Shaheen) of Toledo.

On August 28, 1994, Bishop ANTOUN ordained Dcn. Thomas to the priesthood, and Fr. Thomas served as assistant pastor at his parish in Houston until August of 1996, when he was appointed pastor of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Pinellas Park, Florida (near St. Petersburg).

Between 1996 and his consecration to the episcopacy, Fr. Thomas served in multiple capacities aside from his work as a pastor. He was an appointed member of the Archdiocese Youth Department Board; Spiritual Advisor to the Teen SOYO Southeastern Region; Chairperson of the Tampa Bay Orthodox Clergy Association; Director of Programs in Pastoral Bioethics for the International Academy of Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine in the United States; Speaker at Braunels, Germany, and at City University of Hong Kong on Bioethics; author of published articles on Christian Bioethics; Speaker at Antiochian Village and third session camp priest for the last three years; past President and current Vice President of the Tampa Bay Council of Orthodox Churches. In July 2002, Fr. Thomas was granted a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology jointly from the Antiochian House of Studies and the St. John of Damascus School of Theology of the University of Balamand in Lebanon.

On February 15, 2004, Fr. Thomas was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite by Bishop ANTOUN, and on December 5, 2004, he was consecrated to the episcopacy by Patriarch IGNATIUS IV of Antioch in Damascus, Syria.

On May 6, 2005 Bishop THOMAS was enthroned as Bishop of Oakland and the East at St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



THE MIDWINTER MEETING IS CONFIRMED FOR FEBRUARY 3 - 5, 2006

AT THE ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE.

Diocesan Presidents: Please remember that you are allowed 6 delegates (5 plus you, the President).

General Assembly will begin at 7:00 p.m., Friday evening, continue Saturday morning, meet with all other organizations in the Heritage Center auditorium at 1:00 p.m., go to lunch, and continue with meeting if need be.

## **Father Donald Shadid - Spiritual Advisor**



Father Don was born & raised in Peoria, IL, being baptized & chrismated at All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Peoria. He was active in church all his life, including the Jr. Choir, youth group, and traveling to Pennsylvania to the Antiochian Village Camp. While working on his Bachelor's Degree in Biological Science at Illinois State University, young Donald started the Orthodox Campus Ministry. In June 1982, while at The Village, he met Janet Abdalah (*sister of Fr. John Abdalah, co-editor for The Word Magazine.*) Don and Janet eventually became Antiochian Village Marriage # 3. Fr. Don attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY and earned his Master of Divinity (MDiv.) He then worked full-time for 2 yrs. at Antiochian Village Camp & Conference Center with the late Fr. John Namie. Fr. Don was ordained to the priesthood in April 1986 and in June was assigned to St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Johnstown, PA. The Shadids have 2 sons, Christopher (18) & Stephen (16) and 3 dogs (the oldest dog does Pet Therapy at Hospitals & Nursing Homes...with the other two soon to follow in that important 'ministry').

In addition to his part time job as AWE spiritual advisor and his full time job as priest to a 100 year old parish, Fr. Don has been past advisor for Eastern Region Fellowship of St. John the Divine; Treasurer of the Council for St. Sophia Orthodox Christian Academy (a pan-Orthodox Pre & Elementary School housed at his parish); Assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy Scout troop chartered by St. Mary; Assistant Advisor for the older Venture Scout Crew; a board Member of Westmont Family Counseling Ministries for many years; and in his 'spare' time earned his Doctor of Ministry graduate degree through Antiochian House of Studies and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. When Fr. Don finds time to take a breath he enjoys movies, the Outdoors (Hiking, Camping, etc.), bagpipes, and baking.

*"I am so very thankful that His Eminence has called on me to serve as the Advisor of the Oakland Diocese of the Antiochian Women. Our Executive Board (Officers) are so very dedicated to our Lord and His Church...always seeking His Will for their energies and dedication. They are a joy to work with in this specialized ministry of Christ-like compassion. They seek only to serve and truly emulate the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. They constantly lift me up through their prayer and their tireless efforts to serve our Blessed Archdiocese."*

--Fr. Don

John 14:27- *'The Peace of our Lord'*

## **Ina O'Dell - President**



Home parish: Holy Cross Church- Linthicum, MD (*yes, we are the crazy people often written about in books by my friend & prayer partner, Kh. Frederica Mathewes-Green,*)

AW Positions: Local chapter president, Eastern Region: humanitarian coordinator, newsletter editor, Vice President and President (2 terms).

At Pascha of 1995 my husband (now Dn. Mark) and I and our then adolescent sons, Luke and Zach, ventured beyond our Evangelical comfort zone and entered into the challenging glory that is Holy Orthodoxy. Eighteen years of puzzled looks and questions about our homeschooling no doubt helped to prepare us for the puzzled looks and questions about Orthodoxy. Starting from our ancestral home in Colorado more than 20 years ago, God also chose to lead us on another veritable odyssey through the "wilderness" by having us call no place home for more than 3 years. Job promotions led us to *'traveled the earth lightly'* from Colorado to Washington DC, to London, England, to Connecticut, then again to Washington D, initially experiencing a different protestant denomination with each move. Finally in Connecticut, 1800 miles from our ancestral 'home', God led us truly 'home' for the first time and into His Holy Orthodox Church.

So in addition to becoming an 'expert' on moving and house design & construction, I developed a love of travel-- both just for fun and for mission trips such as to the Amazon and Romania. I also enjoy reading, writing, speaking, photography, (BA- Journalism & Doc. Filmmaking), teaching Sunday School, hiking, camping, art, iconography, gardening, floral design, creating things and now the joy of going to our 49 parishes and missions to meet the wonderful ladies of AWE. Truly I am in 'awe' of our Creator and His work in all of you and through all of you.

### ***Edna Kay Hart - Vice President***



Edna Kay Hart is Vice President and Humanitarian Coordinator for the AWE. Edna is also the current President of her local AW chapter at St. George Church, Charleston, West Virginia. Over the years she has also served as the AW Midwest Region Secretary and Humanitarian Coordinator and as the local chapter president 9 years ago, as well.

Edna Kay was born and raised in West Virginia, where she also retired after working in state & county government for 40 yrs. Edna Kay is both a mother and a grandmother and has a reputation as a hard working volunteer at her very large and busy church in Charleston, WV.-- now the largest parish in the Diocese of Oakland, PA. Edna Kay loves to serve God in whatever ways she can, and is also active in St. George Senior Fellowship. When she is not volunteering or helping her brother at his florist shop, Edna Kay loves to read, cook, bake, shop, or go to the movies with two of her close friends. She was born into the church and was baptized in Montgomery, WV in 1943 when a traveling Orthodox priest came through her town. She is firmly convinced of the strength that God gives her through all the tough times and especially enjoys the 'love' verses found in I Corinthians 13.

### ***Kh. Yvonne Butts - Treasurer***



Yvonne was born and raised near Cleveland in Twinsburg, Ohio. She attended a private Christian College in Cedarville, OH and received a degree in Bible-Missions. She initially planned on being a missionary to a foreign country, but 10 years ago married and moved with her husband to Pennsylvania so he could attend a Westminster Theological Seminary. Yvonne's husband, now Fr. Joseph, took an Ancient Church class in the protestant seminary. Once he began learning about Orthodoxy he couldn't let it go. He visited St. Philip's Orthodox Church in Souderton, PA. She eventually visited with him, but Yvonne didn't fall in love with it right away like he did. But she decided that she didn't want to go to church by herself for the rest of her life and believed that God would have her follow her husband's guidance and so she began attending church with him regularly. God blessed that decision and gave her grace so that her eyes and heart were opened to Orthodoxy like her husband's had been. Yvonne soon fell in love with the Orthodox Church and they were chrismated together. Fr. Joseph was eventually ordained to the priesthood and assigned to establish Holy Ascension, a mission parish in the Great Valley area outside of Philadelphia. Now, every Sunday, they have over 80 people meeting in the basement of a Boy Scout Office in Frazer, PA.

Kh. Yvonne keeps very busy as a priest's wife helping her husband in the day to day office work of the church, and being mother to three young sons: Micah (6), Isaac (5), Jacob(2) and a baby on the way--due May 31. She's sure it's a boy too! Yvonne co-teaches the pre-school Sunday School class and makes the coffee each Sunday (Can't forget that important role!) She also works part-time as an accountant with an accounting firm in Horsham, PA with whom she had once worked full time (BK)—'Before Kids'. In her free time Kh.Yvonne takes her sons to Story Hour at the library, volunteers in her son's first grade class, enjoys crossword puzzles and mystery novels. Their 'boy' family loves to wrestle and play and take nature walks together. Yvonne's dream is to hike the Appalachian Trail. She likes serving AW as treasurer because she feels it is important to serve God with the gifts He has given you. It also gives her an opportunity to meet women around the archdiocese, which is sometimes hard to do with three young boys demanding so much of her attention. Her favorite verse is Philippians 2:14-15 "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God..." *Yvonne says: "It's such a convicting verse. So simply said, yet so difficult to put into practice."*

### ***Kh. Pam Pier - Recording Secretary***

(No photo available) Pam was born in Mechanicsburg Pennsylvania, not too distant from her current home in York, PA. She was a Penn State graduate with a B.S. in Biophysics, and then 27 years ago married her husband, Peter. They have three children: Mary (22), Michael (20), Nicholas (15). The whole family followed Fr. Peter on a journey from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy and, with 'significant input and assistance from God', founded an Orthodox mission in York 13 years ago. Kh. Pam loves to sing and chant not only for their parish, St. John Chrysostom, but also for an area ecumenical choir. As a priest's wife she is very active in organizing church activities and working with the women of the parish. Pam has also worked for many years in manufacturing and is presently employed at an electronics



manufacturing firm in York. Kh. Pam's favorite verse is from Ruth. *"Wither thou goes, there I will go. Wither thou lodgest, there I will lodge. And thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."* --- This verse marks a special point in her journey to Orthodoxy, and is on a plaque she gave her husband when they became Orthodox.

### ***Crystal Senour - Public Relations Director (and Membership Coordinator)***

(No photo available) I was born in North Dakota, but raised my whole life in New Jersey. Growing up we lived in South Plainfield, then moved to Hunterdon County. My family and I have now resided in Glen Gardner, New Jersey for nine years. My husband, Scott, is from Northwest Indiana, where we also lived for nine years.

Born into Orthodoxy, I was baptized and married at St. Anthony's Orthodox Church in Bergenfield, N.J. After marrying, my husband and I moved to Indiana, where my spiritual journey included praying fervently for children. We became members of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Indiana. God granted us a son, Graham, two days after Thanksgiving one year, so he will be turning eleven on November 26th. He is truly a gift from God. When we moved to New Jersey we became members of St. Gregory Palamas Orthodox Church in America where my spiritual journey led me to become a Sunday School Teacher. Our family eventually changed churches back to our childhood town of South Plainfield. We have now been members of Saint Stephen the Protomartyr Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church for five years. I was once asked if it worried me that I attended an Orthodox Church in America, my son was "a baptized soul" in the Greek Orthodox church, and I was a "baptized soul" in the Antiochian Orthodox Church. This statement astounded me. For we are all one in the Orthodox Church and it is my prayer, my hope and my dream that all of Orthodoxy become unified. The beauty of Orthodoxy is that no matter which Holy Orthodox congregation one belongs to, whether Greek, OCA, or Antiochian, the Orthodox Holy Traditions, Doctrine, and Divine Liturgy remain the same, unchanged for over two thousand years. My spiritual journey has lead me to pray for the unity of Orthodoxy and to become a certified Orthodox Sunday School Teacher to Teach children our faith and these. It is my hope that there will be an abundance of Orthodox Christian Schools one day. For then, our witness will be fulfilled. My favorite verse is John: 3:16.

## **THE COORDINATORS**

### ***Olena Basarab - Religious***

(Not photo available) I was born in Germany, but my parents were both Ukrainian . When I was around three years old we moved to Brazil and lived there until I was 16, at which time we came to the United States. We came here looking for a better life and we found it. At the age of 22, I married my husband Ron and we have been married for 36 years. We have 2 sons ages 32 and 24. Our son Ron is a psychologist who works with one of the Crisis centers here in York, PA and our son Ken is a Paramedic, he works in the Adam County Area. Both my husband and I are cradle Orthodox. We are both involved in our Church community. My husband serves as Subdeacon at St. John Chrysostom and I am involved in our Antiochian Women group.

I have served on the Regional level (secretary, V. President and president) and National level (as religious coordinator) and really enjoyed the fellowship with all our sisters. At this time I am serving as the president of our parish's Antiochian Women and Religious Coordinator for the Regional Antiochian Women. My favorite bible story is the story of Mary and Martha. I feel that I identify with Martha a lot. But I am working very hard to be more like Mary.

### ***Nancy George - NAB Project***



I was born in McKeesport, PA and raised in Pittsburgh just a few miles down the Monongahela River. I was born into Orthodoxy, with my mother being Russian Orthodox, and my father's family coming from Syria. At age 17 my mother became one of the first non-Syrians to marry into our church after the World War II. She learned all the traditions, but it was not easy since she was an American woman with carrot top red hair! But slowly she came to love and work hard for the church as well as my children. She and my dad taught Sunday School and always taught me that my talents were gifts from God to be shared with others. I am currently the co-president of our chapter of Antiochian Women at my parish, St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh. We are active in many things such as an abused women's shelter, food for the hungry, and lunches for the homeless. I also represent



the AW on the Parish Council, and have become active with the fellowship of St. John Divine. At church I have also taught cooking classes, sewed altar scarves, and baked Holy bread with my mother's help.

I have two grown children, Damian who is 27 and Alicia who is 25. My daughter is living in Lawton, OK, but I am pleased to have my son living nearby. I am currently employed full time for a small library in Scott Township, PA, but I worked for almost 20 years for the University of Pittsburgh. When my daughter was still a baby, I decided to go back to school one course at a time. I got my BA in English when she was 11 1/2 years old, and began my Masters in Library Science about six months later. I received my Masters in May, 1999 as I was approaching my 51<sup>st</sup> birthday. I like to sew, cook, bake, crochet and read or listen to books on tape to keep up with patron's questions on current bestsellers. One of my favorite books is called 'Dear and Glorious Physican' by Taylor Caldwell which is a fiction based story on St. Luke. It is interesting reading, imagining what life was like in the era of Jesus' life.

### ***Webmaster - Saydeh Karabatis***



Saydeh Karabatis was born and raised in Lebanon. She came to the US for graduate studies and completed her MS in Computer Science. She is married to George Karabatis and they live in MD. They are blessed with 2 boys: Yianni and Peter. Since infancy, Saydeh was attending her village patron Saint Mar Yacoub (St. James Adelphotheos). Growing up during the 17-year Civil war in Lebanon, she became active in the Church serving in Sunday School, Social Services and Young Adults and joined the Orthodox Youth Movement of Antioch ([www.mjoa.org](http://www.mjoa.org)). After moving to MD and joining Holy Cross Church ([www.holycrossonline.org](http://www.holycrossonline.org)), Saydeh has been a Sunday School teacher. She is the Webmaster for NAB as well as AWE. Saydeh believes that with her background, she can serve Orthodoxy in today's technological society. Being a mother and a professional, she is

committed to the outreach of the mission of the AW organization. Her favorite verse is from the Thanksgiving Akathist service thanking the Lord for all His mercies, "seen or unseen".

### ***Newsletter Editor - Vera Acker***



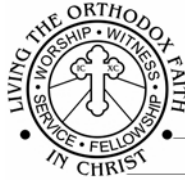
I was born and raised in Queens, NY, and Orlando FL and currently live in Harleysville, PA. I had come to know the Lord as a teenager, in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. I met my husband, Raymond, while we were students at Nyack College, a Christian liberal arts college. In 1988 we moved to this area for my husband to attend a Protestant seminary. However, my husband had begun a search for more traditional worship, and little did we know that we were headed to Orthodoxy. First we became Episcopalian, and about the same time, a friend of ours became Orthodox. About two years later, after many discussions and visits, we were also Chrismated into the Orthodox Church. After a few years at St. Vladimir's seminary and then Florida, we returned to this area in 1998, and my husband was ordained to the Diaconate as Deacon Herman at our parish, St. Philip's, in Souderton, PA. We have two sons: Simeon, 12; and Ephrem, 6.

I am in the church choir and am the church librarian. I am also the church secretary during the week, which extends into the weekends as I answer questions and help people find what they need. In all my years in administrative positions, I have discovered that what I like best is layout and design. So I am also happy to have a place working with the wider community of Orthodoxy and love working with the AWE newsletter. This year we have changed our format so we can reach more ladies, more quickly, more often, and less expensively by having it as a bulletin insert that we can send out via e-mail.

One of my favorite verses is really also my prayer: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer." Psalm 19:14



**Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year to all!**



# TEEN SOYO EDUCATION MONTH

Educating Orthodox Youth Workers



**January 2005**

Teen SOYO is committed to the education of parish youth workers, providing scholarships to Parish Youth Workers enrolled in the Youth Ministry Concentration of the St Stephens Program. Our teens tell us there is a perceivable difference when youth workers are educated. More significantly they see the difference in the teens that are ministered to by well-educated parish youth workers.

We are committed to educating our parish youth workers in a significant way. This past September we began this education process by partnering with the Antiochian House of Studies to provide an opportunity for parish youth workers to receive both a certificate in Applied Orthodox Studies with a concentration in Youth Ministry, as well as a Master Degree in Applied Orthodox Studies with a concentration in Youth Ministry. This program is specifically designed for Parish Youth Workers who are otherwise employed and therefore cannot leave their jobs and homes for an extended period of time to attend an Orthodox Seminary.

## You can help by making a contribution to the NAC Teen SOYO Youth Worker Fund

Name \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed  \$1,000     \$500     \$250     \$100     \$50     Other amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This commitment will be fulfilled by a gift in the form of:

Check     Securities - Credit Card:  AMEX     Discover     MasterCard     Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Ident Code\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* The last 3 digits on the back of Visa, MasterCard, and Discover cards. For AMEX cards, the 4 digits above the credit card number on the front.

Mail contributions to:

**NAC Teen SOYO Youth Worker Scholarship Fund—Department of Youth Ministry**  
PO Box 389—Westwood MA 02090—Secure Online contributions may be made at [www.antiochian.org/SOYO](http://www.antiochian.org/SOYO)

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## Educating Our Parish Youth Workers

This is a significant education program you can do in the comfort of your own home\* without leaving your job or ministry.

The Antiochian House of Studies Youth Ministry concentration is aimed at preparing Orthodox Youth Workers in North America to minister to the needs of our nation's growing youth population. This program is recommended for those currently serving or those planning to serve, as Parish Youth Workers/Directors/Advisors. It will equip them with the information and experience needed to successfully implement and manage a Youth Ministry program at their parish.

A parish youth worker can receive the education needed to successfully perform youth ministry through the St. Stephen's Program, a graduate-level directed-reading course of studies in Applied Orthodox Theology with a concentration in Youth Ministry!

Successful completion of the St. Stephen's Program leads to a certificate in Applied Orthodox Theology. The Youth Ministry concentration in the program comprises 15 directed-reading courses, three projects, all of which are done in the comfort of your home and three weeks of residency (one week each year). Each entering Class completes the coursework, projects, and residency on the same trimester schedule (two long sessions and one residency) during the course of the Program. Each fall session includes three directed-reading courses; each spring session includes two reading courses and one directed-project course; and each summer session includes one week of residency in the Antiochian House of Studies.

Students that successfully complete the Youth Ministry Concentration Certificate will be eligible to apply for the Master's Degree Program with a concentration in Youth Ministry through the Antiochian House of Studies and the Balamand University, which involves writing a Thesis, as a follow-up to the class work done in the certificate program.

### **The Certificate Program**

The certificate program is made up of a total of 15 directed-reading courses, three projects, and three weeks of residency (one week each year) over a three-year period. Each fall session includes three directed-reading courses; each spring session includes two directed-reading courses and one directed-project course; and each summer session includes one week of residency in the Antiochian House of Studies

### **Youth Ministry Concentration Classes**

#### **Unit Course Name**

- I Fundamentals I: An Introduction to Orthodoxy - Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Allen
- I Church History I: The Christian Church from its Foundation - V. Rev. Dr. Michele Najim
- I Liturgical Theology I: An Introduction to Liturgical Theology, Baptism, and Eucharist - Dr Paul Meyendorf

- II Church History II (Post 7th Century) - V. Rev. Dr. Michele Najim
- II Practical Aspects of Youth Ministry: Fundamentals of Youth Ministry - Rev. Michael Anderson
- II Youth Ministry Project 1 & Project Paper

S1 One week summer 1 Residency - V. Rev. Dr. Joseph Purpura and Rev. Michael Nasser

III Practical Aspects of Youth Ministry: Relational Ministry and Spiritual Development in Youth -  
Rev. Kevin Scherer

III Holy Scripture: The New Testament - V. Rev. Dr. Paul Tarazi

III Patristics I: The Fathers of the Church During the First Five Hundred Years - V. Rev. Dr. Michel Najim

IV Holy Scripture III: Biblical Topics - V. Rev. Dr. Paul Tarazi

IV Doctrine I: The Doctrine of Knowledge in the Tradition of the Church - V. Rev. Joseph Antypas

IV Youth Ministry Project 2 & Project Paper

S2 One week summer 2 Residency

V Doctrine II: The Orthodox Doctrines of the Holy Trinity - V. Rev. Joseph Antypas

V Moral and Ethical Issues Confronting Orthodox Youth - V. Rev. Dr. Joseph Purpura

V Pastoral Theology IV - Rev. Dr. Joseph Allen

VI Pastoral Theology IIV - Rev. Dr. Joseph Allen

VI Designing and Building a Parish Youth Ministry - V. Rev. Anthony Yazge

VI Youth Ministry Project 3 & Project Paper

S3 One week summer 3 Residency

### **Masters Degree Program**

Students who successfully complete the three-year St. Stephen's certificate program and who satisfy other prerequisites may apply to enter the Master's Degree Program, leading to a Master of Arts in Applied Orthodox Theology with an Emphasis in Youth Ministry.

The Master's Degree Program with the Youth Ministry concentration focuses on a practical need in Youth Ministry and, in general, requires the following:

- Presentation of a thesis proposal (abstract)
- Completion of two trimesters (fall and spring) of thesis research and preparation.
- Completion and defense of the master's thesis.

For more information and an application booklet visit [www.antiochian.org/educating\\_parish\\_youthworkers](http://www.antiochian.org/educating_parish_youthworkers) or request a catalogue from the Antiochian House of Studies Office - **St Stephen's Studies—Antiochian House of Studies—385 Ivy Lane—Bergenfield, NJ 07621-1607 Telephone: 201-569-0095 Email: [theoeduc1@aol.com](mailto:theoeduc1@aol.com)**

## REMINDER

Diocesan Boards: Please remember the following schedule for submitting your articles and profiles. One diocese is highlighted in each issue according to the following schedule. However, Articles and news from all dioceses and parishes of the North American Antiochian Archdiocese are welcome in every issue.

	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Date Due</b>
1	NAB Board	September 2005 ✓	Done ✓
2	NY and the Archdiocesan District, and Oakland, PA and the East	December 2005 ✓	November 1, 2005 ✓
3	Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	March 2006	February 1, 2006
4	Toledo and the Midwest	June 2006	May 1, 2006
5	Worcester and New England	September 2006	August 1, 2006
6	Miami and the Southeast	December 2006	November 1, 2006
7	Wichita and Mid-America	March 2007	February 1, 2007
8	Los Angeles and the West, Eagle River and the Northwest.	June 2007	May 1, 2007

To ensure publication in the next issue, please submit your news and articles by this date.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for our sisters in Christ Kh. Joanne Abdalah, Kh. Christina Tassos, Kh. Christina O'Grady, Eleanor Kinan and Lynette Hoppe.

Merciful Lord, visit them in their time of need and affliction; and as You healed Jairus' daughter and raised her from her bed of infirmity, visit your servants, Joanne, Christina, Christina and Lynette, and deliver them from sickness and pain. For You alone have borne the sickness and affliction of our world and with You nothing is impossible. For You are all-merciful and to You we ascribe glory and adoration forever.