

# *DIAKONIA*



Winter 2006

December 2006 - February 2007

*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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Barbara Baz ..... Widowed Clergy Wives Program

### *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 Diocese of Miami  
and the Southeast**

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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**READ THE DIAKONIA ON LINE AT**  
<http://www.antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA>

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Self-Ruled  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

The Right Reverend Bishop JOSEPH  
Bishop of Los Angeles and the West

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

المسيح ولد ، فمجده !

Χριστός γεννάται! Δοξάσατε!

*"That One, Who before the very creation of the world was the Only-Begotten, Without-Compare, Simple, Incorporeal, is incarnated and descends into the world, clothed in a perishable body, so that He is visible to all. For if He was not visible, then by what manner would He teach us to keep His precepts and how would He lead us to the invisible reality? Therefore, it was for this that He became openly visible, to lead forth those of the visible world to the Invisible."* – St. Gregory the Wonderworker, On the Nativity



My Beloved Children in Christ, the Right Reverend, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers; Reverend Deacon; and all the faithful of the Holy Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:

As we celebrate the joyous Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, I commend you to reflect upon the Gift that each of you has been given, the Kingdom of Heaven. While we live in a world full of suffering and strife, we are offered Eternal Life full of peace and harmony. As our neighbors labor for security in material possessions and earthly honors, we receive the grace of God that endures trial and time.

All we have is conditioned upon a single call from our Lord: "Take up your cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). By this, our Lord means that we patiently endure the injustices and scorn of the world with the aim of depending only upon Him. Through our own true daily Christian life, we become dead to sin, but resurrected in Him. We do not merely speak of Jesus Christ, but live with Him in every moment of our lives. In this way, we make the Nativity of our Lord apparent to all our neighbors. We make our invisible Faith visible to all through our example. When people see us practicing the faith seriously and spiritually, they are moved by our witness and they are touched by our faith. By living our Christian life truly and every day, we share our joy with all the world, and the blessings of the Incarnate Word of God become real and not just a statement. This is the best way of evangelizing America.

My beloved, I call upon each of you to examine your lives in light of our Lord Jesus Christ's Incarnation. Do you make manifest the Invisible through your visible lives? Do you bear the Fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control [Gal 5:22-23])? For, if your lives do not manifest the Fruits, then your lives will only produce works of the flesh (Gal 5:18-20). If you do not live as an icon of the Incarnate Lord, then you are destined to be an example of sin and corruption.

As the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Holy Virgin and conceived within her the Eternal Logos, so allow the same Holy Spirit to enter you through your repentance and sincere tears for your sins, so that the Holy Spirit may bring forth good things through you. Let His peace, joy and love flow through you into this world, that your neighbors may see and come to know God through you.

Rejoice with the gift and the blessings of the Nativity of our Lord as a reminder of your own calling to holiness in God. Receive the imperishable gifts that can be infinitely shared without being diminished. His grace is beyond measure, and His love cannot be contained!

Your Father in Christ,

**+ JOSEPH**

Bishop of Los Angeles and the West



# The Nativity Sermon of St John Chrysostom

"I behold a new and wondrous mystery!

My ears resound to the shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but loudly chanting a heavenly hymn!

The angels sing!

The archangels blend their voices in harmony!

The cherubim resound their joyful praise!

The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead herein... on earth and man in heaven. He who is above now, for our salvation, dwells here below; and we, who were lowly, are exalted by divine mercy!

Today Bethlehem resembles heaven, hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices and, in place of the sun, witnessing the rising of the Sun of Justice!

Ask not how this is accomplished, for where God wills, the order of nature is overturned. For He willed, He had the powers, He descended, He saved. All things move in obedience to God.

Today He Who Is, is born ! And He Who Is becomes what He was not! For when He was God, He became man-while not relinquishing the Godhead that is His...

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him angels, nor archangels, nor thrones, nor dominions, nor powers, nor principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them deprived of His care, nor because of His incarnation has He ceased being God. And behold kings have come, that they might serve the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven; Women, that they might adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He might change the pains of childbirth into joy; Virgins, to the Son of the Virgin...

Infants, that they may adore Him who became a little child, so that out of the mouths of infants He might perfect praise; Children, to the Child who raised up martyrs through the rage of Herod; Men, to Him who became man that He might heal the miseries of His servants;

Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd who was laid down His life for His sheep;

Priests, to Him who has become a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek;

Servants, to Him who took upon Himself the form of a servant, that He might bless our stewardship with the reward of freedom (Philippians 2:7);

Fishermen, to the Fisher of humanity;

Publicans, to Him who from among them named a chosen evangelist;

Sinful women, to Him who exposed His feet to the tears of the repentant woman;

And that I may embrace them all together, all sinners have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! Since, therefore, all rejoice, I too desire to rejoice! I too

wish to share the choral dance, to celebrate the festival! But I take my part, not plucking the harp nor with the music of the pipes nor holding a torch, but holding in my arms the cradle of Christ!

For this is all my hope!

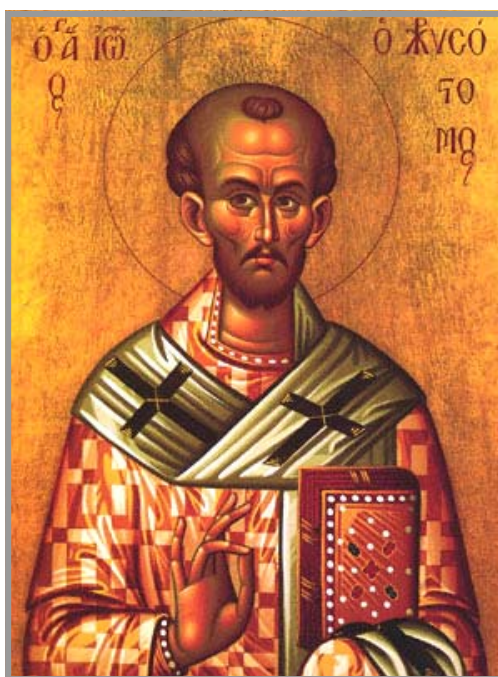
This is my life!

This is my salvation!

This is my pipe, my harp!

And bearing it I come, and having from its power received the gift of speech, I too, with the angels and shepherds, sing:

"Glory to God in the Highest! and on earth peace to men of good will! "





*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*

I send the warmest greetings from the sisterhood of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. We have enjoyed a productive year! We are the youngest former region, now diocese, in our God-protected archdiocese and are composed of 34 parishes to date. Of this 34, 25 are churches and 9 are missions. Our newest mission, St. Elizabeth the New Martyr in Murfreesboro, Tennessee has recently been assigned a full-time priest, Fr. John Oliver (former parishioner of St. Ignatius, Franklin, TN) who arrived with his wife and four children to assume his new position, August 1<sup>st</sup>! We are excited about the growth of our diocese!

Our women, with the support and help from their parishes and communities throughout our diocese, met the challenge for our project with enthusiasm and collected \$28,460.58!

A raffle of donated gift baskets from participating parishes were on display throughout our Parish Life Conference in June, raising \$948. This has proved to be a fun and effective way to raise funds over and beyond what each parish collects and has become an annual event. We also set aside the allocated monies designated for an orphan our diocese adopted a few years ago from the profits of the raffle. We honored His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP on the anniversary of his 40<sup>th</sup> year of his Episcopacy with a monetary gift. Many years, Your Eminence!



St. George, in Vicksburg, Mississippi, celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> year this year! They enjoyed an exciting celebration. We look forward to meeting in January at our Mid-Winter Delegate's meeting, in Jacksonville, Florida, to make plans for our next PLC which will be held in Orlando.

I have worked with the best of the best and thank God for the officers, coordinators, and ladies of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. We are blessed to be under the care of His Grace, Bishop ANTOUN who enthusiastically inspires us! We have also been cared for and watched over by our spiritual advisor, Fr. Peter Nugent. My sincere thanks to Laila Ferris who has guided me and has been quick to respond when I've sought her wisdom.

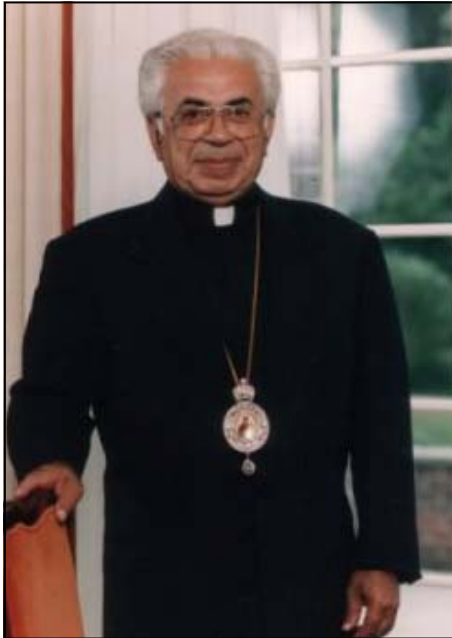
I am honored and humbled to be numbered among the Antiochian Women and ask that you pray for me as I pray for you!

Forgive,  
Kh. Terry Rogers, president  
Antiochian Women  
Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

**Introducing  
The 2005—2007  
Board of the Antiochian Women of the  
Diocese of Miami and the Southeast**

**THE OFFICERS**

***The Rt. Rev. Bishop ANTOUN - Bishop of Miami and the Southeast***



His Grace was born **Antoun Yssa Khouri** on January 17, 1931, in Damascus, Syria, the fourth of six children born to the late Wedad Elias Abraxia and Yssa Khouri. After completing his elementary education at the Orthodox School in Meedan, Syria, he entered the Minor

Seminary at Balamand, near Tripoli, Lebanon, at the age of fourteen, where he met his lifelong friend, the future Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba). At the Balamand he completed his junior and senior high school studies and then went on to receive his diploma in theology from the Balamand Theological Academy of Saint John of Damascus .

On October 28, 1951, he was ordained to the diaconate by His Beatitude, ALEXANDER III, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Damascus. While a deacon at the cathedral, he was instructor, then Dean of the Saint John of Damascus School. While in Damascus, he undertook undergraduate studies at the Assiyat Orthodox College from which he was graduated in 1957. In the same year he was assigned to the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Brazil, where he served at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint Paul and as secretary to His Eminence, Metropolitan IGNATIUS (Forzley) of Sao Paulo.

In 1959, Deacon Antoun arrived in United States

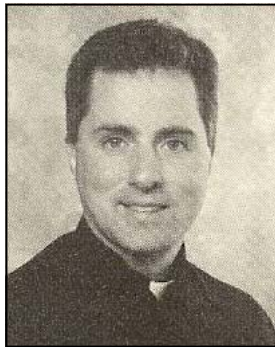
for graduate theological studies at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary near New York City, from which he was graduated in 1962, having been ordained to the priesthood on May 29, 1960, by His Eminence, Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir), the Archbishop of New York and all North America. On August 3, 1969, he was elevated to the dignity of Archimandrite by His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba), the current Primate of Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. As a priest he served the following pastorates: St. George Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; St. George Church in Toronto, Ontario; St. George Church in Allentown, Pennsylvania and St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York. From 1969 to 1977, he worked from the Archdiocesan chancery in Englewood, New Jersey, as personal aide to Metropolitan Philip

The General Assembly of the Archdiocese of North America, consisting of clergy and lay delegates from parishes throughout the United States and Canada, nominated Archimandrite Antoun for the office of auxiliary bishop to the Metropolitan on August 1, 1981, and the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East elected him to that office at a session in Damascus, Syria, on November 4, 1982, as titular of Selefkia. He was consecrated to the episcopacy on January 9, 1983, at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) of North America; Archbishop MICHAEL (Shaheen) of Toledo, the Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of North America; Archbishop ELIAS (Saliba) the superior of the Patriarchal Monastery of St. George (Tel-Kalakh, Syria); Bishop PAUL (Bandaly), the Patriarchal Vicar (now Metropolitan of Akkar, Lebanon); and Bishop ANTONIO (Chedraoui), the Patriarchal Legate for the Diocese of Mexico and Central America.

By a decision of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate dated October 9, 2003, His Grace became a diocesan bishop bearing the title of **Bishop of Miami and the Southeast**. Bishop ANTOUN maintains his office and residence at the Archdiocesan Chancery in Englewood, New Jersey.



**Father Peter Nugent - Spiritual Advisor**



Rev. Fr. Peter Nugent has been the pastor of St. Basil Antiochian Orthodox Church in Metairie, Louisiana, since August 1999. He is married to the lovely Khouriya, Pamela Nugent. He has a six year old daughter, Emma, and a three year old boy, Aidan. Fr. Peter entered Orthodoxy in 1991 while living in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of Texas A&M

University and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological Seminary. He is currently enrolled in a Master of Social Work program at Tulane University.

**Kh. Terry Rogers - President**



I am a native Tennessean. Although I was born in Nashville we have lived approximately 25 miles south of there in beautiful, historic Franklin since 1985. Our parish is in Franklin and our current temple was built in there, in 1985 as well. We have outgrown our space and are currently building a new parish hall and new a church building

sometime after that. I met Fr. Stephen our senior year of high school and we both graduated from Memphis State University. We were married in 1973. My degree is in Early Childhood Education. I chose to stay at home with our three daughters until 1990, when I began teaching full-time. I currently teach second grade in a wonderful public school. I am a Master Teacher for Intel©, recognized as a SMART Technologies® Exemplary Educator and a Peer Educator for SMART®. I'm the webmaster for my school's website. I recently became a facilitator/trainer for Quantum Learning Network®. I serve as the webmaster for our parish's website and teach church school. Our daughters have all grown up! Ashley married Dan Kevorkian from the St. George parish in Little Falls, N.J. and Katie married Adam Roberts from St. Elias in Atlanta. Rachel is an accomplished knitter and works for a cellular company. Father and I have 4 beautiful grandchildren, Steven -6, Hanneh-3, Julian, 1 ½ and Evie 4 mo. Number 5 is due to arrive in May, 2007, to Ashley and Dan! We are blessed!

My favorite Bible verse is:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”. John 13: 34-35.

**Kh. Dannie Moore - V. President/Project Coordinator**



Since the early 90's, I have been involved with the work of the Antiochian Women.

The first several years it was an honor to serve as Humanitarian Coordinator for the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. During that time we began the ministry of sending cards to our friends in the Diocese who, for various reasons, had to stay at home or were in

other places to have assistance with their care.

It was an honor and humbling experience to receive a certificate of Meritorious Service from Metropolitan PHILIP in June, 2002. After more than ten years, many of the ladies in different parishes continue this vital ministry. Following those years, I served as Membership Coordinator for a couple of years and at the present time it is a privilege to serve as Vice President/ Project Coordinator for the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast.

Growing up in the “Old-timey” Methodist Church (which was a blessing) my heart is always full of thanksgiving to God for bringing us to the Orthodox faith.

Being a part of the EOC (Evangelical Orthodox Church) was a step of faith that led Fr. Andrew and me to the Antiochian Orthodox Church. In the year 1987, when Metropolitan PHILIP spoke the words to hundreds of evangelicals, “Welcome Home”, our lives were forever changed. We will always be grateful for his compassion for us and embracing the “evangelicals” that we can now say .. we are “home” in the true Church.

Many years ago, I did graduate from the Crawford W. Long Hospital School of Nursing in Atlanta, Georgia and received an R.N degree. Soon after that, I married and now Fr. Andrew and I have been together 46 years. The fruit of our marriage has been six beautiful children (2 girls and 4 boys) and at present, 13 grandchildren ( 2 grandsons and 11 granddaughters).

It is a privilege to serve in our parish, St Stephen Antiochian Orthodox Church in Hiram, Georgia. We have a church school in which I teach. Also, we have a very active food pantry. The parishioners bring food items and we distribute to those in need in our county. Most of the people who come to us are single mothers with children.

In addition to the above and other acts of mercy the women do in our church, I like to read and play the piano. Psalm 27:4 is a prayer that I ask God to grant:

“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the Lord,  
And to inquire in His temple”.

**Ashley Kevorkian - Recording Secretary**



I am a member of St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, TN. Besides serving the Antiochian Women, I have also served as treasurer for the Fellowship of St. John the Divine in our Diocese. I am currently the Oratorical Coordinator for our Diocese, as well. My involvement in the church started at a young age. I

was greatly influenced by my 7 years as a camper at Antiochian Village Camp, my service as a counselor at Antiochian Village and more recently at Camp St. Thekla, our Diocesan camp. My love of working with youth led me to obtain my degree in Elementary Education. Locally, I serve as Church School Director for my parish. I am married with a 6 year-old son, Steven, and a 3 year-old, Hanneh. We are expecting our third child in May.

**Martha Rowell - Treasurer**

No biography or photo available

**Vanessa Swatek - Public Relations**



I am a native Georgian and grew up as a Southern Baptist. Soon after marriage, I began to explore other protestant faiths as I married and moved away from my home church. I visited many different churches, including Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of God, Pentecostal, and Seventh Day Adventist, to name a few.

An Orthodox Christian friend at work invited me and other co-workers to Vespers at a Russian Orthodox Church, which left me thinking Orthodoxy as strange. But after months praying to find the “true Church”, I visited another Orthodox church and began to seriously study the Orthodox faith. Within several months, my children and I were baptized and chrismated. My search was over and my love of Orthodoxy has only deepened over the years. Becoming Orthodox relieved my ever present struggle to find myself in God. Suddenly, I knew that I was one of His children and have never doubted it since!

I have been a member at St. Elias in Atlanta for over 15 years. I am privileged to be on the Parish Council, to sing in the choir, to chant, and to work with the teens. In my professional career I am a Senior

Software consultant for I.B.I.S., Inc., a Microsoft Business Solutions Partner in the Atlanta area. Additionally, I enjoy family, cooking, gardening, and quilting. My husband, Chuck, is an incredible blessing to me and faithful to join me in worship every Sunday. My children are a great source of joy to me. My daughter, Tiffany, is a senior at the University of Georgia and my son, Eric, is in the Navy stationed in San Diego, CA. He is married to a wonderful girl, Ingrid, and they have been blessed with their first son, and my first grandson, Gavin, who is 2 years old. I have recently witnessed the most wonderful miracle of healing of my God-daughter, Mary Evelyn. She and thousands prayed mightily for God to heal her from a cancerous tumor. With God’s mercy and power and the fervent prayer of so many righteous, she has recently been declared free of cancer. GOD IS SO GOOD!

My favority Bible verse is:

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Psalms 37: 4-5

**Sarah Hodges - Immediate Past President and Religious Coordinator**



Sarah Hodges has been a member of St. John Orthodox Church in Memphis, Tennessee, since her chrismation at Pascha in 1990. She currently serves as NAB Religious Coordinator; Religious Coordinator and Immediate Past President for the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast; and President of

the Women of St. John. A native of Memphis, she has also spent important parts of her life in Chicago, New York, Paris and the Congo. Married to husband Mickey since 1989, they have four children: Chris (16), Irene (14), Ben (12) and Joe (8). With a Masters in Business Administration from New York University, Sarah also consults on pensions, benefits and HR administration. She enjoys swimming, reading, and walking to church.



## THE COORDINATORS

### *Myrna Martin - Membership*



I was born in Guatemala. I came to US as a nanny/maid when I was seventeen years old. I met and married Edward Martin who is a Deacon at St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin TN. We have three children, Miriam, Henry, and Stephen, who has just recently finished working at the Rafael Hogar Ayau Orphanage in

Guatemala for a year as a missionary. Our effort as a family has been to do something for this place of abandoned children. A group of Orthodox nuns were given the task of being there, working faithfully and serving in any capacity for them. Our family has seen the miracles that have occurred. I'm blessed to be able to work for the church and for the opportunity to serve in any way.

My journey to Orthodoxy began in 1982 through Father Gordon Walker. I enjoy meeting people and speaking about the Orthodox faith. Often they become very good friends and as a result, I seem to have acquired many godchildren who bring me much joy. I teach Spanish at a small private school and enjoy being

available for anything that needs to be done.

I serve now as the Vice-President of our AW chapter and Membership coordinator for SER. For many years I have cooked the Lenten Meals and continue to help decorate our sanctuary every year for Christmas and Pascha. I have reached an age that shows me where I need to be. I have learned also that attending and participating in services are such strength to my soul; I never thought I needed to be strengthened by the word of God in such a way. Thanks be to God also, for my priest Fr. Stephen who has encouraged me to do what I have been doing. His guidance and prayer have been of great help for me to be the person I need to be.

May God Almighty give us strength to serve Him well.

**The following are Coordinators for whom no biographies or photos were submitted:**

*Elaine Mauney - Humanitarian*

*Debbie Chalhoub - Scholarship*

*Cathy Stazione - Fundraising*

*Judy Chalhoub - Parliamentarian*

## 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.

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	September 2005 ✓	August 1, 2005 ✓
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.

# Orthodox Women Saints

## St. Lucia of Syracuse

Feast Day, December 13

This sweet saint of Orthodoxy was Lucia who was born in Syracuse, Sicily, in the year 235, the daughter of pagan parents who became Christian shortly after her mother became a widow. After the death of the father, Lucia came to know the light of the Savior but her mother withdrew into the darkness of paganism, responding to her daughter's pleas for Jesus Christ with a skepticism that made her little better than an agnostic. How Lucia became so devout a Christian in an atmosphere less than conducive to recognition puzzled her mother, but it required more than the words of pious daughter to win her over to Christianity.

Lucia's mother who answered to the name of the Christian sounding Eutychia, became seriously ill with a blood disease, perhaps a form of cancer, when she was taken to the shrine of St. Agathi in Catania, Sicily, where the daughter prayed for a cure, involving over and over the name of St. Agathi who had lived in the previous century. The ailing mother felt her daughter's loving spirit and with it also felt refreshed and vigorous, walking away with her health restored and with an awareness that Christianity is the true religion.

In accordance with pagan custom, Lucia had been committed in marriage as a child by her mother, who returned to Syracuse in total agreement with her daughter that this arrangement should now be formally dissolved. The dissolution of an engagement was not taken lightly in pagan circles, particularly when the intended groom had every intention of marrying the girl. Despite the fact that both women were aware that the break would lead to serious consequences, the pagan family was apprised of the change of heart of the girl, particularly since she was a confirmed Christian, a confession of faith which only compounded the affront to the pagans.

With the pagan Emperor Diocletian in sympathy only with those who, like himself, had no sympathy for Christians, the full fury of the spurned suitor was turned on Lucia who was summoned before a tribunal to answer for her actions. St. Agathi had appeared in a

vision to Lucia to forewarn her that she too, would be martyred for Christ. Nevertheless, Lucia made an eloquent plea in her defense, stating that it was not her intention to offend anyone, pagan or Christian, but that her religion precluded marriage to a pagan, stating further that she would be willing to marry a converted pagan to fulfill the promise in which she had no part but she would observe as a compromise to custom.

There was no compromising with Pashasion, the presiding Roman judge, and when Lucia refused to resume the pagan ways of her betrothed and consent to marriage, she was condemned not to die but to suffer a degradation worse than death. The vindictive court sought to vilify her, as well as her Christian image, by forcing her to serve in a brothel for the amusement of a depraved Roman citizenry. Knowing this to be scarcely more than a prolonged agony to end in shame and death, Lucia refused to budge from the prisoner's dock, but her furious resistance was no match for the burly guard who attempted to take her away.

An unseen power seemed to come to her assistance as guard after guard was repelled by the Christian girl who preferred death to dishonor, and it was then that she was looked upon as some sorceress who would make a bad bride anyway. She was then instructed to disavow the King of

Kings of whom she spoke, but her defiance brought a platoon of guards lunging at her and a sword ended her life on December 13, 304.

*From Orthodox Saints by Fr. George Poulos, printed with permission.*

*The name Lucia (or Lucy) is derived from the Latin word for light (lux), and so she is often invoked for afflictions of the eyes. There is a tradition that she was blinded by her torturers, and the church of San Giovanni Maggiore in Naples even claims to possess her eyes.*



**JANUARY IS...**

# TEEN SOYO EDUCATION MONTH



Join Teen SOYO in this quest to provide scholarships to your parish youth workers to participate in the Antiochian House of Studies Youth Ministry Education Program, so that they may better serve the youth of your parish.

*A commitment  
to our parish  
youth workers...*

*...is indeed a  
commitment to  
our youth.*



Get more information on the web: [www.antiochian.org/youth](http://www.antiochian.org/youth)

**Yes! I'd like to help educate parish youth workers by making a contribution to the NAC Teen SOYO Youth Worker Fund!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to make a gift of:

\$500    \$250    \$100    \$50    \$25    Other Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

This commitment will be fulfilled in the form of:

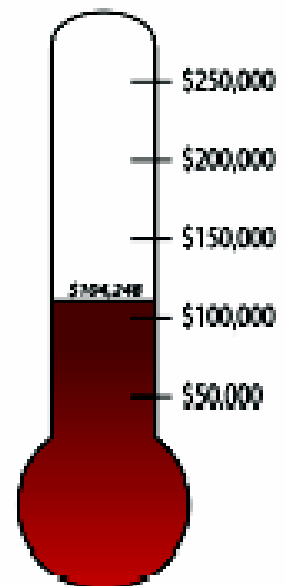
Cash    Check    Securities (Credit Card)    AMEX    Discover    MasterCard    Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ident. Code\* \_\_\_\_\_

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



*Please make donations to:*

*SOYO Youth Worker Fund - c/o Department of Youth - PO Box 309 - Westwood, MA 02090*



*Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Women of North America*

Mailing Address:  
C/O Lucy Hanna  
1853 Kensington Road  
Corona, CA 92880

