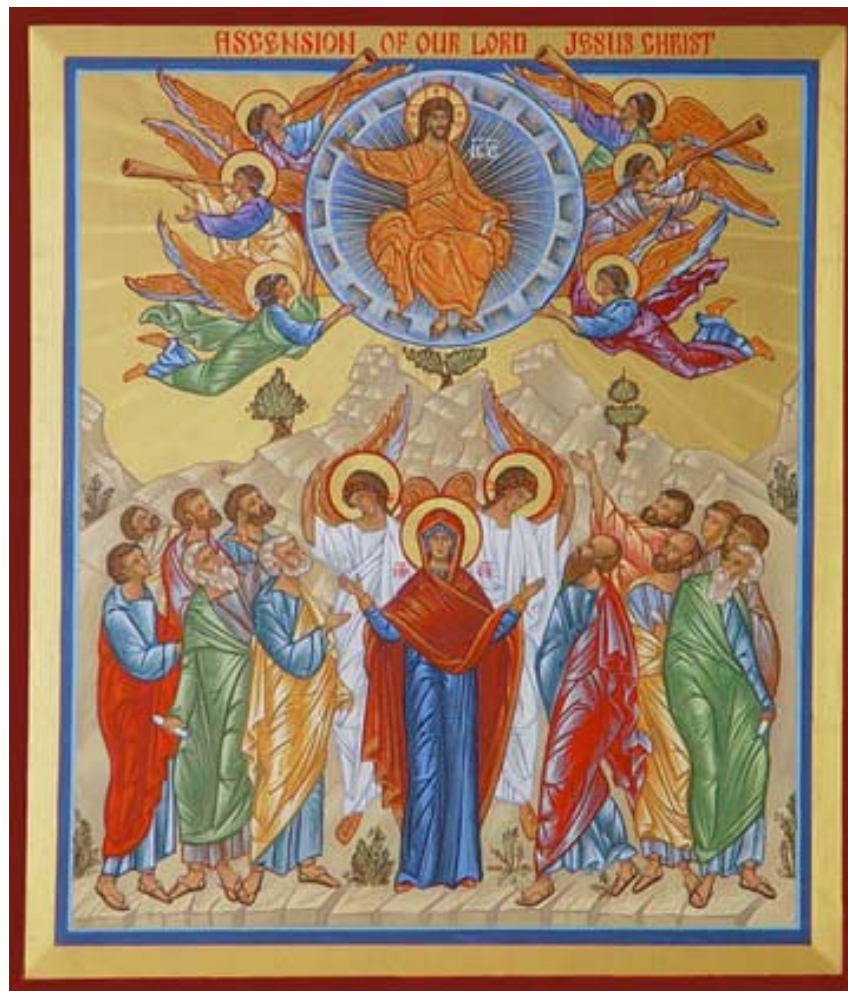


DIAKONIA



Summer

June - August 2006



Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, having become confident of the blessing. Verily, thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world”.

Troparion for the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ

*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
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Founder

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOSEPH
Overseeing Hierarch

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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.

In this issue of the DIAKONIA we highlight the
**Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Toledo
And the Midwest**

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.

Cover

This icon of the Ascension of our Lord, is by the hand of an iconographer who wishes to be anonymous. It is the patronal icon of Holy Ascension Antiochian Orthodox Mission of the Great Valley, Chester County, PA.

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

The Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest

by Roberta Royhab, President

Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest has experienced much change this last year. We have a new bishop, his Grace Bishop MARK, and we have a new spiritual director, the V. Rev. Fr. Joseph Cervo of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Canton, OH.

Redesigned borders of dioceses mean that some women have left the "Midwest." However we are blessed to have new women become Midwest Antiochian Women through development of our missions, through joining our churches, and through Chrismation. Also, we were delighted to meet two Protestant women on the path to Orthodoxy who attended our retreat!

Each of our chapters is different, each is unique, and we can learn much from each other. A woman at St. Raphael of Brooklyn Antiochian Orthodox Mission, Iowa City, IA, said her women's group doesn't fundraise. Her entire church fundraises and will contribute to the 2006 Antiochian Women's Project, Retired Clergy Fund. She added that the women meet for fellowship and study of the church fathers and mothers. Recently they studied *Holy Women of Russia*.

The Midwest Diocese is spread over a large chunk of upper mid-America. In it are thirty-five churches and nine missions in 10 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

This year at the direction of His Grace, Bishop MARK, Midwest Antiochian Women offered a weekend women's retreat on May 5-7 at Dormition Mother of God Orthodox Monastery in Rives Junction, MI.

An Antiochian sister in Christ, Joy Corey of St. John the Baptist Antiochian Orthodox Church in Post Falls, Idaho, led the inspiring and informative retreat on "The Tools of Spiritual Warfare." She wrote a soon-to-be-published book on Spiritual Warfare and started a prison ministry in which she participates two days a week. Dormition Monastery as a center for spiritual care and growth is a perfect place to go on "retreat." We had a wonderful visit with Mother Gabriella, Abbess; Archimandrite Roman Braga, priest and spiritual father to the community of nuns; and the other nuns.

We are happy to have our officers and 11 coordinators serving the organization. Six of the women also are presidents of their Antiochian Women chapters! We meet in the fall, in early spring, and during our parish life conference in June. At the conference there is a meeting followed by a luncheon on Thursday, and a tea the next day, on Friday.

At the well-attended informal teas in the past, we enjoyed ethnic pastries made by several women and had

the opportunity to get to meet new women and become better acquainted with others. The women also shared with each other the work they do in the parishes.

Midwest public relations director Kh. Elfriede Daly of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church, Grand Rapids, MI, edits *The Torch* newsletter four times a year. The publication makes available to the chapters all the important information from both the NAB and Midwest organizations. In it are reports from coordinators, announcements and reminders, and articles written by His Grace Bishop MARK and Fr. Joseph.

This year along with the entire Archdiocese, Midwest Antiochian Women will honor his Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP on his 40th anniversary to the Episcopacy and four decades of service to Holy Orthodoxy and the Archdiocese. We have invited him to speak at the June 29 luncheon, following our meeting, at the parish life conference. St. Matthew the Evangelist Antiochian Orthodox Church in North Royalton, OH, is hosting the conference near Cleveland, where His Eminence first served as a priest.

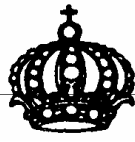
In the December, 2005, issue of *The Torch* I pointed out that the women are asked to direct efforts toward the challenge of keeping young people in the Church. At the request of NAB and the Department of College Ministry we asked each chapter to assign a woman to serve as a "teen contact."

Also, we asked women in the parishes to encourage young people to go on missions. We can help by raising funds for and awareness of mission work, an opportunity for service to others and for our own spiritual growth. Teens in grades 7-12 can participate in Orthodox Youth Outreach and college-age young people can go on Real Break trips. There is also mission work to be done in our own communities.

Many women in the parishes already do much for young people. A woman at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cedar Rapids, IA, sends care packages, bulletins and newsletters, articles, and letters to parish youth who are away at school.

At the mission in Iowa City women prepare meals for the Orthodox Youth Fellowship from the nearby university once a month following Vespers. A question and answer forum with clergy follows. On the two Sundays before final exams the church hall is open to college students for studying, and snacks are provided.

There is a need to serve everyone, and a need to remind ourselves that Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America is "A sisterhood serving Christ through serving others."



THE BIBLE AND THE FAMILY



I have heard from some converts that since entering the Church, they have found themselves reading the Bible less and less, while others born in the Faith say they never read the Bible at all.

First and foremost, we must remember that the ability to own one's own Bible is a modern phenomenon. In the first 1800 years of the Church, most Orthodox Christians were unable to obtain a copy of the Sacred Books, and literacy was also not as wide-spread as it was now. The ancient Tradition of the Church, however, has always stress knowledge of the Scriptures.

How was this done? To this day, we pray and sing the Scriptures within the worship of the Church. Our hymnody recites the Holy Words of God, and over years of attendance and attention, Orthodox Christians are gradually immersed in the truth of the Bible. Many who have never opened a Bible on their own know far more about it than those who have spent years reading and rereading the books.

How can this be? Because, we teach that the Bible is not to be memorized word-for-word as it is to be acted out. Through the hymnody of the Church, based on the Scriptures, we learn about who Jesus Christ is and what we are called to do by Him. We learn of His mercy and love, and are called upon to be merciful and loving towards all people. We hear of His forgiveness, and thus we learn to be forgiving. We sing of His generosity, and so we strive to be generous.

The Bible is not only a book to be read, but it is a book to be prayed. We pray the Scriptures, we sing the texts, and in our utterances these words on paper become part of us. They become our connection to God. We become one with them, and they transform us.

No greater example of this do we have than the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who received the Word of God and bore the Incarnate Word. She is the example of the Theologian, one who knows God from within. She heard the Word of God and, as the Gospel tells us, she 'kept it.' We also must hear the word of God, let it enter us, and allow ourselves to bear forth the fruits of God: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

We cannot receive the word of God until we heed the Cry of the Forerunner from the banks of the Jordan: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" We must repent, which is to give up the things that are not of the Heavenly Kingdom. We must give up our Pride and all its children- envy, anger, greed, lust, laziness and gluttony. We must toss aside our unforgiveness, so that

we might receive God's forgiveness. We must beg to be forgiven, and try to restore what we have taken or broken, so that we can receive from God His blessings without the burden of our debts to others.

This is why, during the Holy Season of Great Lent, we strive after the example of repentance found in St. Mary of Egypt. Throughout her years of seclusion, she surrendered herself to God and became a vessel of His Holiness. She gave up the world, and so she could enter the Heavenly Kingdom.

We read her story and sing the Akathist to the Virgin to inspire us. The spiritual life is offered to us: a life of joy and peace, with strong confidence in God's care for our daily needs. Change is possible, if we are open to the possibility.

The Bible is not an instruction manual, but rather a warning: repent and seek after God, or you will find yourself in misery. We need not be perfect, though it is our goal, as none of our fathers were perfect. Yet, the Patriarchs, despite their flaws, were loved by God and they loved Him. This is how we are saved.

We would not know these things were it not for the Bible. The world teaches us to succumb to our temptations, and abandon ourselves to sin, promising happiness. Yet, those who chase after worldly cares find their moments of peace too brief. You may save up for an exotic vacation, but what will you experience when you come back? The same troubles you left. But, those who seek after God find that their troubles quickly pass and do not control them. They are constantly consoled and strengthened, so that events that would crush a person without Faith have little effect on them.

We must all struggle to study the Scriptures, but we must also strive to put them into practice in our daily lives. Not as rules, but rather as an attitude. Allow the Holy Words to come into your minds and change you. See the world in the Light of the Scriptures, so that you may receive the Heavenly Kingdom in your daily life.

Heaven is not far away. You can begin to experience it now, if you, as the Virgin Mary, hear the word of God and keep it.



PRIORITIZE

As summer rapidly approaches attendance at our parishes will noticeably decline. Certainly one may be absent from the local parish for a week or two of vacation, but not the whole of the summer. Perhaps we need to be challenged with where the Church, prayer and Communion with our Heavenly Father fit into our schedule?

Salvation in the Orthodox Church is not legal or juridical, but relational, in that we are saved by virtue of being in a life changing relationship with our Creator. Consequently, salvation is continuous and ongoing. Repentance is never complete, but goes on throughout one's life.

Perhaps we may avoid prayer as it is in some respects an experience of judgment, not in the final ultimate sense, but in relationship to our daily shortcomings. We live in an age and day where it is much easier to fill the quiet with noise, i.e., radio, TV, boom boxes, mp3 players and personal computers. The silence offers opportunity for the Lord to speak. When noise does not suffice, we may attempt to flee from the presence of the Lord by car, bus or plane. As the psalmist says:

[1] O LORD, thou hast searched me and known me! [2] Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar. [3] Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. [4] Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. [5] Thou dost beset me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me. [6] Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it. [7] Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? [8] If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there! [9] If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, [10] even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. [11] If I say, "Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night," [12] even the darkness is not dark to thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee. [13] For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb. [14] I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works! Thou knowest me right well; [15] my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the

depths of the earth. [16] Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139: 1-16)

Sadly, we attempt to fill a void, an emptiness or longing with created things rather than the Creator Himself. Some may try to fill that void with food, others with alcohol, drugs or sex. We will find no satisfaction or comfort in any created thing. Only through a life of prayer will our hearts find their true home. In psalm 139, the psalmist expresses this quite clearly. I also love Psalm 42:1f, for it speaks of the restlessness of the soul in its yearning for its Maker:

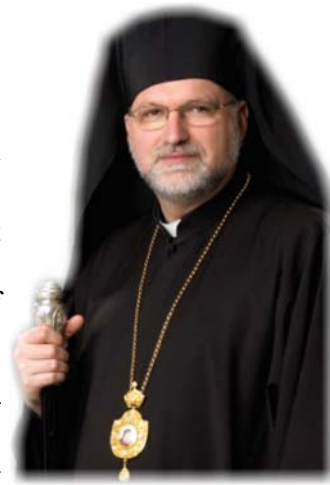
[1] As a heart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. [2] My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?

Years ago, a friend told me that he could not stand silence or being alone. He needed a radio, a tape or TV on all the time, even with others present. It is in the silence and time alone that we have the greatest opportunity to pour out our hearts to the Lord and let Him fill our hearts, our very selves with His Holy Presence. The people I have known to maintain a solid prayer life, also are the most joyful Christians I know. The Prophet Jeremiah speaks of Israel's faithlessness and meaningless wanderings away from the Lord as follows:

[12] Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the LORD, [13] for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2: 13f)

Have we hewn out cisterns for ourselves? Have we forsaken the Fount of Living waters? Have we been looking to fill the loneliness, the void, the longings with material things? Let us stop and seek the Lord with our whole heart. As we begin the process, it will

(Continued on page 11)



CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

On May 14, this year, we in America, honor our mothers on this special Sunday, known as Mother's Day. Mothers may not know it, but they are often the most instrumental for the faith development of their children, more than all the bishops and priests put together. A godly mother has a built-in congregation, i.e. her entire family. It would do us well, I believe, if we would focus on a verse from 1 Peter 3:15: **"...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"** (vs. 15).

Do we know what people ask "a reason for the hope that is in us?" The answer is vast, for it can be anyone. But more commonly, it is with people whom we live and interact with on a daily basis. For mothers, this will mean their husbands and children. People, directly or indirectly, are frequently challenging our faith in the workplace, in schools and in social gatherings, but the challenge that comes from family is more demanding and more persistent.

The challenges that come from family and children can be both clear and hidden. Sometimes children ask their mother, clearly and directly, "Mom, why do we do this?" or "Why do we say that?" Some of their questions can be very hard to answer. Take for example, a boy who asked his mother, "Mom, if God is everywhere why do we have to go to church to pray?" (Do you know the answer?). But, as difficult as the questions they ask may be, that is actually the easy part. The hard part is being attentive enough to hear the questions they are asking, not in words, but by their changing attitudes and behavior or by their body language. Mothers who are able to hear and respond to the unspoken questions of their children are not just great mothers but effective members of the "royal priesthood" of Christ.

Children today are growing up in an increasingly perilous and confusing world. They need answers. The BIG question is; are we ready to provide them? St. Peter directs us to **"always be ready"**. But how can we be ready to defend the truth of our faith? The simple answer is, we must be grounded in the faith ourselves and only then will we be able to share it with those around us. You can't give what you don't have. We must make a concerted effort, no matter our age, to know our faith more deeply by studying the basic documents of our faith, the Bible, through which the teachings of the Orthodox faith is revealed, along with the writings and lives of the Saints who serve as "role models" because they listened to and honored the Holy Scriptures. Those who do not know the Scriptures cannot know Jesus Christ. **"with meekness and fear"** (vs. 15).

This advice is very pertinent to mothers who may be chronically impatient with their children because they have great love and expectations for them. As, a father, who tends to be "old school" tough with my children, I have observed that my wife's more tender and gentle approach is often more effective with children than a harsh and intimidating attitude.

When it comes to sharing our faith with others, example speaks louder than words. In fact, it has been said by countless clergy, educators, philosophers, public officials and psychologists, that the greatest legacy that a mother can leave her children, is the testimony of a deep and exemplary life of faith. The following is an adapted version of a well known template for raising children.

Children Learn What They Live

- *If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
- *If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
- *If children live with ridicule, they learn to be withdrawn.
- *If children live with shame, they learn to feel inferior.
- *If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.
- *If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.
- *If children live with approval, they learn self-esteem.
- *If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.
- *If children live with fairness, they learn justice.
- *If children live with security, they learn to have faith.
- *If children live with acceptance and friendship, they learn to seek and find love in the world.
- *If children live in a Christian environment, they will learn to love God.

On behalf of all children and their fathers, who have been blessed by the love of godly mothers, we commend and pray for all Christ-loving and God fearing mothers. We ask for the intercession of the most exemplary of all mothers, the Most Holy Theotokos, to inspire and intercede for all mothers, who go about their difficult task of raising and imparting true faith to our children.

THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

From OrthodoxWiki

When Thou didst speak to the myrrh-bearing women with joy, thou didst end the wailing of Eve the first mother, by Thy Resurrection, commanding Thy disciples to proclaim that the Savior is risen from the tomb.

Kontakion for the Myrrh-bearing Women

The myrrh-bearers brought funeral spices and ointments to commit Christ's body to the grave. They were the first to see the empty tomb and were instructed by the risen Lord to bring the joyful news to the apostles. There are eight women who are generally identified as the myrrh-bearers. Each of the four Gospels gives a different aspect of the roles of these eight women at the cross and at the tomb on Easter morning, perhaps since the eight women arrived in different groups and at different times. The eight are:

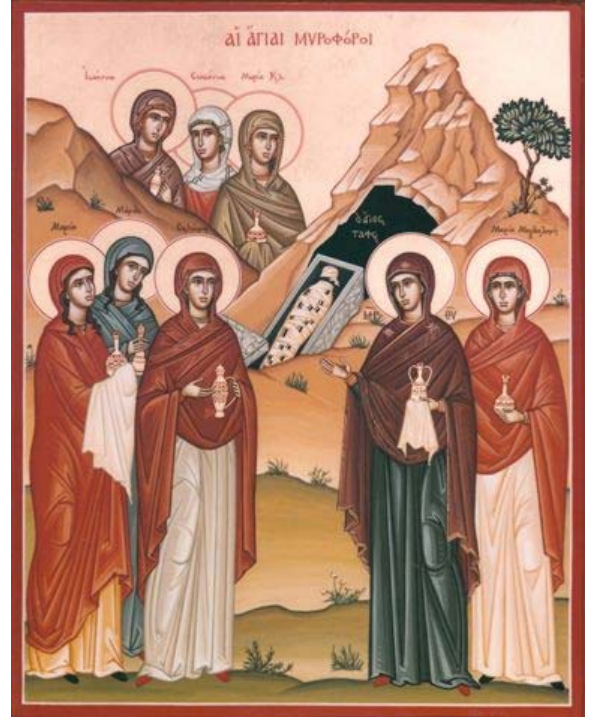
- Mary, the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary)
- Mary Magdalene
- Joanna
- Salome
- Mary the wife of Cleopas (or Alphaeus)
- Susanna
- Mary of Bethany
- Martha of Bethany

Of the eight, the first five are the more prominent and outspoken. The last three are included according to tradition. Five of these women were also very wealthy; the women of means were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and Mary and Martha of Bethany.

A confusing aspect in Gospel references to these women is that two of the Marys had a son named James. Mary, the wife of Alphaeus, was the mother of James, one of the Twelve Apostles; the Virgin Mary was the step-mother of James, the Lord's brother (Matthew 13:55, Galatians 1:19).

In Western tradition, James, the son of Alphaeus, and James, the Lord's brother, have sometimes been identified as the same person. In Eastern tradition, James, the Lord's brother was Bishop of Jerusalem from 30-62 AD and never left the vicinity of Jerusalem. He is the James who rendered the decision of the council of Jerusalem in 48 AD (Acts 15:13-19). Eastern Tradition links James, the son of Alphaeus, with evangelism abroad, especially in Egypt where he was martyred.

One helpful tip that can clear up the confusion between these two Marys is the passage that refers to the Virgin Mary as the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 13:55). This Joseph is also called *Barsabas*, *Justus*, and *Judas* (Acts 1:23 and 15:22). Therefore, in Matthew 27:56, the women looking on from afar at the cross were Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary (that is, Mary the mother of James and Joseph), and Salome (the wife of Zebedee and the Virgin Mary's step-daughter).



Matthew refers to Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary," who is probably the Virgin Mary also from the context (Matthew 27:61 and 28:1). Such Church Fathers as St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory Palamas support this interpretation. Similarly, St. Gregory of Nyssa identifies "Mary, the mother of James" (Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:10) as the Virgin Mary also.

These eight women had been together a lot during Jesus' three-year public ministry. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others (Luke 8:3) are described as providing for Jesus out of their possessions (that is, acting as deaconesses). These same women had faithfully followed him from Galilee and had come up with him to Jerusalem (Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:40-41, and Luke 23:55).

On June 27, the Church celebrates the feast day of Joanna the Myrrh-Bearer, the wife of Chouza, the steward-administrator of King Herod Antipas. She is listed in Luke 8:3 as one of the women who followed Christ from Galilee and supported the disciples, along with the other Myrrh-bearers listed above. In Luke 23:55-24:11, we have the story of how these same women went to the tomb to finish the job of embalming Jesus' body, which was hastily begun by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They were perplexed when they found the tomb empty except for the grave clothes. The angel appeared unto them and proclaimed the Resurrection. They believed and became the first evangelists of the Risen Christ!

**Introducing
The 2005—2007
Board of the Antiochian Women of the
Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest**

THE OFFICERS

The Rt. Rev. Bishop MARK - Bishop of Toledo and the Midwest



Bishop MARK was born on June 22, 1958 to John L. Maymon and Catherine Hoffman at St Edward's Hospital in New Albany, Indiana. He is the fifth of eight children. Bishop MARK was baptized in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church in 1958, and confirmed

when he was nine. After attending elementary school at our Lady of Perpetual Help, he began attending New Albany High School, graduating in 1976.

The following fall he began studies at Indiana University South East, later completing undergraduate studies at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Degree Majoring in Biblical Literature with an emphasis in Old Testament, and with a Minor in Business Administration, graduating Summa Cum Laude in May of 1985. In 1987, he completed the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Biblical Literature with the emphasis in Old Testament at Oral Roberts University. He graduated with Honors and was named Old Testament Student of the Year.

Upon graduating from the Seminary, Bishop MARK was offered, and accepted the position of Adjunct Professor of Old Testament at Oral Roberts University. His responsibilities included teaching Old Testament and New Testament Survey for all incoming freshman, as well as Biblical Hebrew I & II, Hebrew Prophets, Old Testament Introduction, The History of Israel, Wisdom Literature, Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations and Old Testament Theology. He was also responsible for the oversight of fourteen graduate fellows and co-taught Teaching Methodologies.

During his studies at Oral Roberts University, Bishop MARK was introduced to the Orthodox Church in his Church History class, by the V. Rev. George

Eber, pastor of St. Antony in Tulsa, OK. Through contact with the Orthodox Church, he saw the Scripture less and less as the book of the university and more and more the Book of the Church. Fr. George invited him to 'come to the Church that gave us the Bible.' Listening to the wonderful hymnology of the Orthodox Church at Great Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy, the Scriptures were opened in an entirely different way.

Additionally, the Orthodox presented God as a loving Father and Shepherd who comes searching for those who are lost. Many personal struggles, unconquered through the academic study of the Scripture, began to dissipate as he learned how to struggle more effectually through the School of Repentance during Great Lent. On Great and Holy Wednesday in 1989, he was officially received into the Orthodox Church through Holy Chrismation.

Being newly Chrismated, already 31 years of age, he requested Metropolitan PHILIP's blessing to attend St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. With the blessing of His Eminence, Bishop MARK completed the degree requirements for the Master of Divinity Degree at St Vladimir's in 1991 and spent an additional year studying Church History and Patristics, under the direction of Fr. John Meyendorff. During the summers of 1991 and 1992, Bishop MARK worked at the Antiochian Village, under the direction of Fr. Paul Finley and Fr. George Alberts. He also developed the curriculum for the Christian Education programs for the summer camp programs (1991-1993).

After working at the Antiochian Village Camp and Conference Center, as weekend manager from 1992 to 1993, he moved to New Kensington, PA. There he assisted Fr. John Abdalah with services, taught Bible studies, enquirer classes and served on the parish council. He also began working as a counselor in mental health, dealing with dual diagnosis patients, i.e., those with both mental illness and substance abuse issues.

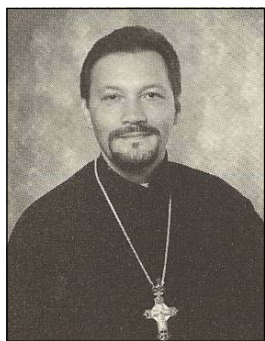
In the summer of 1997, Bishop MARK yearned to offer himself to the work of our Lord more fully and petitioned for Ordination to the priesthood, asking to serve, St. John the Evangelist Church in Beaver Falls,

PA. On August 17, 1997, he was ordained by the hand of His Grace Bishop ANTOUN at St Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Wilkes Barre, PA and to the Holy Priesthood at St George in Pittsburgh, PA. on September 07, 1997. He was assigned to St John the Evangelist in Beaver Falls, PA from September 1997 through December 31, 2000. In January of 2001, he was assigned to assist Fr. John Estephan at St. George in Grand Rapids, MI, until Fr. John's retirement in December of 2002. Upon Fr. John's retirement, Bishop MARK assumed all the responsibilities for the pastorate of St George.

Bishop MARK was nominated to the sacred episcopacy at a Special Convention of the Antiochian Archdiocese held in Pittsburgh, PA in July, 2004, and was elected to the episcopacy by the Local Synod of Bishops in October, 2004. He was consecrated as a bishop at the hand of His Beatitude IGNATIUS IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All The East at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus Syria on December 5, 2004.

Bishop MARK was enthroned at St. George Cathedral, Toledo, OH on Thursday, August 25, 2005.

Father Joseph Cervo - Spiritual Advisor



Birth: 11-5-1954, Pittsburgh, PA.
High School: East Allegheny, North Versailles, PA.
College: University of Pittsburgh.
Seminary: St. Tikhon & Christ the Savior.
Marriage: Linda Irene Schoming, 10-9-83 at St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA.

Children: - Subdeacon Joseph Paul, & Gregory John.

ORDINATIONS:

Holy Diaconate, by Metropolitan PHILIP, 9-23-1984 at St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA.
Presbyter, by Bishop ANTOUN, 6-15-1986, at St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA.
Elevated, by Bishop DEMETRI, 10-17-1999, at Holy Spirit Church, Huntington, VA.

ANTIOCHIAN PARISHES SERVED:

Deacon: St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA
Priest: St. George, Detroit, MI.
 St. John Chrysostom, Fort Wayne, IN.
 Holy Spirit, Huntington, WV.
 Holy Cross & St. George, Canton, OH.

Roberta (Bobbie) Libb Royhab - President



Bobbie served as Public Relations Director and Secretary of Midwest Antiochian Women before becoming President this year. She first learned about Orthodoxy while dating her future husband Ron (of Lebanese descent) who was attending a Russian church and working at the daily newspaper in Elyria, Ohio. As religion editor

she wrote an article about Pascha and about the new priest who was assigned to Ron's church, SS. Peter and Paul Church (Orthodox Church in American) in Lorain, a few weeks before their wedding in 1969. The priest is a good friend of theirs and is still at the church where they periodically attend, and Bobbie and Ron will celebrate their 37th anniversary this spring. Before she met Ron, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, at the time a priest, visited the Royhab home and Ron's Dad, a barber, cut his hair. After many moves, and involvement in the women's organizations at the Orthodox Churches that she attended with Ron and their children, Bobbie became Orthodox (13 years ago). Ron and Bobbie have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren, ages 2, 3, and 4. A fourth is expected in June. As chair of her Antiochian Women's group at her church, St. Elias in Sylvania, OH, Bobbie planned retreats. "This was perfect preparation for working with Fr. Joseph and the Midwest women and planning our Midwest Antiochian Women retreat in May at Dormition Mother of God Monastery in Michigan." She has taught Church school and served on the parish council. Bobbie has also served with mission teams at the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orthodox Orphanage in Guatemala every summer since 2002 (Cincinnati teams in 2002 and 2003, and Orthodox Christian Mission Center teams in 2004 and 2005).

Margaret Simon - Vice President

(No photo available)

I was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Both my parents, who were very devout Orthodox Christians, were born in Seidnaya, Syria. They met and married here in the United States. They were members at St. George Orthodox Church in Grand Rapids, MI. When growing up, along with my brothers and sister, we attended a mission called, "Way of Life Mission." In my teen years we started attending St. George Orthodox Church with our

parents. A few years later I became a Sunday school teacher, a member of the choir, and joined the Georgian Stars. Later I became a very active member of the Ladies Golden Links Society (our local chapter). Over the years I held many positions in the Ladies Golden Links Society. I was president of the Ladies Guild for many, many years, as well as coordinator of several different positions for the Midwest Region. In June 2003 I received the Metropolitan Philip award from the Midwest Region.

Note: Margaret is Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Engineering and also the Director of Engineering for Blackmer Pump in Grand Rapids. June 1, 2006 Margaret will be celebrating 47 years at Blackmer, Lord willing. Her two favorite verses are "The Golden Rule," "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", and John 3:16.

Julie Abraham - Treasurer
(No photo or biography available)

Sheryl VanderWagen - Recording Secretary
(No photo available)

I have served twice as President of my local chapter of the AW, the Ladies Golden Links Society, St. George, Grand Rapids. I also serve as Co-Sunday School Superintendent, direct the Cherub Choir, sing in the adult choir, do some chanting and oversee the church library. I have also directed the music for their Pan-Orthodox Vacation Bible School. This is my first experience holding an office in the Diocese.

I was raised in Coopersville, Michigan (near Grand Rapids) and live there with my husband, Guy, of 20 years and two daughters, Abby and Emily, ages 14 and 9. We began our journey to Orthodoxy 10 years ago. I was raised in the Reformed Church in America and graduated from Hope College in Holland, MI with a B.A. degree in Mathematics. I went on to Western Michigan University where I received my M.L.S. (Master's in Library Science). I was a public library director for 18 years and am currently the System Librarian for the Lakeland Library Cooperative based in Grand Rapids, MI. I have also served as Secretary of the Michigan Library Association for the last two years.

After many years of searching, I feel as though I truly have found my home in the Orthodox faith and at St. George. It is pure joy for me to serve my church in whatever capacity I can. I find great peace and pleasure in all of the various services. One of my favorite things is making the Holy Bread. And, although I was not raised Orthodox, I have come to love and value all of our traditions.

Kh. Elfriede Daly - Public Relations
(No photo available)

I was born in the city of Braunau, Austria, not far from the "Sound of Music" region of Salzburg. I was trained as a religion teacher for the public schools of my home country. As a young woman I went to Rhodesia, Africa to serve as a missionary from 1973 until 1979. It was there that I met my husband.

In 1980 he and I entered the Orthodox Church, and were married at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Detroit, MI. In January 1981, my husband became an Orthodox priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese. He has served in a number of churches throughout the Archdiocese. We are now back in Michigan and have served St. Nicholas parish over 5 years.

We have two sons: Fr. Raphael Daly who was ordained on January 1, 2006 and is currently doing graduate studies at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary in Brookline MA; and his brother John Daly who although trained as an electrical engineer, has also entered Holy Cross seminary to study for the priesthood.

At present I am working part-time for St. Nicholas church as the church secretary. I also help with Church School and sing in the choir as well as help the chanters. I enjoy working for the church very much. Whatever time is left over, I like to dig in my little garden, knit, crochet, and make Christmas ornaments. I am the president of our local chapter, the Antiochian Women of St. Nicholas Church in Grand Rapids, MI and the Public Relations Coordinator for the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest.

Marie Bojrab - Immediate Past President
(No photo or biography available)

The Antiochian Women Summer Meeting is Scheduled for July 21 - 23, 2006 at the Antiochian Village. Please mark your calendars and plan your travel in advance.

THE COORDINATORS

Libbie Kohl - Finance

Libbie Kohl is a member of St. George Church of Cedar Rapids, IA. She is a cradle Orthodox and has served the church on many levels: On the parish council, teaching Sunday School, and President.

She was Vice President and Treasurer of the Antiochian Women's group and has been directing the choir for many years. On the regional level, she has held the position of President, Vice president, secretary, treasurer and numerous committees. She is also a recipient of the Metropolitan Philip award. Her husband Joe travels with her to all the meetings. She has a son, daughter, grandson and two great-grandchildren. She loves to read, travel and crafts.

Jan Metry - Metropolitan PHILIP Award

I have been a member of the parish of St. Michael, Louisville, KY, for 47 years. Over the years I have taught Sunday School, sung in the choir, served on the Church board and held many offices including President of St. Michaels' Ladies Society. Within the Antiochian Women I have held positions both on the Regional and NAB levels including President of the Midwest Region and Membership Coordinator for NAB.

By profession I am a Certified Teacher, currently substituting for schools in Louisville, KY. My family continues to grow with three married children, single son and four beautiful grandchildren plus another to arrive in August. I am truly blessed that all my grandchildren live close by.

My interests include family, church, quilting, needle work, the arts and volunteering. I cherish all the wonderful friendships I have made working for the Antiochian Women.

Ramona Darmour - Archives

Ramona is a lifetime member of St. George Church in Cleveland. She is an active member of the Ladies group and the church choir for over fifty years. She has served as president of the Ladies for many years and represents St. George at all of the Inter-orthodox Organizations of Greater Cleveland. She was honored to have served the Midwest Antiochian Women as its president and as Coordinator on both the Midwest level and the North American Board of the Antiochian Women.

Ramona tries to attend all of the Winter and Summer meetings as the Antiochian Organization is a very important part of her Life. She is a recipient of the Metropolitan Philip Award.

Dianne O'Regan - Historian

Elinor Bourjaily - Parliamentarian

Dianne and Elinor are also on the North American Board of Antiochian Women. Please refer to the September 2005 issue of DIAKONIA for their photos and profiles. You can find them online at:

<http://www.antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA>

No photos or biographies were available for the following Coordinators:

Dottie Malooley - Antiochian Women's Tea

Kh. Irene Khouri - Teen Coordinator

Roxanne Marks - Religious Coordinator

Ann Durkin - Humanitarian Coordinator

Kholoud Swais - Membership Coordinator

Milia Durkin - Correspondence

(Continued from page 5) Message from H. G. Bishop MARK

not be easy; be patient and the Lord will reward your perseverance with joy inexplicable. Be faithful in your prayer life, reading of the Holy Scripture and quiet time and the Lord will grant you peace and joy. If we set our priorities aright, before all else we will pray. It is through our relationship with the Lord that we discover our life's purpose, meaning and personal direction.

A pastor once heard that one of his flock had fallen away from the church. He went to visit the man who was sitting before a roaring fireplace. The pastor sat for a while and said nothing. Then he got up, took the tongs and removed a coal from the fire and set it off by itself. After sitting with the man in silence a while longer, together they watched the coal begin to grow cold and die. He got up once more and put the coal back into the fire and they watched it begin to glow and come alive once again. As the pastor got his coat to leave, the parishioner said, I will see you in Church next Sunday.

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Women of North America*



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.