

DIAKONIA



Fall 2006

September - November

Antiochian Village



The officers of the North American Board of Antiochian Women
at the Midsummer Meetings at the Antiochian Village July 2006

*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

NAB Board

V. Rev. John Abdalah, Spiritual Advisor

Officers:

Laila Ferris President
Cynthia Nimey Vice-president
Dianne O'Regan Recording Secretary
Violet Robbat Treasurer
Lucy Hanna Public Relations

Marilyn Robbat Past President

Coordinators:

Elinor Bourjaily Parliamentarian
Sherry Abraham Morrow Humanitarian
Joanne Bitar Membership
Sarah Hodges Religious
Vacant Scholarship
Saydeh Karabatis Web Site
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.

In this issue of the DIAKONIA we highlight the
**Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Worcester
and New England**

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

No, the officers did not take the meeting outside, although we wish we could have, so I let my imagination loose and pretended we did by superimposing the photo of the meeting onto one I took from the window of my room. The weather was perfect!

Lucy Hanna, DIAKONIA publisher.

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

Highlights from the NAB Summer Meetings

The Summer meeting of the North American Board was held at the Antiochian Village on Friday and Saturday, July 21 & 22, 2006. All dioceses were represented from 30 parishes. President Laila Ferris conveyed Bishop JOSEPH's greetings to the ladies. His Grace was unable to attend because he had a number of duties to which he needed to attend in the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West.

Over the two-day meetings many issues were discussed and the following are some of the highlights:

1. \$141,000 were raised this year from all dioceses for the Retired Clergy Fund. A check for the amount was presented to Metropolitan PHILIP. Added to the \$115,000 raised last year, we have reached over half our goal in 2 years (goal was \$500,000 over 5 years). Presently 41 priests and 13 widowed clergy wives are receiving monies from the fund.
2. 2 women were awarded \$500 scholarships this year.
3. ***Term of office-Constitution and By-laws change:*** After going through the year-long procedure of what it takes to make a change in the Constitution, the vote was taken and the proposal passed with a vote of 34 yes and 4 no. The language in the Constitution and By-laws will be changed to read that *"an officer may succeed herself in the same position for a second term upon election to that position."* This will affect both the Dioceses and the North American Board. It was made clear however, that if a woman wishes to serve a second 2-year term in the same office, she must follow the nomination guidelines. She cannot automatically be elected.
4. The Holy Bread Video is being revised to remove the part where the demonstrator puts oil on her hands. It will be made into a Video and available for purchase.
5. A committee was formed to create a DVD to promote who we are and what we do which will be distributed to each chapter. It can be used for membership drives. The target date for this DVD is the 2007 Convention in Montreal.



The detailed account of the meeting including, Met. PHILIP and Fr. John's addresses to the ladies will be sent out in the minutes prepared by our NAB Secretary, Dianne O'Regan.

Metropolitan PHILIP and Their Graces Bishops ANTOUN and THOMAS joined us on Friday and the Metropolitan addressed the women. He thanked the ladies throughout the Archdiocese for their dedication particularly for adopting the Clergy Retirement Fund Project. Looking at a brochure which showed all the projects the women have adopted, he said, "I never dreamed when the Antiochian Women were formed in 1973 that they would raise almost \$2 million. You have gone beyond my wildest expectations". He said that he always believed in the women, had faith in them and saw them as leaders. He stressed that the President of the Antiochian Women from every parish should be on the

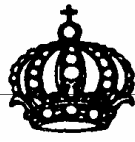


Parish Council. "This is very important", he added, "Doesn't the council want to know what the women in the parish are doing? How would they know unless the women's president is on the parish council? According to the model constitution, the President of the Ladies should be an ex-officio voting member of the parish council. I support this 100%. And not only the ladies' president but the Sunday School, the Teens, the Choir - they should all be represented."

Fr. John Abdalah, our spiritual advisor, also spoke to the women highlighting the events of the clergy symposium which was held the week prior to the Summer meetings and giving us encouragement to continue the good works with love for one another and for the world.

The 2007 Midwinter meeting will be held at the Antiochian Village, February 2-4, 2007.





The Fast of the Holy Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

During the Holy Dormition Fast, we remember the repose of our Lord Jesus Christ's mother, the ever-blessed Virgin Mary. We may wonder why we would have this fasting period prior to the commemoration of someone's death, since the other Great Fasts (i.e. Pascha and the Nativity) precede a joyous celebration. Why should we fast? What use is this feast to us?

The Fast of the Holy Dormition is a reminder to us that mankind (even the Mother of the Son of God) will face death in this age. No matter how close we reach God, we shall all pass through the gate of bodily death. Though we consider the Virgin Mary the greatest Theologian (a theologian is one who hears the Word of God and, as the Scripture says, 'keeps it'), this is not enough to avoid the natural consequence of the Fall of Adam.

We must all remind ourselves that the time of our death grows nearer each day. Are we ready? Are we prepared? Perhaps some of us have unfinished business: apologies that need to be made, words that need to be said, forgiveness that needs to be given. Do we wish to pass out of this world and into the presence of God with so much left undone?

The time of this fast is established by the Church to help us recognize our sins and repent of them before we take this journey. It is not 'morbid' to prepare for one's death any more than it is 'morbid' to have a check-up by a doctor. After all, we go to the doctor to prevent a physical illness from overtaking us, knowing that we can become sick at any time. We think about physical illnesses, are we therefore 'morbid?' Certainly not! Rather, we are considered wise for having routine examinations of the body.

So we must also have routine examinations of our soul through Confession. The fast is a 'check-up'; a time to examine ourselves to see if there is some unknown spiritual malady lurking in our hearts. We humans are clever, and can hide our guilt and resentment even from our own consciences. However, just like the beginning of any disease, just because we don't 'feel sick', it does not mean we are not. Rather, we can be physically sick unto death and feel quite well. The same is true of illnesses of the soul.

Through Confession and self-examination with a spiritual director, we can diagnose our spiritual

illnesses and begin treatment. Our goal is to pass from this life with a healthy soul; one full of God's love and mercy, so that we can enjoy all eternity in the presence of our Father. Our enemy is denial, and if we deny our illnesses, they will only worsen and deny us the joy of the Heavenly Kingdom.



Sin is a preventable disease. Though we cannot help but sin (just as we cannot prevent all forms of bodily illness), we can treat sin in its early stages and remove it before it kills us (i.e. totally removes us from God). Through regular 'check-ups' with our Confessor, we can monitor our symptoms and take the right treatments. We cannot be cured of our propensity to sin, but we can live healthy lives if we remain disciplined in regularly examining our deepest thoughts and emotions.

We live in an unhealthy world. Sin is very contagious, and so we must constantly be on our guard. Just as an unhealthy person, physically weakened by other diseases, is more likely to become sick, so we are likely to fall prey to more and more sin if we refuse to treat the sins we are already afflicted with.

Let us use the Paraklesis Service (Supplicatory Prayer) as a tool to remind us of our spiritual afflictions, and ask the Great Physician to enter into us and heal us. As we sing hymns extolling the Virgin Mary, let us beg for her intercessions for us. We must awaken to the reality of our sins and have confidence that God desires to heal us. The Theotokos is with us, and is a ready aid to strengthen us in the difficult task of repentance.

The Holy Dormition Fast is vital to our spiritual well-being, and it is my fervent prayer that all of us take full advantage of the mercy we are offered in it. By being healed by God, we will be given the gift of grace that will allow us to emulate the wondrous virtue of the Most Holy Virgin.

I pray, with supplication to the Mother of God, that all of us, clergy and laity, men and women, adults and children, emulate her example and ask for her intercessions.

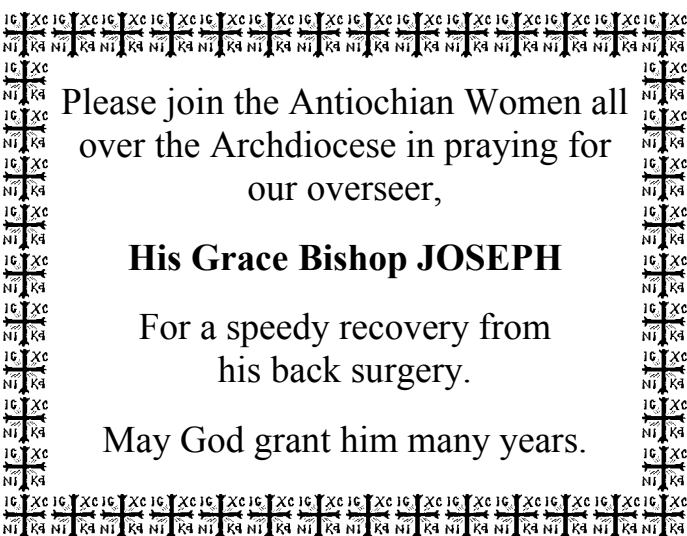
Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

A Note to Readers from HG Bishop JOSEPH:

While you are reading this article about the Holy Dormition in September, do not be confused because I did it this way for a reason. The reason is that the death of the Holy Theotokos and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross are not about death, but about life. If you think of death as the wages of sin, this article is not about death, but about the Fountain of Life. It is also important to point out that in the month of September we celebrate the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year (September 1), the Nativity of the Holy Theotokos (September 8), and the Elevation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross (September 14).

The fast of the Holy Dormition helps to prepare us for these Holy feasts.

You have to know, my beloved readers, that the consequence of sin is death, and the consequence of virtue and holiness is life.



 Please join the Antiochian Women all
 over the Archdiocese in praying for
 our overseer,

His Grace Bishop JOSEPH

 For a speedy recovery from
 his back surgery.

 May God grant him many years.

Sacred Meals Offered to Aid Retired Clergy Fund

The cookbook, Sacred Meals by Fr. John Finley is being offered to all chapters of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America for half-price to aid in their fundraising efforts for the Retired Clergy Fund. This offer is exclusively for that purpose and all profit should be sent to your Diocesan Treasurer along with any other money raised for this project.

- Orders should be placed by individual chapters.
- The suggested retail price per unit is \$18.95.
- Books will be sold to individual chapters at \$9.48 each. This is an exclusive 50% discount and will not be offered to parish bookstores (Minimum order – 10 books. Cases of 28 are also available.)
- Free shipping will be included in order to maximize profits for the chapters.
- This offer is good through December 31, 2006.

To place orders now, call **1 (800) 573-9337**

or email sacredmeals@cox.net

Please visit the website: www.sacredmeals.com

What others are saying about Sacred Meals

"It contains not only a lot of wonderful recipes, but a lot of good information about our faith." *Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*

"Sacred Meals' takes the experience of family dining out of the recipe-card box and returns it to the broader context in which it belongs: the loving circle of a lively home." *Frederica Mathewes-Green*

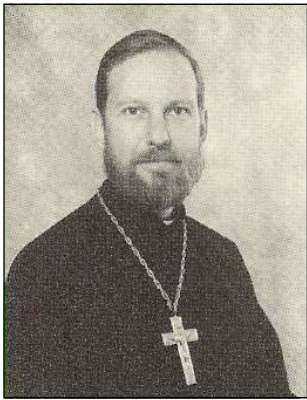
"What a treasure. It is truly a work of love that seeps out of every page." *Mary Dibs, St. Mark Orthodox Church Bookstore, Irvine, CA.*

"Great recipes and more...Sacred Meals walks you through the Church Year evoking laughter and tears. It's a catechism for body and soul." *Chris Farba, Eighth Day Books, Wichita, KS www.eighthdaybooks.com*

"Our society has sadly lost the art of enjoying meals together as a family. Fr. John calls us back to that important ritual and provides a homespun glimpse at his own family and some of their favorite recipes." *John Maddex, Ancient Faith Radio www.ancientfaithradio.com*

Spiritual Advisor's Message

By the Very Reverend Edward Hughes



I have had the honor and great joy of serving as the Antiochian Women advisor in each region of this Archdiocese in which I have served for almost all of the last 24 years. There is no doubt that I have been greatly enriched by coming to know so many wonderful ladies. I have certainly enjoyed their company and fellowship. There is not

another position in the entire Archdiocese as agreeable and pleasant as Antiochian Women advisor; working with some of the most interesting and delightful people that one could hope to find anywhere.

I have also been greatly inspired by their presence and example. I believe that the Ladies of this Archdiocese are Heroes for the Faith. It is my contention that there would not be a single parish in the Archdiocese if it were not for the Ladies. When our earliest parishes were organizing over 100 years ago, I believe that it was the Ladies that motivated and animated the process. They encouraged their husbands to meet together and organize. They volunteered their "butter & egg" money toward the building funds. In almost every community the Ladies held dinners and luncheons and bake sales to supplement the donations which came in. Ladies' organizations existed almost simultaneously with the first parish councils. Even though in those days the women did not vote, there is no doubt that they directed everything through their husbands and sons. Just a few decades later, there was a need for Choirs and Sunday Schools. Our ladies have certainly carried most of the weight of those organizations as well. They sing, they teach, they cook, they clean, they raise money. For the last sixty years they have served on parish councils as well; advising, directing, and organizing. All while making their homes, raising their children, and in many cases, for most of these 100 years, also holding down full time employment. Who can look on this heroic sacrifice and leadership and not be amazed?

It has been like this from the beginning. In St. Matthew's Gospel, we hear of the "Many women ... which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him." (Mat. 27:55) In Acts we hear of women such as Lydia who opened their homes to the Apostles as they traveled and taught. We also know of women who traveled and taught and served as Apostles, such as Mary Magdalene, Photine the Samaritan Woman, Mary &

Martha, Priscilla, Thekla, Nina, and others. Women offered their families as martyrs, encouraging them to be faithful to the end such as Sophia, Julitta, and others. Women offered their children as ascetics such as St. Martha, the mother of St. Simeon the Stylite. Some, like Ss. Macrina and Monica offered their children as hierarchs to the Church. All the while, there were women like St. Dorcas in the Book of Acts who were leading others in caring for the poor and needy throughout the world. Women were also the very first ascetics and monastics. St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos ended her life in holy asceticism in the company of a community of holy women. St. Thekla founded the longest lasting monastery in the world centuries before the great Monastic Fathers such as St. Anthony. (These Mothers did not write long detailed "rules" governing their living together. Perhaps because women know how to create families naturally.)

We cannot imagine the history of the Church without this myriad of holy and heroic women. We also cannot imagine the Church of the present without our current myriad of holy and heroic women. A lot of these wonderful women have found the Antiochian Women to be a perfect vehicle through which to practice their ancient and holy ministry. When we come together in piety and holiness we can so often accomplish more through each other's help than we could have on our own. We encourage one another and inspire one another in spiritual struggles and feats. We strengthen each other through our prayers and our love. We also comfort and console one another. We do these things in our families and our parishes, in our regions or dioceses, and in the Archdiocese as a whole. We, the Antiochian Women, have the power and the gift from God to transform any or every organization into a family, His family, through love and sacrifice and caring concern. Not only is this a gift from God; it is a vocation. Because He has given us this gift, He has given us this calling. He asks us to do this for His Church, for His people, and for people everywhere that we can reach and touch with our love. And whenever we try to do as He asks, to answer His calling, He Himself brings our efforts to fruition through His own power and love.

Let us then accept this Gift from God, giving Him thanks, and offer our selves to Him in service and in love. We will continue to be what God has called us to be. We will continue to serve in that great stream of Holy Women who have served our Lord from the time of His earthly ministry through two thousand years to this very present day, and will continue to do so until He comes again.

Antiochian Women Project - Retired Clergy Fund

As previously stated, we have now raised over half of our \$500,000 goal in our effort to support our retired clergy. The Retired Clergy Fund was established to subsidize the original fund that supports our retired priests or widowed Khouriyas. Through our joint efforts, this Fund will give our active priests peace of mind for the future for themselves and their families, while insuring our retired priests' ability to live out their golden years more comfortably. We must not lose sight however, of the fact that we need to support our active clergy who are always there for us in times of illness, sorrow, celebrations, etc. They need and are deserving of our support.

The following article was originally published by Orthodox *DYNAMIS* on July 31, 2006 and reprinted here with permission. *DYNAMIS* is a daily Bible meditation based upon the lectionary of the Holy Orthodox Church. *DYNAMIS* is a project of the Educational Committee of St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral in Wichita, Kansas. *DYNAMIS'* Web-site is free: To obtain any of their meditations for the current month or for the last twelve months, or for questions concerning Orthodoxy or editorial comments, contact their editorial address:

dynamis@dynamispublications.org Web Site: www.dynamispublications.org

Clergy Support: 1 Corinthians 9:13-18, especially verses 14, 15: *"Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. But I have used none of these things...."* The First Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth reveals an immature and troubled congregation struggling with a wide variety of problems. With Divine worship so central to the life of the Church, it is not surprising that among other problems the worship of the Corinthian Christians was fraught with several serious issues. In a series of course readings one may follow St. Paul as he addresses a number of these problems. Despite two thousand years in time and significant cultural disparities between then and now, it is amazing how many of these problems still can be found in the Church today.

A cursory reading through the present passage reveals the Apostle pressing to establish the principle that congregations should support those who "minister the holy things" (vs. 13). Note, however, that St. Paul exempts himself from all benefits under this rule (vs. 15). Instead, he places himself in a special relationship with those to whom he had brought the Gospel (vss. 16-18). At the same time, he reminds us that the support of those who minister at the Altar is "a given" of long standing among the People of God, dating back as far as the Mosaic Covenant (2000 BC) and to the "temple service" as well (vs. 13). And pointedly, the Apostle recalls that the Lord Jesus Himself "commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the Gospel" (vs. 14), referring, presumably, to Christ's directive in Matthew 10:10, simply another reiteration of a well-known principle in the Church (1 Tim. 5:18).

Unfortunately, the struggle to assure adequate provision for the clergy still has not resulted in full support for all clergy. Occasionally, historic circumstances have made it difficult to keep this command of the Lord, as when the 1918 Bolshevik revolution in Russia abruptly cut off all funds to the

North American Mission, the major source of income for most parishes. Today, there are a few situations where failure to support the Priest is defensible. Most of these are in new parishes or in older parishes serving communities with declining populations.

Nevertheless, the basic, Scripture-attested Tradition absolutely extends to clergy pensions and health coverage in this day and age. The entire Church should assure that older Priests, when they are ready to retire from the demands of full-time ministry, should be able to do so without concern for personal, spousal, and family maintenance. Thank God our Bishops and lay officers are making serious efforts to correct all inadequacies connected with clergy support including retirement benefits and essential health-care coverage for all Priests and their families.

Another point in this passage was long ago noted by St. John Chrysostom: "As in the case of the priests 'of the temple'...so we see here, 'of the Gospel;' and, as there he says, 'eat' so here, 'live,' not make merchandise or lay up treasures." Bluntly, one does not undertake the solemn duties of the Priesthood to become enriched. Of course a balance must be struck between adequate provision by parishes and reasonable expectations by their clergy.

Finally, observe how the Apostle sought to avoid applying this rule for his own support. He very carefully stated the principle so that the Corinthians would not think he was seeking anything from them (vs. 15). His "necessity" to "preach the gospel," was derived from the Lord. He was delighted to provide for his own maintenance, because in supporting himself to preach the Faith, he had experienced the free nature of grace, living as God provides (vs. 18).

O Lord, enkindle the hearts of Thy people to make adequate provision for Thy Priests so they may serve Thee freely in the work of Thine earthly vineyard for the salvation of our souls.

Introducing The 2005—2007 Board of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Worcester and New England

THE OFFICERS

Father Edward Hughes - Spiritual Advisor



Fr. Edward was born in Kingston, Pennsylvania in 1955. He graduated Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA in 1977, with a BA in Religion, Near East Culture and Archeology. He visited Lebanon, Syria, Palestine Greece, & Italy in 1975 as part of the requirements.

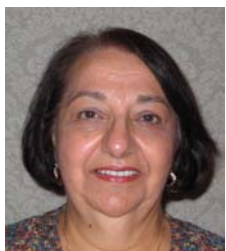
Fr. Ed graduated St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in NY in 1980 and did some post-graduate work at the Institute of Christian Oriental Research at Catholic University in 1980-81. He worked with Fr. John Namie during the first three seasons of the Antiochian Village Camp and lived there full time 1981-2. He met Anna Timko during the second season there and married her in 1982. He was ordained Priest in 1982 at the Antiochian Village by Metropolitan Philip.

Fr. Ed served the parishes of St. Michael's in Beaumont, TX 82-85; St. Mary's in Wilkes-Barre, PA 85-89; and St. George in Lawrence, MA 89-present.

He also served as Antiochian Women's Spiritual Advisor in the Southwest, Eastern, and New England Regions. He was Co-Chair of the Department of Liturgics and Translations for the Antiochian Archdiocese in 1989 and Chair of the Department from 99-present. He is Commissioner of the Western Rite 86-present and Dean of New England Clergy, 1995-present.

Fr. Ed and his wife Kh. Anna have 4 Children: Sarah, a senior at Lycoming College; Michael, a sophomore at Worcester Polytechnic Institute; Martha, a senior at Methuen High School and Elizabeth who is currently in the seventh grade.

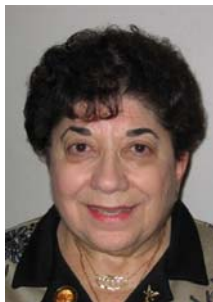
Priscilla Goss - President



St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cambridge, MA has been my parish since I was born. I was married there 41 years ago to James Goss (a retired engineer). We are blessed to have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. I am a laboratory office manager.

I was a Sunday School Teacher for many years and President of the Women's Club of St. Mary's on and off for many years. My offices for the Antiochian Women have been Public Relations Coordinator, Secretary, Vice-President and now President of the Diocese of Worcester and New England.

Marilyn Kurban - Vice President/Nab Project



My name is Marilyn Kurban. I was born and raised in Allston, MA, a suburb of Boston, and lived there the first half of my life. The remaining half I resided in Arlington, MA, and presently live in Belmont, MA for the past four years. I worked for the Federal Government for 28 years in various clerical and secretarial positions. I was married to the late

Edmond Kurban of Lebanon for 25 years. I have three children - Elias, George and Laura along with their spouses - Kelley, Mary and Bob, respectively. I also have six grandchildren -Kathryn, Elizabeth, Eleanor, Carolyn, Amelia and Edmond. I am an active member of the church of St. John of Damascus in Dedham, MA. The church has been the center of my life. Following are some of the activities in which I served locally and regionally:

- Young Peoples Assn. - Recording Secretary - two terms.
- Recording Secretary to Clerk of the Executive Board - three terms.
- NER SOYO Recording Secretary - two terms.
- NER AOCWNA Recording Secretary - two terms.
- Sunday School Teacher for several years.
- Sunday School Superintendent for one year.
- Church School Guild member for several years.
- Choir member for several years - past and present.
- Member of the local ladies chapter, Virgin Mary Society.
- Recipient of NER Meritorious Service Award.
- Member of Saint Ignatius of Antioch.

To know God is to love Him and to love Him is to serve Him! I pray God will continue to give me good health so that I may continue to serve Him.

Pamela Samara - Recording Secretary



Pam Samara has been a lifelong member of St. George Cathedral in Worcester. She and her husband George have 3 children: Leila, Sub-Deacon Khalil, and Jamil. She has been a Family & Consumer Science (Home Economics) teacher for 28 years. On the local level, she has served as a Sunday School Teacher and Director, Antiochian

Women Secretary and presently the Treasurer. At the Diocesan level, she has been Humanitarian Coordinator, and currently is the Secretary. For the past 21 summers, she has been a Volunteer at Antiochian Village. Her hobbies are sewing, quilting, reading and gardening.

Public Relations

At this time, the position is vacant.

Carol Swydan - Treasurer



I am a member of St. George Orthodox Cathedral, Diocese of Worcester and New England. I am a long-time member of the Cathedral Choir. I am presently the President of our chapter of Antiochian Women and past Second Vice President. I am also currently Treasurer of the Diocese of Worcester and New England Region and past Religious Coordinator. I have also served on the North American Board as Recording Secretary.

In my personal life, I am married for 36 years to Paul V. Swydan and have two children, Paul Assad, married to Summer, and Laila. I owned two Subway franchises for ten years and am currently retired.

Mary Ellen Mabardy - Immediate Past President and Parliamentarian

(No photo or biography available) Mary Ellen is a member of St. Mary Church in Cambridge, MA

THE COORDINATORS

Nora Walker - Cultural



Dr. Walker has been a prominent educator, both in Rhode Island and in other parts of the country. She has worked with cultural anthropologists, linguists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists, and has been involved in education at every level -elementary, secondary, college and university as well as adult training

programs. She received her doctorate from Syracuse University and, before she retired, supervised 26 elementary schools in Rhode Island. She is the author of numerous articles and booklets, and has been a consultant to several publishers and to a number of school districts.

Born and raised in Rhode Island - except for government work in Washington, DC for thirteen years, Dr. Walker has been intimately involved with service to the Antiochian Orthodox Church in Rhode Island, New England and in other parts of the United States. She has been an officer of the New England region of Antiochian Women on and off since the middle sixties. She has served as coordinator for membership and public

relations, and has been the cultural coordinator for the past three years. She has represented St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island to the New England region since the days of Eli Haddad and Ralph Richards. She has served with dedication and love.

Gladys Laham - Humanitarian



I was born in Boston, MA. and always lived in the Boston area. I am married to Robert H. Laham who has been on the Archdiocese Board of Trustees for many years. He is the Archdiocese's Treasurer and Chairman of the Village Council. We met while we were Sunday school teachers at St.

George of Boston, married and are still parishioners of St. George. We have three children Robert, Kenneth, and Carol and 5 grandsons. Our children are very active in the Orthodox Church and we thank GOD for this blessing. We have taught our children to live by the Golden Rule. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

On the national level for many years I served as the

Creative Arts Chairman for NAC. In 1973 I became the first Cultural Chairman for the Antiochian Women before it rotated to the regions. In 1979 I had the privilege of serving as the National President for the Antiochian Women with our Ladies from New England.

On the local level, I taught Sunday school, served as secretary for a Sons and Daughters group, as Vice-president of our Ladies Society and at the present I serve as Treasurer. I was the chairman for our project this year for the Clergy Retirement Fund, which was very successful.

On the Regional level, I served as President of the Antiochian Women, Vice President, Treasurer and at the present I am the humanitarian coordinator. This year as our humanitarian project we chose to do something for the Jimmy Fund Children who have Leukemia or Lymphoma. I asked the ladies of our diocese to donate something that the children could use or read while they are having their treatment. Due to our ladies generosity, we were able to donate at least twenty cartons of these articles to the Jimmy Fund clinic at the Dana Farber Cancer Hospital. Children are our future and if we can help and let them know that someone cares, we not only help them, but also help ourselves to become a better person.

My husband, children and myself have always attended and served our Church and as a family, we try to give back to HIM what he has given to us. We thank GOD for all of his blessings.

Kh. Louise Ferguson - Religious



No biography available

Melissa Nassif - Website

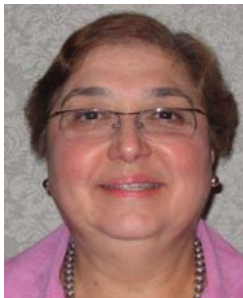


I recently retired from a career as a paralegal, managing compliance for employee benefits administration companies. I also have a degree in teaching, and still volunteer as an English-as-a-Second-Language tutor. My major occupation (and joy) these days is taking care of our home-schooled six-year-old grand-daughter while our daughter works

part time. I am married (my husband is head of a high school science department and also teaches chemistry at a

community college) and we have three grown children. Formerly Episcopalian, we came to Orthodoxy – Peter returning to his roots, and I coming for the first time to what I believe God was preparing me for all my life – and I was chrismated in 2000. Since then I've been active at St. Mary's Church in Cambridge, MA, serving in the Women's Club and the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, issuing the parish e-mail newsletter, coordinating a discussion group, serving as secretary of the parish council, and most recently, becoming coordinator of the Antiochian Women's website for the diocese.

Marilyn Robbat - Membership



I have been married to Michael A. Robbat for almost 33 years and we have three (3) daughters, Kristen, Stephanie & Michelle, two of whom still are at home. We are anticipating with great pleasure the marriage of our eldest daughter, Kristen, in the fall. Michael and I have been truly blessed with a

loving family.

I grew-up in the Orthodox Church. Both my parents and grandparents were born in Damascus, Syria, which makes me “first generation.” I was the youngest of three; and they engrained in us children, by their example, the importance of love, devotion and service to the Church. At a young age, I joined the Choir, Sr. SOYO and became Choir Director in my home parish of St. John of Damascus Church, now in Dedham, Massachusetts. I graduated from Boston University with an Associates Degree in Commercial Science in 1964, (the first in our family to attend college) getting my first and only job at the national headquarters of Sheraton Hotels in Boston.

After marriage, I joined Michael’s church of St. Mary in Cambridge, Massachusetts, “to work in another part of Christ’s Vineyard,” singing in the Choir, joining the PTA and ultimately directing their Choir. In 1989—after my youngest went to school full-time, I started looking for work. Our church needed a secretary, at the time; and it seemed a natural progression for me to take the job. I have been employed as the Church Secretary/Administrator for the past 17 years; and consider it not only a job but a ministry.

I have been a part of Antiochian Women for a number of years holding local, diocesan and North American Board offices. I am presently St. Mary Church Women’s Club President, Membership Coordinator for the Diocese of Worcester & New England; and I am still serving on the North American Board as Immediate Past President.

My interests OUTSIDE the church include cooking, movies and reading—with not a great deal of time left for that!!

Orthodox Women Saints

Saint Thekla, the Protomartyr

Feast Day, September 24

Thekla, the Protomartyr, was one of the very first women to be put to ordeal for her faith in Jesus Christ. The indignities and abuse heaped upon her by the pagans she denounced are documented in ancient manuscripts and offer a tableau in horror that for sheer cruelty, rival any of the atrocities in recorded history.

According to her biographer, St. Epiphanius, Thekla was born of humble parents in the town of Ikonion in Asia Minor about a quarter century after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Like other girls of her class, she had no formal education and was unfamiliar with any of the arts or the classics. A dutiful peasant girl, she was resigned to one day becoming a wife and nothing more was expected of her, but she showed an intellectual curiosity which was frowned upon by her friends but was encouraged by her mother. She attained a degree in literacy, which was rare for a girl in those days, and with the help of her mother found some of the answers she eagerly sought in quest of the real meaning of life.

It was not strange, therefore, when Thekla was eighteen years old that her mother took her to listen and learn about the new faith that was bringing joy to those who were poor in spirit. She and her mother were privileged to listen to the mightiest missionary of them all, no less than St. Paul himself, whose message of Christ so moved the young girl that she sought out the company of St. Paul, who personally converted her to Christianity. She had much to learn about the teaching of Jesus and His true light and attended every meeting held in the area by St. Paul and spoke with other converts in whom she found the love of God.

When Paul was preparing to leave the area to continue his work for Jesus, Thekla ran to her mother and begged her for permission to go with the holy man and take up the cause for Christ in her own way, if St.

Paul would let her. Her mother, a devout Christian herself, told her daughter she was free to go anywhere to serve the Lord. The delighted girl then overtook the missionary party of St. Paul and was welcomed into the group, thereafter to become so deeply involved that she was soon one of the ablest of the missionaries.

It was suggested to Thekla that she undertake her own missionary work in other parts of the lands hitherto unreached, while the rest of the missionaries did likewise and split up into groups that fanned out into all directions of the pagan countries. With Paul's blessing she set out on a journey into many strange lands, some of which were hostile and others of which were anxious to hear the words of the girl whose reputation had preceded her. She won countless numbers of pagans to the new faith but was finally apprehended by an unnamed pagan ruler whose barbarism struck terror into the hearts of his subjects.

There ensued a series of tortures that would have ended the life of any mortal at the outset, but the Lord had seen fit to make Thekla superhuman, in answer to the cruelties of the enemies of early Christianity. When she was cast into a fire, she walked away unscathed. Lances bounced off her and nails could not penetrate her skin. When the onslaught on her person had been thwarted at every turn, her pagan foe retreated in awe. She died of natural causes at the age of ninety and was declared a saint and isapostolos (Equal to the Apostles).

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

On the weekend of September 22-24, Antiochian Village will welcome guests from near and far for the Annual St. Thekla and St. Raphael Pilgrimage. The theme is "Leading a saintly life". Make your journey to the Antiochian Village for a spiritual renewal. For more information or to download the registration form go to www.antiochian.org



Shrine of St. Thekla at Antiochian Village, Bolivar, PA

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Women of North America*

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



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.