

DIAKONIA

Summer 2007



*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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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
Los Angeles and the West**

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 STORY: A most spectacular setting for the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of the West Spring Retreat at St. Nicholas Camp, April 20-22. Inset: Friday, April 20. What a difference a day makes! Breathtaking setting whether snowy or sunny. More photos of Retreat on pages 4 and 5.

READ THE DIAKONIA ON LINE AT

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

Beloved in Christ, the Antiochian Women:

Greetings and blessing in the Name of our Lord, Jesus. I would like to wish all of you a Happy (Late) Mother's Day. We value and appreciate the Mothers for their love. Even to those ladies that are not biological Mothers, you have to act like Mothers just as the Holy Virgin did, being a Mother at all times. I am not talking about biological aspect, but about the values of Motherhood.

As we approach the Fast of Sts. Peter and Paul, I think it would be appropriate for us to contemplate not only the message of the Gospel in their preaching, but in how they shared their lives with those to whom they preached. These Apostles did not simply speak to those around them. They lived in the midst of those they sought to convert. Rather than being at a safe distance from danger, they chose to wade into the communities they evangelized, often in the face of intense persecution.

Our modern lives are far different in many ways from the ancient times of the Roman Empire. Christians are no longer threatened with death. However, we are threatened with humiliation, dishonor and discomfort. Yes, many of us flee from situations that will be 'uncomfortable' to us. The devil found that Christians can endure great hardship, because his hand is so easily revealed in great trials.

So, now, we are tried in a thousand small ways, so that the devil gradually gets us to compromise our values. He gives us a million small excuses not to attend church, keep the fasts, teach our children about God, to hold on to anger and unforgiveness, etc. Only after many years do we discover that we have totally compromised our lives. We have lived in great comfort, and never shared the joys of our Faith with others, mostly because we ourselves have not enjoyed the true blessings of the Christian life.

You see, the world celebrates Mother's Day and Father's Day as a time to sell cards and restaurant reservations. It is a marketing gimmick, which we can see simply from the singular nature of the name. It excludes those who are not biological or 'legal' mothers or fathers.

The truth is, the Apostles lived our true 'motherhood' and 'fatherhood' by building up those they evangelized. To be a true parent is not a biological function or a legal obligation, but a catechetical task. Parents raise children before the presence of God. They teach children about the faith not by sending them to Sunday school, but by living out good examples of the Faith.

Yes, just as the Apostles did, you will be persecuted. Your children will think you are 'mean' because you forced them to go to church, to dress modestly, to keep the fasts, and so on. Your friends will mock you because you are 'old fashioned' or 'prudish.' However, you will raise up children who will not end up pregnant out of wedlock, or addicted to drugs, or just plain immoral. If you raise your children to live by the Christians morals you live each day, you will be a true 'Apostolic Parent.'

If you nag your children about their homework but fail to encourage them to study the Bible (as you yourselves should), then you are no parent to them. However, when you emphasize their spiritual growth, you will be a true Apostolic Parent, fulfilling your biological, legal and, most importantly, your God-appointed role as the Apostolic messenger to your family.

The Orthodox Church has not grown because of evangelism programs or parish activities, but because generation after generation of parents have raised up Christian children, who have then shared their faith with the world. This is what God is calling you to do.

If you love God, if you seek to follow Him, then be an Apostolic Parent. Follow in the footsteps of those two great fathers, Sts. Peter and Paul. Be a mother or father to those around you through your courageous example of the faith, and encourage them to follow you along the way to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Yours in His Service,



+ JOSEPH

Bishop of Los Angeles and the West

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



The Annual Antiochian Women's Retreat in Southern California

April 20-22, 2007
Frazier Park, California

White Hairs, White Hearts, this year's Annual Spring Retreat was beautifully planned by Laurie Olson and so eloquently ministered to us by the V. Rev. Fr. Josiah Trenham. Thank you to Laurie for all your hard work in organizing this retreat and greeting each lady with a smile at our arrival. V. Rev. Fr. David Hovik, as our spiritual advisor, was there for us throughout the weekend, hearing confessions and offering words of advice and encouragement.

Despite the rain and snow, many of the women were able to arrive at Camp St. Nicholas on Friday night. Staying at camp St. Nicholas in the winter/spring is a treat, if not a cold treat – as the trees are either budding or dusted with snow. We had both! Snow on Friday and spring on Saturday! Despite the cold the warmth of sisterly love embraced each of us.

White Hairs, White Hearts – what does this mean? Fr. Josiah walked us through the aging process from a biblical perspective. We were reminded that despite popular culture's idolization of youth, it is fleeting. It is through aging that we (hopefully) gain wisdom and respect. Fr. Josiah pointed out that our respect and treatment of the elderly reflects our fear and respect of the Lord Himself. Throughout history those with "White Hairs" have done great things: Noah, Simeon, Anna the Prophetess, St. Anthony whose greatest years of service to our Lord were from age 70-105! Seniors are the most effective co-laborers in most parishes for many reasons including: wisdom, time and an understanding of the importance of a healthy Parish to nurture our youth. We were reminded that just because someone has white hair they may not have developed the white heart. We must age spiritually and not seek to remain in youth physically or spiritually. Just



as there are examples of the elderly doing great things, there are examples of youth with "old spirits" showing spiritually they are elderly such as Daniel, the 3 Holy Youths, and St. Sava who at age 17 was tonsured a monk and by age 20 was recognized as a "child elder".

Fr. Josiah bravely addressed our vanities and challenged us to embrace our age and for those showing white hairs to praise God. The youth look to the elders of the church for examples of God's faithfulness and for wise council. Seniors have a calling for active service in the Parish which is an honor – don't complain and send the wrong message to the youth, instead rejoice at the opportunity for service. Retirement, Fr. Josiah pointed out, is not an excuse for lethargy, it is an opportunity to throw off the cares of this

world (child rearing, full time job) and follow God's calling to service. Fr. Josiah pointed us to Titus 2:3-5 'The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.'

We left this Holy camp with a new respect for our aging, and with a challenge to focus on spiritual things so our hearts grow white as our hair turns white.

Submitted by: Melinda Bentz, Diocese of Los Angeles and the West Public Relations Director.



**Group photo of retreat attendees,
on sunny Saturday, April 21, 2007.**

AN INVIGORATING WEEKEND FOR THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST



Received teaching and nourishment
for their souls and spirits...



They had walks in the snow



nourishment for their bodies
while getting re-acquainted with
old friends and establishing new
ones.....



participated in the Divine Liturgy
and partook of the very Body and
Blood of Christ....



and received a blessing before
heading back home....



Introducing The 2005—2007 Board of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

THE OFFICERS

The Rt. Rev. Bishop JOSEPH - Bishop of Los Angeles and the West

Please refer to the September 2005 issue of the DIAKONIA for His Grace Bishop JOSEPH's biography. You can find it on line at:

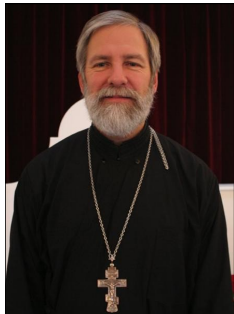
www.antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA and click on "Fall 2005".

You can also read His Grace's biography on the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West web site at:

www.antiochianladiocese.org/Chancery/Bishop_Biography.htm



V. Rev. David Hovik - Spiritual Advisor



I was born in and grew up in Everett, WA. My father, Gordon, was an Everett Fireman and my mother, Geraldine, was the assistant director for the Everett Housing Authority. I am the middle child of three boys (my poor mother). After graduating from Everett High school in 1972, I attended Everett Community College and was planning on going into radio broadcasting (becoming a DJ). That summer I was set up on a blind date with Kh. Debbie and she shared the gospel with me for the first time that I can ever recall. After about two months I knelt down and prayed and, as far as I was able, committed my life to following Jesus Christ. After ECC I graduated from Seattle Bible College and then from Fuller Theological Seminary. I pastored Evangelical non-denominational churches for 19 years and in February of 1997 (after a 6 1/2 year journey) our entire congregation was received into the Orthodox Church by Sayidna Joseph. I enrolled in the St. Stephen's course and was ordained to the diaconate and then to the priesthood and have been the priest at St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Arlington, WA for over ten years. I have been married to Kh. Debbie for 31 years. We have 4 children (2 girls and 2 boys) and seven grandchildren- with the eighth on the way!!! Yes, I can still change a diaper in

under 30 seconds. Our children and grandchildren are all members of our parish, so we are doubly blessed. In February of 2004 Sayidna JOSEPH appointed me as the Spiritual Advisor of Antiochian Women of our Diocese and I have been trying to figure out "why" ever since. Seriously, it really has been a very enjoyable experience for me and I have gotten to know many of the wonderful ladies in our God-protected Diocese. They keep trying to teach me a little Arabic and, with God's help,, I'll get it - eventually.

Samia Habib - President



I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, but grew up in Glendale, California. My 3 older brothers and I are first generation Lebanese-Americans. I began attending St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles as a "Cradle Orthodox" when I was about 7, and it has been my home parish ever since. I attended Sunday School, participated in Jr. Choir, Summer Camp and Teen SOYO. I met my husband, Greg Habib, at a church event, and we were married April 28, 1974. We've been married for 33 years, and we have two sons, Sub-Deacon Michael, age 25, a seminarian at St. Tikhon Orthodox Seminary and Episcopal Assistant to His Grace Bishop JOSEPH, and Gabriel, age 19, working, pondering college/trade school and deciding on his future. We have lived in Burbank since 1980, and I am now a Preschool Teacher at Laurel Hall Early Childhood Center in North Hollywood. I have been a member of our local chapter of the Antiochian Women since 1974, serving as Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Vice President of Membership, Antiochian Women Representative, and most currently Chaplain. I started on the Diocesan Board (then Western Region) in 1994, and have served as Humanitarian Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, Corresponding Secretary, Public Relations Director, and am currently finishing my term as President. I also taught Church School for 30 years and have served on past committees for Conferences and Conventions, including our upcoming Parish Life Conference in 2008. I was a member and secretary of the S. California Deanery Committee on Marriage and Family, and I am an active Oblate of Order of St. Benedict at St. Michael Orthodox Church in Whittier, CA. I earned a B.A. in English, a Secondary Teaching Credential at Cal. State University, L.A., and a Child Development Teacher Permit from L.A. Valley College.

Kathy Johnstone - Vice President



No biography available.

Bonnie Carver - Recording Secretary



Bonnie is a native Californian, born and raised in the Los Angeles area. As a child she was confirmed in the Lutheran church. Later, when she moved to the Orange County area, she attended a small home church in Huntington Beach. This home church was one of the 20 churches which were known as the EOC (Evangelical Orthodox Church). In February of 1987, this large

group of churches were converted in mass to Orthodoxy becoming part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese.

Bonnie attends St. Barnabas Church in Costa Mesa. She has been very active in the church, becoming the first president of the St. Barnabas Antiochian Women. In addition to this she served as secretary on the board of the host committee for the 2001 Parish Life Conference in Orange County. She is presently serving as vice president of her chapter at St. Barnabas.

Bonnie resides in Huntington Beach and is a sales representative for a local steel firm. In her free time she loves to paint and in particular enjoys painting portraits.

Georgette Malouf - Treasurer



The Orthodox Church and church community have been a part of my life as long as I can remember. I grew up singing in the choir, teaching Church School and being very active in SOYO and eventually the Ladies. Being active in my local church, St. Nicholas in Los Angeles, lead me to meet, have a wonderful friendship, and eventually

marry my husband of 30 years, Ed Malouf. We have three children - Christian, Natalie, and Lauren.

I was fortunate enough to stay home with the kids as they were growing up. When they started college, I began working at an elementary school office as the Special Education Coordinator.

I have held all offices and many coordinator positions in the Antiochian Women of the Western Diocese. I have also been active and held positions on the NAB level.

Melinda Bentz - Public Relations/Web Site



I was born in St. Louis, Missouri and lived in Missouri, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland and California. I graduated from Olivet Nazarene University, 1990 with a BA in Psychology and Sociology and I work as a Pharmaceutical Representative for a global Pharmaceutical company. I grew up the oldest of six children of a Nazarene Minister.

My husband, Bill Bentz, is a cradle Orthodox and we have 3 beautiful girls: Brigette 14½, Ginger 12, and Brittany 11. He introduced me to Orthodoxy. I was Chrismated by Fr. Stephen Hardy (memory eternal), after Bill and I were married over 7 years ago. All my young adult and adult life I had questions about Protestantism and Catholicism theology and perspective on the relationship between God and man. I didn't understand why the "early" church disappeared and had to be re-created by Martin Luther and John Wesley. At one point I was even in dialogue with a Jewish Rabbi trying to make sense of when (if) God changed his mind about how he wanted to be worshipped. The Protestant form of worship confused me because it was so person oriented instead of God oriented.

On the local parish level, I have been the President and Secretary of my Parish's Antiochian Women's chapter. I currently teach 1st grade Sunday School, sing in the choir and serve as the Secretary for the Parish Council. I am unofficially the Parish photographer and "visual" historian.

Widad Tarazi - Immediate Past President



I was born in Ramallah, Palestine, raised and lived in Jerusalem till I immigrated with my husband and three of my five children, to the United States of America. I studied at The Friends Girls School in Ramallah, and at The Schmidt's Girls College in Jerusalem. We moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1960 where I enrolled at

The Beauty College in Highland Park. Although I graduated with excellence, I have never practiced professionally. The majority of my life has been as a home maker. When my youngest entered high school, I studied early education to work with children 3 to 5 years of age in preschool. This is one of the most beautiful professions I can relate to.

My activities on the local parish level at our church "The Orthodox Church of the Redeemer", include church school Superintendent for over five years, Ladies President for a number of years and served on the Parish Council for more than 7 years as the Chairperson.

My husband and I are very active in the church. I became very much involved with the Antiochian Women where I served on the board in many different offices, ending as the President in 2005. The most rewarding thing to me is that everything I have done is for the Glory of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

THE COORDINATORS

Elsie Safady - Corresponding Secretary



My claim to fame occurred on the day of my birth; I became the 18th baby to be born on "Ellis Island". After a month long voyage from Damascus, Syria, my parents landed on the island. Mom was detained on the island for a while due to an eye infection. Because she couldn't get adjusted to American food, she stored up on Syrian bread, olives, and cheese. On that special day, she reached for the cheese, to her surprise she had an unexpected visitor, a "Rat", who was munching on the cheese. Needless to say, she became frightened, went into labor and I was prematurely and abruptly born, at a whopping 2 1/2 pounds! I was named Elsie for the Island on which I was born.

My family and I lived in Brooklyn, NY for ten years, then moved to Pasadena, California where I still reside. My love and involvement in sports has been an important part of my life, as it led me into my career of teaching Physical Education. I graduated from San Jose State with a Bachelor Of Science Degree and taught for 11 years. After I got married, I left teaching to become a stay at home mom. My husband Jack and I have three children.

I have been an active member of the Antiochian Women at Saint Nicholas Cathedral for 25 years holding many positions including the Presidency several times. On the Regional level I have also held various positions. Besides being involved with the Ladies, I served on the St. Nicholas Summer Camp and Sweetheart Ball Committees for many years. I have also enjoyed working with our Kid's Club, an outreach program at St. Nicholas. In 2005, I was recognized for my continued service and support to the Cathedral.

Mary Patty Holly - Humanitarian Coordinator



I was born in Pennsylvania and raised in the Baptist Church. I had the opportunity of working so that my husband, Dn. Stephen Holley, could graduate from Philadelphia College of the Bible and then get his Masters degree at Biblical Seminary in Hatfield Pennsylvania. We received the gift of becoming parents in 1976 with a son, Jephthah David. I call it

a gift because we returned that gift back to the Lord on March 3, 2006. In 1988 we moved across the country to California and have been in the same house since. After many disappointing years in the Baptist Church we knew that it was time to look for a new Church. We were invited to attend St. Michael Orthodox Church in Whittier with friends. My husband loved the church immediately and knew that he was home. After about 3 weeks I realized that I have never been in any church like this and that I wanted to worship with this group of Christians. I am very active in the Church where I have held the office of President and Treasurer of our

Antiochian Women's chapter and I am now serving on our Parish Council.

I have always worked in the Medical field. I have held the position of supervisor in the Admissions Department at St Jude Hospital in Fullerton for the last 5 years.

Jeanne Beyer - Membership Coordinator



I was born on September 23, 1919 in Oshkosh, WI where I grew up. I was raised as an Episcopalian. After graduating from Nurse's training, I married Marvin Beyer and did little nursing as I stayed home to raise my family. We had 4 boys, Chuck, Jack, Bob and David. In 1950 we moved to California where I renewed my nurse's

training, passed the California Board and went to work. In 1974 Marvin passed away. David was only 14 and it became my sole responsibility to provide for him and his education.

Throughout the years al 4 boys attended church regularly and were altar boys. It was in Spring of 1981, after a year of studying Orthodoxy, that I joined the Orthodox Church. Since then I have been very active on the local, regional and NAB levels. It has been my faith that has given me the strength to carry on with my obligations all this time. I am still active in nursing doing relief work for others when needed.

Lucy Hanna - Religious Coordinator



Lucy is also the NAB Public Relations Director and publisher of this Newsletter. Please refer to the September 2005 DIAKONIA for her biography. You can find it on line at:

www.antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA and click on "Fall 2005".

Grace Mary Parhamovich - NAB Project



Grace has been active not only in our Diocese but also on the NAB level. Her home parish is St. Michael 's of Las Vegas. She feels honored to have served on the NAB Scholarship program for approximately 10 years as well as almost all the chairmanships on all 3 levels of the Antiochian Women. Her latest and most rewarding endeavor is serving as

President of her local chapter to which she devotes most of her time at the age of 79 young. She states that she will stay active until she is physically unable to serve.

Kh. Christina Tassos - Retreat Scholarships



I am currently from Palmdale, California but born in Charleston, WV and raised there by immigrant Orthodox Christian parents. My father came to America from a small village in Greece when he was 18 years old. My mother's family was from Lebanon and lived in Sherbrooke, Canada for a few years before completing their immigration to the U.S. My mother and her twin sister

were the only children born outside of Lebanon. I was adopted as an infant by my parents and grew up attending St George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Charleston.

At St George, I was active in Church School (first as a student and later as a teacher), basketball, creative arts and oratorical contests, choir, Teen and Senior SOYO, and English chanting. Outside of church, I was a Brownie-Girl Scout, played junior and senior high team tennis and volleyball, belonged to the Thespian Club and was a Medical Explorer. I attended West Virginia University and then graduated from the University of Charleston with a degree in Nursing Science. Currently I work per diem as a peri-operative RN for two outpatient surgery centers.

My husband and I met while attending St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. We were married in 1993 and now have 3 wonderful children: Caitlin 12, Juliana 10 and Nicholas 7. Father Michael is the pastor of Holy Cross Orthodox Church in Palmdale and also works full time as the CFO for Specialty Surgical in Beverly Hills. Our family enjoys reading, chanting, singing, arts & crafts, bike rides at the beach and playing with our two year old Shih Tzu, Molly.

I have enjoyed being able to serve as the Scholarship Coordinator and am so pleased that our executive board has had the wisdom and generosity to offer scholarships to women who might otherwise have not been able to attend our annual retreat. I sincerely hope I will be able to be of more service in the future!

Isabel Elac - Parliamentarian



I was born in Chile. I am a cradle Orthodox and have been a member of St. Nicholas Cathedral since the early 50's where I was active in Jr. SOYO and later Sr. SOYO and held various offices including President. Later on I moved on to the Antiochian Women's local group where I held various offices again including President.

When the Antiochian Women were organized in 1973, I served on the Regional level including President. In 1987 I was the first President of NAB to be elected "at large" serving with women from all corners of the Archdiocese. We had a job to do to unite all our women "in the spirit of Christian Leadership" and "create a genuine expression of love and service of fellowship". I implemented some new ideas having discussions of difficult moral issues and holding a workshop/mini Retreat at all NAB meetings. I tried to visit all the Regions during my tenure and met so many wonderful and dedicated women of our Archdiocese. I'm still very active in our Diocese (old Western Region) holding many offices. In our local Parish I have served on the parish council for many years, holding different offices and presently I sing in the Choir, run our Bookstore, and I am a member of the Altar Society and the Antiochian Women Chapter.

Laurie Olson - Retreat Coordinator

For photo and more details on Laurie's bio, please see page 11.

I was born in Lynwood, California and lived in Downey until I was 10 years old. Then we moved to Orange County where I still live. I spent my freshman year at Westmont College in Santa Barbara and then transferred to Cal State Long Beach, graduating with a B.S. degree in Medical Microbiology. I was raised as an evangelical Protestant and was quite involved in my church throughout my youth and adult life. It was at Calvary Church in Santa Ana that I met my husband, Ron Olson when we were just teenagers. We married in 1979, and one year after we married we went to Colombia, South America as missionaries. We spent four years in Santa Marta, Colombia as church planters and then returned to California and began to minister in the inner-city of Santa Ana.

A note from the Editor

My dear Sisters in Christ,

As my term as NAB Public Relations Director comes to a close, I wish to thank all of you for submitting your articles, biographies, photos, etc. I also wish to thank those who submitted articles for the Word Magazine.

It has been a pleasure serving you and publishing this newsletter. I pray that in a small way I was able to contribute to the furtherance of the goals of the Antiochian Women "to develop among women throughout the Antiochian Archdiocese a spirit of Christian leadership, awareness and commitment as taught in the Holy Orthodox Church, to foster among them a genuine expression of love and service through works of charity, and to instill among them and the community at large a sense of fellowship and a deeper understanding of the heritage and traditions of the Antiochian Archdiocese and the Orthodox Church".

God willing, I will continue to serve the Antiochian Women and this God-protected Archdiocese, whether in this same capacity, if re-elected, or in any other capacity, as long as I am able.

Your sister in Christ,

Lucy Hanna

A Thank you letter from our NAB President - Mrs. Laila Ferris

Dearest Sisters in Christ,

As we come to the close of another term for the North American Board of Antiochian Women's officers, I wanted to take this opportunity to extend our sincerest thanks for all that you have done to, not only support the Antiochian Women's organization, but our faith and each other. You have worked diligently to ensure that our goals have been met for the benefit of those in need and for the glory of God.



It is due to the hard work, of those of you, at the local level, under the leadership of your Diocesan officers, that much has been accomplished over the past four years. You have continued to support some very important programs such as the the Married Seminarians' Fund and the Antiochian Women's Scholarship. Within the past four years you have seen the successful attainment of our goal to reach the \$1,000,000.00 Endowment Fund for orphans around the world, and you have moved rapidly towards meeting the goal set for our present project, the Retired Clergy fund. We are to raise \$500,000.00 in five years, and you have raised over \$250,000.00, in the first two years. There is more than this that you do that goes unsung, but is always worthy in the eyes of our Lord.

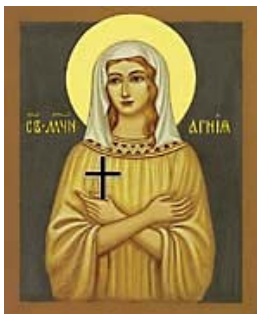
I have truly been blessed to have had the opportunity to work with many of you during my two terms of office. You have made me realize what a gift it is to be a part of the organization. I will always cherish the many ways in which you have enriched my life.

There are never enough words to state my thanks to and love for you. I also wish to extend my sincerest appreciation to our Primate, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, our Hierarchical overseer, His Grace Bishop JOSEPH and all our Hierarchs and Spiritual Advisors for their never-ending support and trust. Many thanks and much love to the Diocesan Presidents, Priscilla Goss, Ina O'Dell, Kh. Tracey Allen, Kh. Terry Rogers, Roberta Royhab, Judy Stevens, and Samia Habib, for their strong leadership. Also, a tremendous "thank you" and love to my N.A.B. Officers and Coordinators for their selfless love and committed work: Fr. John Abdalah, Cindy Nimey, Dianne O'Regan, Violet Robbat, Lucy Hanna, Marilyn Robbat, Joanne Bitar, Sherry Abraham Morrow, Kh. Barbara Baz, Sarah Hodges, Saydeh Karabatis, and Elinor Bourjaily.

I pray that your work continues with the dedication which you have consistently shown over the past 34 years as the Antiochian Women of this great and blessed Archdiocese. Please know that your future N.A.B. Officers and Coordinators will always be there for you, just as I will. May our Lord bless you and continue to give you the strength to continue to perform the good works to which we are committed.

Your Sister in Christ,

Laila Rizk Ferris, President
Antiochian Women
North American Board



ST. AGNES OF ROME (291 - 304)

Feast Day: July 5

St. Agnes was a young girl of Rome whose sweetness and purity of life brought about the conversion of many pagan women whose lives were just the opposite of her own. By her actions she became known to the authorities, who led her to the temple of Minerva to make sacrifice, which she refused to do.

After attempting to force her into a life of ill-fame, she was offered her freedom if she would marry a pagan, with the alternative of being burned at the stake if she refused. She remained steadfast, counting such a marriage defilement, for she had promised herself to the service of God.

When she was brought to the stake, a shower of rain put out the fire; this event was regarded as miraculous by those who witnessed it. Her steadfastness influenced even more pagans to change their way of life, even though the Roman Prefect finally had her beheaded, about 304 A.D. at the young age of thirteen.

The name Agnes means "pure". St. Agnes remained true to her name, and was willing to die for convictions rather than to give in to evil.

Laurie Olson, Diocese of Los Angeles and the West Retreat Coordinator, takes on new responsibilities as the wife of the newly-ordained Deacon Paul.

A note from the editor: While the following article, by Subdeacon Peter Samore of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles was written as a biography of Deacon Paul, it describes the road that Laurie took along with her husband to arrive at the blessed ministry that they have both undertaken.

Just a few months after they were married Deacon Paul (Ron) and Laurie Olson left their newly purchased home in Anaheim to serve God as “church planters” in Santa Marta, Colombia, South America. While the locale may sound exotic, their first dining room table was a suitcase stood on end, a barrel top balanced on it and covered with a tablecloth. Here is where they learned Spanish and to love the Latin-American culture. They also deeply bonded with and came to share a mutual love with the people. They left after four years, taking with them, their two daughters, Teresa and Sophia who were born there. It was in Colombia that they acquired a fluency in the Spanish language. Soon after their return to the U.S. they were working with inner-city Cambodian refugees and Hispanic immigrants. At a Santa Ana Hispanic church they helped to found and oversaw an extension Bible and Pastoral Theology institute as well as other programs for growth, such as training leaders for small groups.

They left this blessed ministry only to follow “in a more exact way”—the Way of Orthodoxy—and were chrismated in 1990 after a year of careful study of Church history from a variety of perspectives—not just the Orthodox, reading many books and delving into theology. Concluding that The Church was indeed the Orthodox Church they were brought into its embrace with their three daughters, which now included Erica, at St. Barnabas Antiochian Orthodox Church of Huntington Beach (now of Costa Mesa). Soon Laurie was involved in the Sunday School and Ron joined the choir and began to help establish a tradition of Byzantine chant at this relatively new parish. After thirteen years of faithful service at the chanters stand, having taken the St. Romanos basic and advanced courses, he sought Fr. Wayne Wilson’s blessing to take the St. Stephen’s course.

A key requirement of this course was the directed projects that were to be of a practical nature. Ron desired to do these in a Spanish-speaking context if at all possible. Fr. Wayne suggested that he might contact Fr. Michel Najim and Dn. George Ajalat at St. Nicholas Cathedral. Fr. Michel welcomed Ron and Laurie to come and serve the Hispanic congregation. Soon it became clear that this was to be their new “home.” Warmly welcomed by both the Spanish and the English/Arabic congregations they found many opportunities to serve and do the three required projects. After only a couple of months Ron and Laurie became so “tied in” that they moved their membership to the Cathedral with the blessing of Fr. Wayne and Fr. Michel. Then, after little more than a year of service at the Cathedral, Bishop JOSEPH made Ron a Subdeacon.

This facilitated even more Ron’s ability to help and serve the small Spanish-speaking mission at the Cathedral. Preaching, singing, leading the choir and helping at the altar; translating materials, teaching catechism and Bible studies—Sundays became very busy but blessed times of serving—most often arriving before 8 a.m. to prepare for the Spanish service and staying until the end of the English service’s coffee hour. Seeing the people of the mission grow in understanding and in the love of Christ and His Church has been very gratifying for both Ron and Laurie, as have been the opportunities to reach out into the surrounding community.

Having completed the St. Stephen’s course and submitting application to Bishop JOSEPH and the Antiochian Archdiocese with the blessing and support of the Cathedral clergy, Ron became a deacon (taking the name of the Apostle Paul) of the Holy Orthodox Church. Deacon Paul feels greatly humbled by the opportunity and looks forward “to serving the Hispanic Mission and the Cathedral at large to an even greater degree. I have been nurtured and encouraged in Faith and in Service here at St. Nicholas Cathedral. This is a blessing for which I give thanks to God, to the Bishop, Clergy and the people of the Cathedral, and to the people of the Mission for their love and prayers. May God grant you all many, many years.”



*Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Women of North America*

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



	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 ✓

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.

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

We have completed the 2005 - 2007 cycle!

Thank you for all your submissions.