

DEPARTMENT OF MARRIAGE & PARISH FAMILY MINISTRIES
Archdiocesan Convention Chicago July 28, 2011



Your Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, Venerable Hierarchs, Esteemed Clergy and Wives, and Board of Trustees Members

The Department of Marriage and Parish Family Ministries has been actively working for 8 years throughout the Dioceses of the Antiochian Archdiocese. This Department consistently operates below its budget each year and has voluntarily frozen its budget for several years. This decrease has not affected the quality of the work in the Department.

Many new seminars and workshops on marriage and family life have been developed and presented. Three ongoing programs have been proposed for Antiochian Village on Marriage and Family Enrichment, Premarital Preparation and a Bereavement Retreat. Presentations at the Parish Life Conferences and the Archdiocesan Conventions as well as the Clergy Symposiums, Seminaries and Monasteries are regularly scheduled. The Clergy are continually being trained in premarital assessments and counseling skills in order to prepare the couples of our Archdiocese for successful marriages. In addition this program is being taught at the Seminary level to prepare future Clergy to work with the skills and tools in order to achieve this goal.

The goal of this Department is to continue to make available the training and tools to assist the marriages and families of this Archdiocese to strengthen their bonds. An additional goal is in moving from crisis intervention to providing preventative measures and skills for individuals and couples to utilize *before* challenges in their relationships escalate. Training in parenting skills has been a popular program from this Department also. Because of the struggles of our families to live an Orthodox lifestyle in the midst of an increasingly secularized world, the topic for the workshop at this Convention is "*Cultural Influences on the Family*".

The workshops and seminars taught in the parishes and conferences are the main vehicle for this training and instruction. Currently, publications on these topics is an active focus to provide materials to assist the marriages and families of our Archdiocese. In particular a book on preparing couples for marriage is being written. At the last Archdiocesan Convention I introduced two new booklets on Orthodox Marriage Preparation and Parish Etiquette. They have been quite popular and are available through www.antiochian.org/departments/departmentofmarriageandparishfamilyministries. Both of these booklets are a free download and are being used in many of our parishes.

Within the past two years Clergy consulting on sensitive and challenging problems within their own families and among parishioners has increased significantly. The goal of this Department is not long-term therapy but crisis intervention with referrals to local qualified professionals when needed. All contact with this Department is strictly confidential. Finally, there are no records for Marriages kept in this office, as many request them. They are only available by contacting the Archdiocesan office in Englewood.

The Director of this Department, Khouriya Maggie Hock, gratefully acknowledges His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, all Hierarchs, The Board of Trustees, and The Order of St. Ignatius Of Antioch for their vision and continued support of this vital ministry to the marriages and families of our Archdiocese.
Respectfully submitted.