



The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
OF NORTH AMERICA

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TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PUBLISHED IN THE CHURCH BULLETIN

Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Faithful of the Archdiocese,

Greetings and blessings on your Lenten Journey.

I have designated the month of March as Antiochian Women's Month in our Archdiocese. Since I founded the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America, they have raised over 3.1 million dollars toward the support and funding of many of our projects, including the Antiochian Village, Balamand Seminary, Married Seminarians, Orphanages/Katherine Ajar Endowment Fund, Retired Clergy Housing Fund, and Al-Kafaat, to name only a few. Through their ministry of serving Christ through serving others, they have continued to find many ways to strengthen their role in the Orthodox Church.

The Antiochian Women have always shown a great deal of concern for orphans around the world, having raised over one million dollars for the Orphanages/Katherine Ajar Endowment Fund. Thus, the first Sunday in March continues to be designated as "Orphans' Sunday." Throughout the month of March, you will see our women more actively involved in the church, including them reading the Epistle, ushering, taking the collections, and addressing those at the Divine Liturgy about the role of the Antiochian Women in their parish, diocese and Archdiocese.

Since 2009, the Antiochian Women have taken on the project of "The Convent of St. Thekla at Antiochian Village," and 2012 will mark their third year of raising funds – and awareness – of this blessed vision. It will be the first monastic community in the Antiochian Archdiocese and, as usual, the women have come to the forefront to see that it becomes a reality.

The future of the Convent of St. Thekla is bright with Mother Alexandra's appointment as Acting Abbess. All the preparatory work has been completed and we are very close to turning the earth on this magnificent endeavor. In order to see this project to fruition, please support the Antiochian Women in this wonderful cause, it is a gift for our own salvation, as well as that of future generations.

I also urge all ladies throughout the Archdiocese to become involved in the local chapters of the Antiochian Women, as well as in their respective dioceses. The women who serve are your sisters in Christ, and they welcome new ideas and input. Remember, **every** woman in our beloved Archdiocese is an "Antiochian Woman."

May your Lenten journey be blessed toward the day when we experience our Risen Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ!

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Metropolitan Philip".

Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate
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"...the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." ACTS 11:26