

35
Years of Service

Antiochian Women
Of North America

1973 - 2008



DIAKONIA

Summer 2009



Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Worcester and New England and their Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Ed. Hughes, at their May 2nd., 2009 meeting at St. Mary Church in Cambridge, MA

This issue of DIAKONIA highlights the Diocese of
Worcester and New England

*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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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 Word or Publisher attachment to:
teta.of.9@sbcglobal.net
NO PDF FILES PLEASE
- FAX typed, double spaced articles to (951) 736-0800.
- Mail hard copy to Lucy Hanna, 1853 Kensington Rd, Corona, CA, 92880

Submission Details

- Please include your name and the phone number where you can be contacted for questions.
- Hard 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.

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.*

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

**In each issue we highlight ONE of the
Dioceses. We encourage everyone
however, to submit news, photos and
articles from all Antiochian parishes of
North America for publication in every
issue. Please see back cover for the
schedule of publication.**

***Remember that if YOU don't submit
it, I cannot include it.***



June this year is a month of Apostolic commemorations: June 7: Feast of Pentecost; June 8: Monday of the Holy Spirit; June 14: Sunday of All Saints; June 15—June 28: Apostles' Fast; June 29: Ss Peter and Paul, chief apostles; June 30: Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles. June is the month of the Apostles!

The apostles, called by our Lord Jesus Christ, and glorified by the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ, form a God-loving choir whose fame we laud these days. So what is the big thing about the apostles? Why do we emphasize them so much? What value do we derive in honoring them so? Simply put, they have taught us the Way of salvation, Christ Himself. They, as individuals each in their own place, and as a group—the apostolic choir, as we say—are the Founders of our Faith. When asked straight away, Who is the founder of Christianity (itself, a late, made-up word), many people say, Jesus Christ. But this is not true. Jesus is Lord, we confess. But the meaning of our confession that Jesus is Lord, and of the profound conviction underlying it, only becomes clear and experiential in the Church (one, the Body of Christ) and in the churches (plural, the different local churches founded by each apostle). Each apostle is the Founder of his Local Church and, by extension, to the daughter churches stemming from that mother. For example, we Antiochian Orthodox recognize the apostolic foundation of the Church of Antioch stemming from the combined apostolate of Ss Peter and Paul, and others (e.g., Barnabas). We give special honour to these two chief apostles, but there are also others. We reject any notion which sets any one apostle over the others. Each apostle passes on the whole Tradition to the churches he establishes. The unity of Tradition and the plurality of churches is the hallmark of our Orthodox Church; we enjoy a unity of Faith and Love in a plurality of Local Churches all in mutual communion.

This has great application to your lives and work as Antiochian women in your families and parishes. Each one of you has a sphere of influence, a ministry,

in Christ's name. It is really your ministry, distinct and different from that ministry exercised by any other woman in your same parish and in another parish. But, at the same time, each of your ministry—your service for Christ's sake—is also the SAME as your neighbor's! It is the ONE ministry of Christ Who serves through each one of us as His hand, His feet, His voice, His love and forgiveness! Do you see how this is the same relationship as the Apostles to each other? They live in communion, and are distinct persons exercising their ministry as persons in each of their own spheres of life.



As you faithful women live out your faith and grow ever deeper in Christ, as you experience the spiritual cure of the Church and purify yourselves as He is pure, as you live out of holy illumination and—God granting it—some of you become glorified, our Antiochian apostolate here in America will mature. But this is not a product of a political committee or some human-oriented “church growth plan.” Let us live like the apostles: denying ourselves, obeying the commandments of Christ, becoming a living prayer, confessing the Faith, suffering courageously as martyrs. We must guard ourselves against any idealism, any enthusiasm, any hastiness, any programmatic tendencies! “Unless the LORD build the house, they labor in vain who build.” Any effective service grows out of faith and love, not only from clever programs.

“Adorned in the blood of Thy Martyrs throughout all the world as in purple and fine linen, Thy Church, through them, doth cry unto Thee, O Christ God: Send down Thy compassions upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy commonwealth, and great mercy to our souls”

(dismissal hymn for All Saints)

*Each one of you
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Christ's name*

Too often the ladies underestimate and understate their role in the Church. I think that the strange movement for women priests comes from this lack of knowledge of the importance of women's roles and ministries in the Church

The Ladies are the very foundation of the Orthodox Christian Church. There is no doubt that this has been true from the very, very beginning. When our Lord was about his public ministry, traveling and preaching all over the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean, the Scriptures tell us that there were "Many women ... which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him." (Mt. 27, 55). At the Cross, besides these women from Galilee, there were "Many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem." (Mk 15:41) Among these women were those blessed women who were the first to know of the glorious Resurrection. It was they who evangelized the Apostles, telling them the good news which they had learned first from the Angels.

These women then spread out over the known world along with the Apostles carrying to everyone the same good news. Mary Magdalene, Mary & Martha the sisters of Lazarus, Mariamne the sister of the Apostle Philip are only some of those who went out to preach. Other women becoming believers through their teaching and the Apostles' teaching themselves began to spread the Gospel further. Priscilla and Lydia are well known from the earliest century. Almost immediately holy women served the Church communities through service, prayer and fasting. Communities of virgins and widows were found in every Church who would "Trust in God and continue in prayers and supplications night and day." (1 Tim. 5:5) Of special interest at this time is the glorious St. Thekla, who, being converted by St. Paul and surviving several attempts at martyrdom, traveled and taught herself until she founded a community of holy women in Syria which has continued in un-broken continuity up to the present day. Thus, women were the very first to practice the monastic life, long before St. Anthony began to teach men the practice. They were also the first to form monastic communities long before St. basil or St. Pakhomius taught men how to do the same.

When the persecutions began, women showed themselves equal to any man in courage, steadfastness of faith and eagerness for martyrdom. Saints Irene, Barbara, Katherine, Lucy, Agnes and Agatha along with countless others, many only children or teenagers, generously and freely gave their lives for the advancement of the Faith.

When peace again came to the Church, brave and intelligent women like Rhipsimia and Nina set out to convert the outlying pagan communities, sometimes adding

martyrdom to their asceticism and apostleship, winning triple crowns from the Lord. St. Walburga of Heidenheim, St. Hilda of Whitby, and St. Bridgit of Ireland excelled in administration and propagation of the Faith as well as great learning, asceticism and personal holiness.



As the centuries have passed, the women of the Church have been the fount of Faith for each succeeding generation. Grandmothers and mothers pass on both the content as well as the practice of the Faith to their children and grandchildren. Contemporary social scientific studies have confirmed that most people receive their Faith from their mothers and grandmothers. But we have already seen that in the lives of our own great Saints. St. Elizabeth gave us St. John the Baptist; St. Anna gave us the Holy Theotokos; St. Monica gave us St. Augustine; St. Helena gave us St. Constantine; St. Martha gave us St. Simeon the Stylite; St. Makrina gave us Emmelia who gave us St. Basil the Great, Peter of Sebasteia, Gregory of Nyssa, Nafkratios of Mt. Nitria, and Makrina; St. Nonna gave us St. Gregory the Theologian; and so on. For so many, many saints there was a mother who was a saint beforehand, who taught and nurtured the next generation of saints for the Church. Martyrs, ascetics, bishops and teachers all had mothers and grandmothers who put them on the road to piety and holiness.

Are we any different? Most of our Church communities were founded at the instigation of wives and mothers who encouraged their families to organize parishes and build churches. How many of our first Church buildings were entirely financed by women's contributions of their grocery money and dollars raised through their cooking and hosting teas and dinners? Our Choirs, Sunday Schools, and SOYO's could never have existed without the commitment of countless women for generations and generations.

And so, as we are entering into this new century and third millennium, we need to look to our ladies, our grandmothers and mothers, aunts and sisters to continue to inspire and lead either directly or indirectly, to serve in every level of parish life, to increase the Faith, to teach and encourage the young, and to minister to the body of Christ as their mothers, grandmothers, and ancient ancestors in the Faith have done for the last nearly two thousand years in holiness and piety and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Contemporary social scientific studies have confirmed that most people receive their Faith from their mothers and grandmothers.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb” Revelations 22:1

In the not too distant past, while in Florida at the park in Disney, I went on a ride called “Mission to Mars.” As we ascended into “outer space”, I looked down to see a very, very small orb which appeared to be Earth. It was so thrilling – to have an inkling of the sensation of being in outer space. At the same time, the thought came to mind – if earth was so tiny in the vast cosmos, of what dimension are we human beings as part of all of God’s creations? I had a momentary sense of being so infinitesimally tiny, to the point of insignificance. I thought, “how does God even know we exist?” How much attention does He pay to our petitions for whatever earthly problem we may be experiencing at the moment? Really, how important are we in the grand scheme of things?

Some of those answers became apparent when in the following year, I visited Rome and Syria. In Rome, at the Colliseum, we saw the vastness of the spectator arrangements. It was then that we realized the joy that the spectators took in the bringing up from the dungeons the tortured Christians to face the half-starved lions and their

feelings of helplessness as they faced certain death. Did they pray for relief? A recount of how they dealt with this dilemma was that they sang hymns to God and Jesus. They were martyred beyond anything we will ever face and their faith sustained them.

Later, in Syria, we visited the Strait Street where St. Paul walked, the place which marked where his conversion took place, and the St. Ananais Church from which he was lowered in a basket to escape the Roman soldiers. St. Paul never met Jesus, and yet his devotion and dedication to Jesus as the Son of God was unshakable. He was most prolific in preaching the word of God. This experience, for me, reinforced the true significance of church and Orthodoxy, and religion and its basis.

One doesn’t have to visit the Middle East to appreciate and live the faith. One only need to look at a new born child (or animal, for that matter) to know that God exists and that He rules the universe with compassion, balance, and omnipotence. You can feel God all around you in nature and in the heavens. Know that when you look to the sky, there is a vast universe out there, but that God looks after all of us. St. Paul reiterated that in his teachings – his writings confirmed it.

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF NEW ENGLAND

By Dr. Nora Mary Walker, President

The founding of Antiochian Women of North America, in 1973 by His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip, was an outgrowth of SOYO of New England, established right after World War II around 1946 or 1947. The first president was Eli Haddad of Worcester; the second president was Ralph Richards of Methuen, Massachusetts. The group included all individuals from teen agers to senior seniors, very co-ed.

When Antiochian Women became an entity of their own, the split engendered Teen SOYO, The Order of St. Ignatius, the Fellowship of St. John the Divine and other organizations within the Archdiocese. The first president from New England was Nora Hallal Matook. +Emily Moses was active in the early days. So was +Joanne Josephs Abdalah. She was followed by many presidents, some of whom have been active most recently: Mary Ellen Mabardy, Priscilla Goss, Marilyn Robbat, Violet Robbat, Joyce Hanna, Joan Hanna, Salwa Khoury and Gladys Laham. A few went on to become presidents at the national level.

In a recent edition of *The Word*, the article entitled “Who are the Antiochian Women?” submitted by Dianne O’Regan she wrote: “...each and every woman – from 19 to 99- who is a member of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada. They are wives, mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers. They are daughters, sisters, aunts, and cousins. They are members of the

‘Women’s Club’, ‘Ladies Society’, or ‘Myrrh-bearing Women’. An Antiochian Woman is YOU.” Pp 27-28

Our projects have been many where funds have been raised for Pastoral education beginning in 1975 to Balamand Seminary, Missions, Orthodox Media, Antiochian Village, Married Seminarians, West Coast Chancery, St. George Hospital, Heritage and Learning Center, Bishop’s Endowment Fund, IOCC, Orphanages, Retired Clergy Fund, and most recently, Children with Special Needs. New England has participated fully in all projects as a unified endeavor.

The parishes which originally made up the Worcester and New England Diocese are St. John of Damascus, Dedham, MA; St. George Orthodox Church of West Roxbury, MA.; St. Mary Orthodox Church of Cambridge, MA.; St. George Orthodox Cathedral of Worcester, MA.; St. Mary Orthodox Church of Pawtucket, RI.; St. George Orthodox Church of Lowell, MA.; St George Orthodox Church of Norwood, MA; and St. George Orthodox Church of Lawrence, MA. Recent additions are St. Michael the Archangel of Cotuit, MA, St. Stephens Orthodox Church of Springfield, MA, Emmanuel Orthodox Church of Warren, MA, All Saints Orthodox Mission of S. Weymouth, MA, and St. Elias Mission of Fall River, MA.

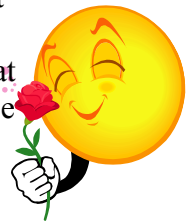
“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.” Revelations 1:10

Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Worcester and New England meet.....

The Diocese of Worcester and New England meets 4 times a year; the locations alternate among all our churches. On Saturday, May 2, 2009, we had our third Diocesan meeting of the year at St. Mary Church in Cambridge, MA. An Executive Board Meeting was called by President, Nora Walker, from 9 - 10 a.m. with all officers and Coordinators, and the General Assembly Meeting followed from 10 a.m. until Noon. During our General Assembly Meeting, our Spiritual Advisor and Dean of the Diocese, V. Rev. Edward Hughes, spoke about the Myrrh-Bearing Women and the importance of women in forming the Orthodox Churches in America and elsewhere. We also heard a report from N.A.B. Vice President, Violet Robbat, giving us all an up-date on the Mid-Winter Meeting held in February at Antiochian Village. Coffee and goodies were enjoyed by all before the meeting and a delicious luncheon after the meeting was served by the gracious and welcoming women of St. Mary Church of Cambridge.



The women accomplish so much at their meetings but never forget to have "Fun, Food and Fellowship" at the same time. Just look at all those happy, smiling faces! A red rose to each one of you and Fr. Ed too!



Yummm...



Here's to you!

A Note from the Editor...

Christ is Risen!

It has been my pleasure and my privilege to serve you and our God-Protected Archdiocese as Public Relations Director for the North American Board of Antiochian Women, and Publisher of this Newsletter for the last four years. Everything good (or bad) however, eventually comes to an end. My term ends this July when another Director will be elected at the Archdiocese Convention in Palm Springs. I wish her the same enjoyment I got from serving you and offer her my assistance in any way I can.



As a brief history of how the DIAKONIA started, when I was first elected as PR Director in 2001, my duty was to highlight the Antiochian Women organization and publicize their work. The best and only way I could think of, was by starting a newsletter that would highlight one diocese in every issue. Thus, the NAB Newsletter was born, and appropriately named DIAKONIA which is a Greek word meaning “Service”.

I served as PR director for one 2-year term (2001 - 2003). In 2005 I was re-elected to that position and picked up where I had left off two years earlier, and served for two 2-year terms (2005 - 2009). According to the NAB by-laws, an officer may not serve in the same office for more than two consecutive 2-year terms.

We have so many talented and computer savvy women in our Archdiocese, one of whom will pick up where I leave off and continue producing the DIAKONIA which is now one of the official publications of our Archdiocese. I urge any woman with a God-given talent to submit her nomination form as soon as possible to the NAB Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee Chairman, Laila Ferris at: 3016 Harrison, El Paso, TX 79930-4027. If you don't have the form, you may contact her by email at: lferris130@yahoo.com and she will send you one.

I would like to thank all the diocesan Public Relations Directors who have made job easier by collecting information from their respective officers, coordinators and others to send to me for publication. I would also like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, Their Graces the diocesan Bishops and The Reverend Spiritual advisors for their support and for the wonderful and edifying articles and messages they were kind enough to submit for publication.

Special thanks go to our Hierarchical Overseer, His Grace Bishop JOSEPH for continually supporting us and for the excellent articles he wrote for each and every issue of the DIAKONIA. May God grant him many years.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Cindy Nimey and ALL the officers and coordinators of the North American Board, the seven dioceses and all the chapters across North America, for their love and dedication to the Antiochian Women and to the causes and principles for which they stand. I especially thank them for their contributions to the DIAKONIA. You are all truly ***“A Sisterhood Serving God Through Serving Others”***. God bless you all and grant you many more years of service to God and to His people.

Please pray for me as I you,

Lucy Hanna

Mark your Calendars for the 2009 Parish Life Conferences and Archdiocese Convention

Diocese	Dates	Host Parish
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West	May 20 - 24	St. Stephen Church, Campbell, CA
Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	June 10 - 14	St. Peter Church, Madison, MS
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	June 10 - 14	St. Mary Church, Wichita, KS
Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate New York	June 25 - 28	St. George Church, Niagara Falls, NY
Diocese of Worcester and New England	June 25 - 28	St. George Church, Lawrence, MA
Dioceses of New York and Charleston	July 1 - 5	Virgin Mary Church, Yonkers, NY
Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	July 2 - 5	St. James Church, Loveland, OH
Archdiocese Convention	July 19 - 26	St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, CA

Introducing The 2007 - 2009 Board of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Worcester and New England

OFFICERS AND COORDINATORS

The Most Rev. Metropolitan PHILIP - Diocesan Bishop



Metropolitan PHILIP was born on June 10, 1931, in Abou Mizan, Lebanon, the fourth of five children to Elias and Saleema Saliba. After completing his primary education at the Shouier Elementary School, he entered the Balamand Orthodox Seminary, near Tripoli, Lebanon, at the age of fourteen. He subsequently

attended and was graduated from the Orthodox Secondary School in Homs, Syria, and the Assiyeh Orthodox College in Damascus, Syria.

Ordained to the holy diaconate in 1949, he was assigned to serve as secretary to His Beatitude, Alexander III (Tahan), the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. In 1952, he was appointed lecturer in Arabic language and literature and student advisor at the Balamand Orthodox Seminary.

While a deacon, Metropolitan PHILIP was awarded a scholarship and invitation to undertake studies in Great Britain at the Kelham Theological School and the University of London. In 1956, he arrived in the United States and enrolled at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. Assigned to a position at St. George Church in Detroit, Michigan, he entered Wayne State University from which he was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1959.

On March 1, 1959, he was ordained to the holy priesthood by Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir) and assigned to the pastorate at Saint George Church in Cleveland, Ohio. While serving in this capacity, he carried to completion the building of an educational and cultural center for the parish. He also served in many religious and civic posts while in Cleveland, among them the Eastern Orthodox Welfare Council, the Television and Radio Commission of the Cleveland Area Church Federation, and the Mayor's Civic Committee. He undertook graduate theological studies at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, and was graduated from that institution with a Master of Divinity degree in 1965.

In March of 1966, the Antiochian Archdiocese, meeting in special convention, nominated Philip Saliba to succeed the late Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir) as Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America. In July of that year, the Patriarchal Vicar for the widowed See of

New York, Metropolitan ILYAS (Kurban), Archbishop of Tripoli, Lebanon, elevated Philip Saliba to the dignity of Archimandrite. He was elected for the See of New York by the Holy Synod of the Antiochian Patriarchate on August 5, 1966, and on August 14 was consecrated to the episcopacy by Patriarch Theodosios VI (Abourjaily) at the Monastery of the Prophet Elias in Dhour Shouier, Lebanon. Metropolitan PHILIP was enthroned at his Cathedral of Saint Nicholas in Brooklyn, New York, on October 13, 1966.

On June 24, 1975, Metropolitan PHILIP and Archbishop MICHAEL (Shaheen) of Toledo, Ohio, accomplished the administrative and jurisdictional unity of the Antiochian Orthodox faithful in North America. This unity was ratified by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate on August 19, 1975. The canonical praxis, issued by Patriarch Elias IV (Mou'awad), named Metropolitan PHILIP as Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

Metropolitan PHILIP has a keen interest in Middle Eastern affairs and is recognized as an expert in this field. As a student at Wayne State University, he served as President of the Arab Student Federation and in Cleveland, he was a member of the Committee on American Policy in the Near East. He has met with United States Presidents, Eisenhower, Johnson, Ford, Carter and Reagan, as well as with Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul, II and many other world leaders on behalf of a just and durable peace in the Middle East. At present, he serves as chairman of the Standing Conference of American-Middle Eastern Christian and Moslem Leaders which represents the two million Americans of Arabic heritage.

In 1968, he established a \$100,000 Trust Fund to provide scholarships to Arab refugees studying in the fields of science, medicine, economics and technology. In 1977, he established a \$500,000 endowment fund for the support of the Orthodox Theological Academy of St. John of Damascus at Balamand Lebanon, the sole remaining Orthodox Seminary in the Middle East.

Since the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1967, Metropolitan PHILIP has inaugurated a number of fund-raising campaigns to provide food, shelter and medical assistance to Arab refugees and victims of war. Under his leadership, the Archdiocese has also undertaken numerous charitable campaigns to aid victims of disasters in the United States and throughout the world.

For his many charitable deeds and renowned humanitarian concern, Metropolitan PHILIP has been commended and decorated by many governments. Some of these awards include the Commander's Badge of the Lebanese Order of the Cedars and the First Class of the Order of Civil Merit of the Syrian Arab Republic. Awards presented to him by ecclesiastical authorities include the Order of the Bush Unburned from the Archbishopric of Mount Sinai, the Cross of Lebanon from the Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon and the Order of Saint Mark from the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all of Africa. In 1981, the Trustees and faculty of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary awarded Metropolitan PHILIP the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*.

On May 5, 1986, the Metropolitan's Alma Mater, Wayne State University of Detroit, Michigan, awarded him an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. On May 20, 1995, The Holy Cross School of Theology bestowed upon Metropolitan PHILIP, the Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree in recognition of his sterling leadership provided to the Antiochian Archdiocese and Orthodoxy at large. On May 26th, 2007, he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity "honoris causa" by St. Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. In conjunction with the 100th Anniversary of the Statue of Liberty in 1986, he was one of the few Americans chosen to receive the cherished "Liberty Award" which was presented to him by Mayor Koch of New York City on July 1st. On May 21, 1994, His Eminence received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. On September 27, 2007, His Eminence was awarded the Lebanese Order of Merit by President Emile Lahoud of Lebanon.

His Eminence is the author of *The Eucharist in the Primitive Church*, *Feed My Sheep*, *He Leads Them*, and a number of poems and meditations, and is the co-author of *Out of the Depths Have I Cried*. He has also written many articles and monographs in the fields of theology and Middle Eastern affairs. Fluent in English and Arabic, and having a knowledge of French and Greek, His Eminence has translated many literary works into Arabic.

In February 1987, some two thousand (2,000) Evangelical Christians embraced the canonical Orthodox Church and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. This was made possible through the leadership of the Evangelical churches and His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP. They bring with them their strong desire to bring Orthodoxy to America.

In 2003, a truly historic event occurred under the leadership of Metropolitan PHILIP. The Archdiocese of North America requested, and was granted by the Holy Synod of Antioch the status of a self-ruling archdiocese. In conjunction with this event, the archdiocese established a diocesan structure, and elected three new Diocesan Bishops who were consecrated by His Beatitude IGNATIUS IV in the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus, Syria.

Metropolitan PHILIP serves as vice chairman of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), vice president of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Chairman of the Orthodox Christian Education Commission.

V. Rev. Edward Hughes - Spiritual Advisor



I was born in Kingston, Pennsylvania and graduated from Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA in 1977 with a BA in Religion, Near East Culture and Archeology, and from St. Vladimir Seminary in 1980. I worked full time with Fr. John Namie during the first three seasons of the Antiochian Village Camp. In May, 1982, I was married to Anna

Timko and then was ordained deacon and priest in July at the Antiochian Village by Metropolitan Philip. In August I was assigned to St. Michael's in Beaumont TX where I also served as the Ladies' advisor to the SW Region. In 1985, I was assigned to St. Mary's in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

I have served as Antiochian Women's Spiritual Advisor in the Southwest, Eastern, and New England Regions. In 1989 I was assigned to St. George in Lawrence, MA where I started out as the senior SOYO advisor and later was made Ladies advisor for NE Region, now the Diocese of Worcester. In addition, I was appointed Dean of the Clergy of New England after Fr. Niphon Abraham's retirement in 1995. I also serve the Archdiocese as the chairman of the Department of Liturgics and Translations. In 1986 I became Commissioner and since January 2009 the Vicar General of the Western Rite.

We have four children – Sarah will be graduating with a Master's degree in Theological Studies from Holy Cross Seminary this May. Michael currently attends Lycoming College, as does Martha. Elizabeth is finishing her freshman year at Methuen High School where Anna teaches History. Anna also serves on the Archdiocese Department of Christian Education and on the Orthodox Christian Education Commission.

Nora Walker - President



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 Diocese of New England Antiochian Women on and off since the middle sixties. She has served as coordinator for the membership and cultural committees, public relations director, and has been president for the past two years. She has represented St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island to the New England region, now diocese, since the days of Eli Haddad and Ralph Richards. She has served with dedication and love.

Delores George - Vice President



I was born and raised in Worcester, MA. as a member since birth of St. George Orthodox Cathedral. My parents emigrated from Lebanon, and my father was a Church founder including being a Chanter virtually all of his life. I had 5 brothers and 2 sisters, Memories Eternal. One brother was born

on the Feast of the Transfiguration and became an Archpriest. Two other brothers were lifelong Arabic Chanters. Coming from a large family was a lot of fun!

I was a Sunday School teacher, and actively worked on organizing the youth group, The Knights of St. George, and I have been in the Church Choir for so many years. I am currently serving as Recording Secretary of our St. George Ladies Society and also The Brotherhood organization and The Young Mahiethett Society.

In 1978, I became an Executive Recruiter and thereafter I opened 2 large staffing and recruiting agencies. In 1986, I opened my own agency, and have been self-employed since then. I have been serving as the Recording Secretary to the Massachusetts Association of Personnel Services for several years, and I was also awarded the "Good Citizen Award." I am a Certified Personnel Consultant with a **SOMWBA** and **DBE** Certification.

The Patron Saint of our family is St. George. I ask for His assistance and intercession, along with our most Holy Theotokos in carrying out the will of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Nancy Ghantous - Recording Secretary



I am a member of St. George Orthodox Church in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. I joined our Antiochian Women's chapter in 1990 and have served in the positions of Membership, Treasurer, Secretary and currently the President. I am in my second term as Recording Secretary for the Diocese of Worcester and New England.

I was born in Lafayette, Louisiana where I met my husband Edmond, who in 1961 had come from Amioun, Lebanon to

study engineering at the college of Southwestern Louisiana. When we were married in 1965 at St. George Orthodox Church of Boston, I converted to Orthodoxy from Catholicism. In 1966 we went to live with my husband's family in the small village of Amioun. It was a chance for me to learn about Lebanon's culture, the family traditions and to learn how to speak Arabic. At the same time the company my husband had worked for in Boston needed him to work on a project in Kuwait. From 1968 to 1972 we lived in Kuwait while my husband worked to build a power station. It was wonderful to be able to visit beautiful Lebanon and to escape the very hot summers in the desert. From 1976 to 1980 we went to Kuwait again for another assignment. Because of the war we were able to visit the family in Lebanon only once in the summer of 1977. After returning to Dedham, MA in 1980 we joined St. George Orthodox Church in West Roxbury, where our children, Susie, Sharon and Sami made many new friends by participating in the Choir and youth groups. In 1984 we moved to Kuwait once more and lived there until 1989. We were able to visit my husband's family in Lebanon once in 1986. Susie and her husband live in Tolland, Connecticut with our three grandchildren. Sharon is a music teacher. Sami is an engineer building a solar power station in the Mohave Desert near Palmdale, California.

Over the years I have worked as a secretary for John Hancock, a teacher's aide, library aide, special needs secretary and payroll clerk for Dedham Public Schools. I received my Associates Degree from Mass Bay Community College in 1994. Through participating in our Ladies' Society meetings, planning and working on our projects, I have met many wonderful friends who have become like family to me.

Carol Swydan - Treasurer



I am a member of St. George Orthodox Cathedral, of the Diocese of Worcester and New England and a long-time member of the Cathedral Choir. I am past 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 and past Religious

Coordinator. I have also served on the North American Board as Recording Secretary. I have been a volunteer at Antiochian Village going for many years when my children were attending camp and recently been back again volunteering. Among the many other things I volunteer for, I belong to the Shrewsbury League of Women Voters.

In my personal life, I am from Brooklyn, NY and married for 38 years to Paul V. Swydan of Worcester, MA. We were married at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, NY and have two children, Paul Assad, married to Summer for three years and living in Colorado, and Laila Mary living in Manhattan.

I owned and operated two Subway franchises for ten years and am currently retired after selling both Subway restaurants. Previous to that I was a Real Estate Broker and worked for many years on Wall Street as an Administrative Assistant.

Pamela Samara - Public Relations Director



I am a lifelong member of St. George Cathedral in Worcester. My husband George and I have 3 children: Leila, Sub-Deacon Khalil, Youth Director at St George Boston, and Jamil, Website Coordinator for the Department of Internet Ministries of the Greek Archdiocese. I was a Family & Consumer Science (Home Economics) teacher for 28 years in Worcester, retiring 2 years ago. On the local level, I have served as a Sunday School Teacher and Superintendent, Women's Club Corresponding Secretary and presently the Treasurer. At the Diocesan level, I have been Humanitarian Coordinator, Recording Secretary, and am now the Public Relations Chairperson. For the past 23 summers, I have been a Volunteer at Antiochian Village Summer Camp.

Priscilla Goss - Immediate Past President, Parliamentarian and Membership



St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cambridge has been my parish since I was born. I was married there 44 years ago to James Goss (a retired engineer). We are blessed with 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 President of the Diocese of Worcester and New England. Presently I am the Membership Coordinator for the Diocese.

Mary Ellen Mabardy - Humanitarian



Mary Ellen is a member of St. Mary Church in Cambridge, MA. She is a proud mother of four and Tata also of four. She has been a member of St. Mary Women's Club for 36 years and has held the office of President many times. Also, she has been President of our region for Antiochian Women. Mary Ellen has also been Treasurer and Membership Coordinator. She is currently Humanitarian Coordinator for our Diocese.

Joan Hanna - Corresponding Secretary

St. George Church of West Roxbury (Boston) has always been my home Parish, except for a five year stay in



Pittsburgh, PA, while my husband pursued a Doctor's Degree in Mathematics. We have three sons and six grandchildren; four girls and two boys. I always say the girls bring sugar and spice and everything nice to the home. When my youngest son entered high school, I decided to complete my education

and returned to Boston University where my husband was a Professor. I received a B.S. In Business Administration and went on to a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice which led to my present volunteer position at the West Roxbury District Court. I did advance studies while at B.U. in Gerontology and as a result I am a licensed Emergency Medical Technician. I also have a Real Estate Brokers License.

I have always been active in my Church as a former Sunday School teacher, and for several years President of our very active Ladies Society. I was Regional New England President from 1997 to 1999. I am fortunate to be one of the officers under the very able direction of Nora Walker, our current President. I enjoy the company of all the Ladies because they really live the words of the Antiochian Women Prayer.

Melissa Nassiff - 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 nine-year-old granddaughter while our daughter works part time, and occasionally babysitting for our 1 1/2 year old grandson. 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.

Kh. Louise Ferguson - Religious



No Biography available



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America
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All articles for the DIAKONIA are due the first of the month PRIOR to the month of publication. The schedule of publication is as follows:

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	September 2007 ✓	Done ✓
2	Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.	December 2007 ✓	November 1, 2007 ✓
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	March 2008 ✓	February 1, 2008 ✓
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	June 2008 ✓	May 1, 2008 ✓
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	September 2008 ✓	August 1, 2008 ✓ □
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	December 2008 ✓	November 1, 2008 ✓
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	March 2009 ✓	February 1, 2009 ✓
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	June 2009 ✓	May 1, 2009 ✓