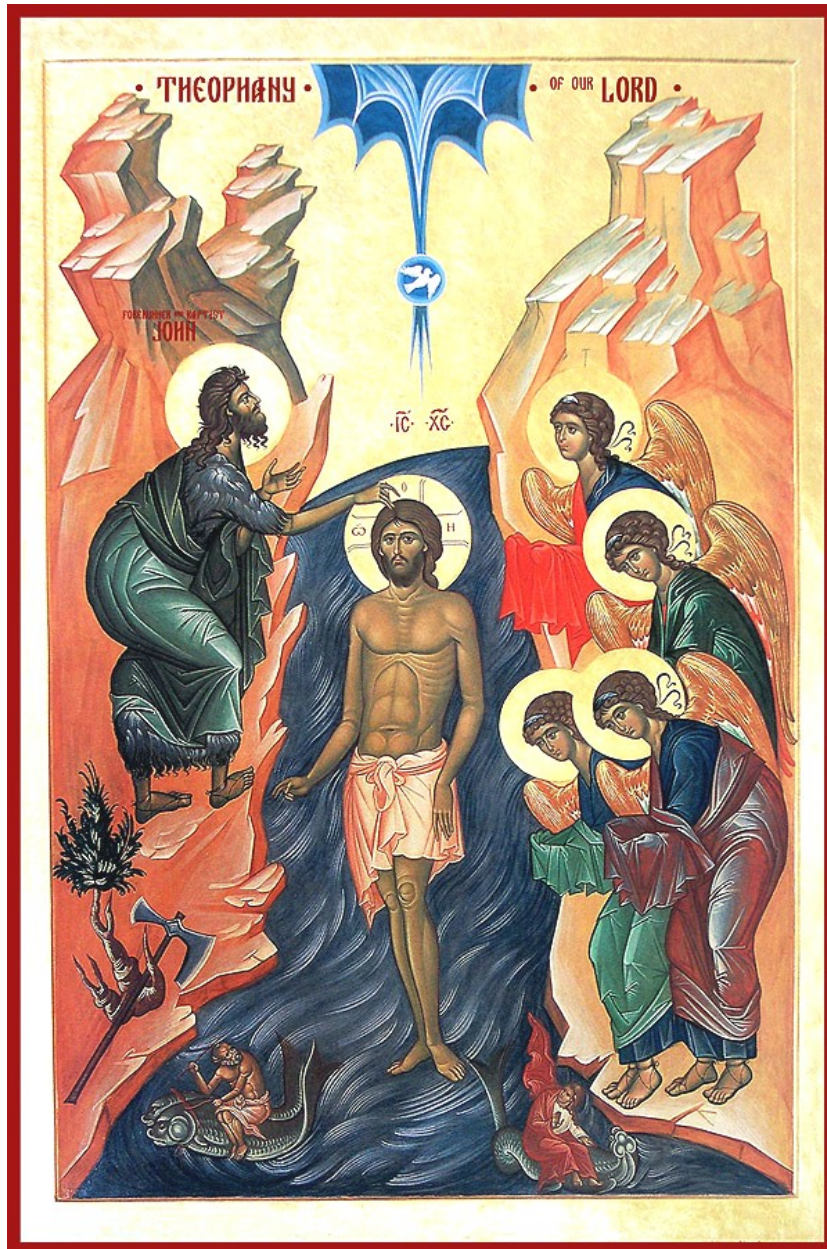


DIAKONIA

Winter 2009–2010



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America

A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

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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 fall, winter, spring and summer.

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 **Roberta Royhab, DIAKONIA Editor**, at bobbie@theblade.com.
- Submit your article on a CD to Roberta Royhab at 27262 Fort Meigs Road, Perrysburg, OH 43551.
- FAX typed, double spaced articles to (419) 874-9274.

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 **Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington D.C.**

In each of the next six issues, we will 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.

What is DIAKONIA

The word **DIAKONIA** is a Greek word meaning *Service*, usually pertaining to service in the Church. The purpose of the Antiochian Women's organization is primarily spirituality and humanitarian service. In the words of our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP it is **"Theology in Action"**.

Epiphany: The Celebration of Life

by Archpriest Antony Gabriel

**How shall I describe this great mystery ?
For the Incorporeal hath become incarnate;
the Word took unto himself the density of flesh.
The Unseen is seen, the Untouchable is touched,
the Beginningless beginneth, and the Son of God
becomes the Son of Man; yes Jesus Christ, himself
who is the same yesterday, today and unto all ages.**

**When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan,
The Worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the Voice of the Father bore witness unto Thee,
calling Thee the Beloved Son,
And the Spirit in the Form of a Dove
confirmed His word as sure and steadfast.
O Christ our God, who has appeared and enlightened the world,
Glory to Thee.**

These two Orthodox hymns differ quite radically from the popular carols "Silent Night" and "We Three Kings," that we heard during this past season. The Orthodox hymns represent a proclamation of the central mystery of the Incarnation in an unique semitic and poetic form, according to the Eastern traditions.

For Orthodoxy, the Feasts of the Nativity and Epiphany are a part of the same rhythm. In fact, they belong together in the same cycle and form one liturgical unit.

The Magi are already mentioned at Christmas Liturgy. And Epiphany speaks about the manifestation of God. In the East, Theophany or Epiphany is in reality the Celebration of the coming of God to meet man in the texture of human history.

It is also called the Feast of Lights. Epiphany already has paschal implications.

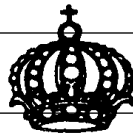
I am reminded that it is in the West that we can recover our common Christian heritage; and at the same time speak about the richness of the Orthodox tradition that has so much relevancy for contemporary society.

The historian Toynbee lamented the ecological damage done to the environment by the Christians who have heeded the Biblical injunction, "to subdue the earth." What Toynbee misunderstood was not that Christianity itself was to blame - but rather a Christianity severed from its roots and seduced by secularism.

Primitive man's perception of nature's divinity was not annihilated by monotheism or Christianity's vision of the Holy Trinity. In fact, the reverse is true. Nature is restored to its pristine beauty as we announce the Saving Deeds of God. Salvation is a cosmological happening.

The upheavals caused by technological misadventures and the subsequent human alienations are quite simply not Christianity's mea culpa. A critical detour in the history of Christianity however has been taken by certain dualistic philosophical trends.

Continued on page 11



Orthodox Villages: A Vision for America

In contemporary American society, the Church enjoys relative freedom of religion, especially compared to the periods of hateful prejudice and violent persecution fearlessly endured by the Saints with an unquenchable love for Christ, for which they often paid the price and achieved the glory of martyrdom. Now, the open practice of our Faith is continually challenged by a new secularism pervading our culture. This secularism is a serious threat. To preserve the faith for our children and grandchildren, Orthodox Christians in America will need to take bold steps by, among other things, establishing “Orthodox villages,” that is, parish-centered American Orthodox communities that exist within and contribute to American society as a whole. These virtual Orthodox villages can be created anywhere in America, whether in an urban, suburban, or rural setting. The major components of the village may be concentrated in one area or, if that is not possible, spread out across a city.

What might a virtual Orthodox village look like? The **churches** would be open as much as possible for people to visit for prayer and worship, to receive the Holy Mysteries, and seek spiritual counsel. There would be a full schedule of services. The priests and deacons would not only receive the faithful, but also go out to them

in the community to minister as fathers and spiritual physicians. They would visit the sick and meet with parishioners in their homes to bless the homes and teach the families how to make their homes active “domestic churches.” They would encourage the faithful to live an Orthodox life of fasting, asceticism, and almsgiving.

In an Orthodox village, parish-based **Orthodox Christian schools** would be established to educate children theologically. When actual schools cannot be established, parishes would create instructional programs that can complete the education that students receive elsewhere. Such parish-based instruction would help orient adults and children within the mind of the Church. Students would learn that the highest and most valuable knowledge is not secular or Scholastic knowledge, but the personal knowledge of God achieved through purity of heart. Students would be taught to love God and their neighbors. They would be encouraged to offer their best for the good of the Church and for the salvation of all. Such parish-based education would aid students in elementary, middle, and high schools to locate their learning within an Orthodox context. It would also support parents who are home-schooling. Parishes close to universities would establish educational

programs for community-college and university students.

Orthodox villages would also be enriched by **monastic communities** that enjoy a healthful, nurturing relationship with the parishes. Monastic life involves prayerful work and prayerful worship. Monks contribute to the Orthodox village by seeking out their own salvation and then sharing the riches of the fruits of prayer with the poor in spirit, while also showing mercy on the monetarily poor. They can provide examples of the beauty of the Orthodox life realized through an asceticism practiced with humility, repentance, love, and joy.

An Orthodox village would also include a network of **health care** practitioners dedicated to treating the body, with a recognition of the importance of the spiritual health of the patient. Orthodox health care practitioners can care for their patients within the commitments of holy Orthodoxy from conception until physical death. Orthodox **business** owners within a virtual Orthodox village should be dedicated to caring for their employees and their customers. Businesses would contribute to the life of the Church. For example, Orthodox Christian-owned restaurants could offer fasting-appropriate dishes on fast days. Professional offices would close on major feast days. All people, blue and white collar, could be taught by

the Church to dedicate themselves to providing a spiritually wholesome environment that is fertile for spiritual growth.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be separate from the world in terms of how we live, but not isolated from the people in the world. Indeed, we should seek to convert others to Holy Orthodoxy. In the Orthodox village, people should care for the non-Orthodox, share the message of the Holy Gospel with them, and invite people to “come and see” the Orthodox Church, where spiritual healing and transformation take place. An Orthodox village is neither an isolated *ethnic ghetto* nor an insulated *convert commune*. It is Orthodox-based, but open to non-Orthodox, too. Within a nurturing American Orthodox village, all Orthodox Christians who sincerely seek their salvation and the salvation of others should feel at home. Such an Orthodox village, in all its components, would be characterized by genuine love and hospitality among believers and also by believers in relation to the non-Orthodox. By our prayers and faithful work, may this vision become a reality in America.



His Grace Bishop THOMAS met with NAB last February at Antiochian Village.

***Message from Co-Presidents, Antiochian Women of the Diocese of
Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York
and Washington D.C.***

Dear Sisters in Christ !

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

There are times when you just can't re-do or re-word a good thing – nor should you try! So we hope you don't mind that we begin this introductory letter, the same way Ina O'Dell began her letter in the *DIAKONIA*, Winter 2007.

*“ The Antiochian Women of the East call ourselves ‘AWE’ since we are in Awe of Our Creator and His work in us and through us. We also chose this AWESome name as a simple way to describe our somewhat complicated structure made up of two dioceses, with two hierarchs. Officially we are **The Diocese of New York and Washington DC** under Metropolitan PHILIP, and **The Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic** under His Grace Bishop THOMAS.”*

The Antiochian Women of AWE come together from many states - CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV. Our individual parishes represent many traditions...older established parishes, newly formed missions, convert Orthodox and cradle Orthodox....all with one common goal, all dedicated to one premise...to do what is right, to strive, to remember that activities are not the main things in our lives...but that the most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to our Lord.

We share common goals, especially as we work together to raise funds each year for the Special Project. This year's Special Project assignment, raising funds for the

Convent of St. Thekla, is particularly heart warming and exciting. Metropolitan PHILIP's announcement at the Parish Life Conference of the arrival of Mother Alexandra and the establishment of a monastery at Antiochian Village was greeted with great excitement, interest and energy.

We are also blessed that Mother Alexandra has accepted our invitation to lead our Annual Lenten Retreat at the Antiochian Village. This year's event will be held March 19-21, 2010. We welcome all our sisters to join us.

Finally, we want to “spread the word” about a very special Icon Project undertaken by AWE to honor the memory of Kh. Joanne Abdalah. The goal of this project is to create a lasting memorial honoring Kh. Joanne, by hanging an icon of the Myrrh-bearing Women outside the library at the Antiochian Village.

AWE is leading and coordinating this project, but welcomes and invites all women of the Antiochian Archdiocese who loved and knew Joanne to contribute to this lasting memorial. We are asking you to “spread the word”, to commend this project to your friends and sisters in Christ... and to donate. Donations can be made by mailing your contributions to our AWE Treasurer: Fadia Juzdan, 576 Lackawanna Ave., Woodland Park, NJ 07424 (Contribution checks should be written to: “AWE” with a memo note “Icon Project”)

We pray that you have a blessed year.

In Christ,

Kh. Helen Waggener & Kh. Pam Pier

Co-Presidents, AWE

OFFICERS of AWE FOR 2010-2011

Fr. Donald Shadid—Spiritual Advisor

Fr. Don was born and raised in Peoria, IL, being baptized and chrismated at All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Peoria. While working on his Bachelor's Degree in Biological Science at Illinois State University, he started the Orthodox Campus Ministry. In June 1982, while at Antiochian Village, he met Janet Abdalah (sister of Fr. John Abdalah, editor of *The Word Magazine* and Spiritual Advisor for NAB). Don and Janet became Antiochian Village Marriage #3.

Fr. Don attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY and earned his Master of Divinity. He worked fulltime for 2 years at Antiochian Village Camp and Conference Center, was ordained to the priesthood in 1986 and was assigned to St. Mary Church in Johnstown, PA.

He later earned his Doctor of Ministry degree through Antiochian House of Studies and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The Shadids have two sons, Christopher and Stephen.

Fr. Don has been active with the diocesan Fellowship of St. John the Divine, St. Sophia Orthodox Christian Academy (a pan-Orthodox pre and elementary school housed at his parish), the Boy Scout troop chartered by St. Mary, the older Venture Scout Crew, and Westmont Family Counseling Ministries.

Fr. Don enjoys movies, the outdoors (hiking, camping, etc.) bagpipes and baking.

Co- President - Kh. Pam Pier

I was born and raised in Pennsylvania. I attended Penn State University and graduated with a BS in Biophysics. At college I was an active member of the Lutheran Student Fellowship where I met my future husband, Fr. Peter Pier. We have been married for over 30 years and have 3 children, Mary, Michael & Nicholas.

I am a convert to Orthodoxy, over 20 yrs ago, having followed my husband's journey from the Lutheran tradition into Orthodoxy. Currently, my husband serves at St. John Chrysostom Antiochian Orthodox

Church, York, PA.

My interests include reading, singing, cooking and wine! I'm currently employed by Ames True Temper, a manufacturer of landscape equipment (wheelbarrow, shovels, rakes, etc.)

Co-President –Kh. Helen Waggener



My husband of 36 years is Fr. Alban from Holy Trinity, Lynchburg, VA. We are recent converts, so I have almost no clue what I am doing AWE-wise, but a lot of free time in which to do it. Kh. Pam Pier knows what she's doing, but her time is at a premium. All that is to say

that we are filling some big shoes left by former President Joanne Bitar.

Father and I have four sons: the older two are married and one has two little boys. Arranging to see them all at the same time is a project in itself, but a rollicking good time when it happens. Joshua, 32, is an air traffic controller in the Denver area. Seth, 28, is a news producer in Birmingham. Matthias, 26, works for an arborist here in Lynchburg. Paul, 24, does landscaping and renovation projects here in town...and oh, yes, he's in a band.

I am a volunteer counselor at our pregnancy center one day a week. During the school year I teach three art classes at one of the home school co-ops. Two afternoons a week I help Father at his secular job as the manager of the used book department at the local independent bookstore.

At church I share Sunday School responsibilities and head up our Antiochian Women of the East book club. I have started a little bookstore at church too.

In our vast spare time, I garden (sunflowers are my favorite), knit (lots of friends are having babies), read (huge Jane Austen fan) and hike (which means trying to keep up with Father in the woods).

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

Yvonne Butts - Project Coordinator



Originally from Ohio, my husband and I moved to the Philadelphia area in 1994 so he could attend Westminster Theological Seminary. While in seminary we converted to the Orthodox Faith and joined St. Philip Orthodox Church in Souderton. Under the guidance of Fr. Boniface Black, my husband, Fr. Joseph, was ordained to the priesthood in 2001. He was assigned to Holy Ascension Mission in Frazer, PA shortly after his ordination. We have been there ever since. I teach the 2nd grade Sunday school class at our church.

We are expecting our fifth child this March. This baby will be welcomed by our three boys and little girl: Micah (10), Isaac (8), Jacob (6) and Genevieve (3). We enjoy outdoor activities, like hiking and biking. We also spend many hours at the Little League Baseball fields. In my spare time (ha-ha) I work as an accountant for an accounting firm. God has blessed me with a flexible job that allows me to stay home with my children and log on at night to work. I thank God for His many blessings.

Fadia Juzdan - Treasurer



My name is Fadia Juzdan and I was born in Yaffa, Palestine. I belong to Saint George's Church in Little Falls, NJ. I currently live in West Paterson, NJ with my wonderful husband Ziad and we have four wonderful children: Paul is 20 and is a junior in college; George is 18 and is a freshman in college; Nicholas is 16 and is a junior in high school; our princess Janine is 12 and in seventh grade.

I moved to this country in 1987, and have been a member of Saint George Church ever since. I have held different positions at St. George; I was the first Woman Parish council Chairperson and now I hold the position of the President of the Ladies' Society. I work as a Senior accountant at Ricoh.

Carmen Elsabee - Recording Secretary

My husband, Ramez and I were born in Egypt and we grew up in the Orthodox faith. We are members of St. Stephen Orthodox Church in South Plainfield, NJ. We are blessed with two wonderful children, Joseph and Amanda.

St. Stephen is a small parish, but one that contains love and fellowship. I do my best to support my parish whenever help is needed. I have been active with Antiochian Women since 2001. At my home parish, I served as Secretary and for the last four years, President of the Women's Group; on the regional level I served as the AWE Religious Coordinator.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking and spending time with my family and I thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed on me and my family.

Following is an article, "Establishing a new Chapter of Antiochian Women"

It was written several years ago by AWE officers to assist new Antiochian Women chapters and to strengthen ones already established.

***—Roberta Royhab,
Editor, DIAKONIA***

Who are we? All women of the Antiochian Archdiocese are considered Antiochian Women. More technically, any group that a parish council recognizes as being for women under our constitution is given the full name: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOCWNA, commonly pronounced: "A" "O" "Nuh".) The most widely used name within our organization is simply "Antiochian Women."

At the national level, we are governed by The North American Board (NAB) of the Antiochian Women, which is directly under the covering and direction of the Antiochian Archdiocese. The NAB functions to provide consistency of information, programs, etc. throughout the whole archdiocese by mailing out information to the seven diocesan boards.

The diocesan boards seek to help individual parishes establish women's groups at the local level and pass along mailings of materials from the NAB and participate in the annual group "Project".

Continued on page 9

When to meet? This is strictly a decision of the group and experimentation may be best to see what is the most popular time and place, as well as frequency of meeting. On paper almost anytime to have a meeting seems to work. In the real world, meetings are perceived by many, as being about as enjoyable as a root canal—and excuses to avoid meetings can quickly grow. This is greatly to be considered when first establishing patterns for “meetings”.

Some groups have meetings right after Sunday Liturgy when ladies are already there, to avoid having to make a trip “all the way back to church” especially if you draw from long distances. Some ladies prefer to meet during a weekday, to avoid night driving, but this will greatly limit the available women—and cut out all ladies with day jobs.

Some groups choose a certain Saturday of the month and meet for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Having a place for young child care can be a great way to involve young mothers who really could use a break for adult fellowship and active participation in something other than child care.

Meeting Reminders: about one to two days before meeting appoint, assign or get a volunteer(s) to phone or e-mail everyone to remind about the meeting. If you e-mail, just request they reply with a “yes” or “no” so you can have a count for planning. This makes all the difference in helping overcome our busy lifestyles and the forgetful problem. Often just the personal voice inquiring about the meeting will bring someone to a meeting that might not have come without the “personal invitation” or reminder.

What to do at a meeting? Once ladies “try out” the typical meeting, you have only a few if any other chances to win their loyalty. Some groups always have food, others avoid it due to expense, or trouble, but food does tend to bring unspoken interest. Some groups ensure attendance by making sure some part of the meeting contains something interesting to hear, see, do, or make, that is not “typical Roberts Rules of Order” fare.

Brainstorming ideas for meetings is good, but someone must come to the planning meeting with a prepared list of ideas to get the discussion flowing. There is nothing more difficult than starting with no ideas and just staring at each other trying to think creatively at the meeting.

Some groups have an annual planning meeting at the beginning of their year. For a month or more before, they take suggestions in a box or via phone, e-mail etc. and get people thinking about the whole year...even exhibits, workshops, women’s health speakers, etc. that might be coming to your area that would be of interest to Orthodox

Our NAB Mid-winter Meetings will be Friday-Sunday, Feb. 5 to 7 at Antiochian Village. Meetings will begin on Friday evening and continue through Saturday. Everyone is welcome. Registration forms are available at the antiochian.org website; space is limited so please register as soon as possible. It should be a rewarding weekend, hope to see you there!

Cindy Nimey, NAB President

women. If you plan in a wide variety of ideas, you are more likely to hit on at least one thing that every woman will want to participate in at one time or other.

If you plan the whole year ahead, accepting that changes will occur, you will avoid dull meetings and only a few people doing all the work at the last minute each month trying to think of what to do. Of course you will also be receiving information that is meant to be passed along to individual members as well—see coordinators.

Why are we having a group? You can find the organizational goals elsewhere, but on the practical side, the chapters seem to be as varied as the needs of the women in them. Most have a constitution that helps to deal with the fundraising, election and function of officers, etc. but day to day functioning is pretty much left up to each group to decide what is best for them.

Many of the women's groups in the past perceived that their main function was fund raising. Indeed, some groups desire that role, while others have it thrust upon them with some resentment. Still others function solely as a humanitarian, fellowship or inspirational arm of the local parish and rarely or never do any fund raising.

Some groups conduct a simple survey of all the women in the parish to see what kind of a group they would like to participate in and what they would enjoy doing that year. This can include: an interest survey (even ideas as choices to see what they prefer if they had to choose); time preference; and even a skills survey etc. Would you like to learn to arrange flowers for church or weddings? Would you like to cook for post Liturgy meal/coffee hour? Only bake for special events? Can’t cook? Would you like to: be on a team to clean the sanctuary; polish brass; weed and plant gardens; sew for the church... Would you like to: take tours with the group; go to monasteries; volunteer at soup kitchens or crisis pregnancy centers... The list of ideas is endless.

Our prayers for the souls of our departed, that they may find rest:



The Very Reverend George N. Khouli, 56, fell asleep in the Lord Friday, January 1, in Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was married to Kh. Nadia (Hanna) Khouli. Born in Zwaitini, Syria, he was a son of Nicholas and Halloun (Nehme) Khouli. Fr. George was an Antiochian Orthodox priest, serving at St. George Orthodox Church in Upper Darby, PA, and also assisting with services at St. George Orthodox Church, Allentown, PA. He is survived by his wife; daughters Naila and her family of Dallas, TX, Norfen and her family of Philadelphia, PA, Nibal and Helen, and son Nick all of Allentown; brothers Walid, Michael, Tony, Gus and Raymon; sisters Georgette Salloum and Romanda Shammas; grandchildren Angela and Christopher (Nailas) and Marcus and Maria (Norfens). The family requests donations to the church in lieu of flowers.



Resa Ellison, 31 of Minneapolis, MN, daughter of the Rev. James and Linda Ellison of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church in Urbana, IL fell asleep in the Lord on the afternoon of Sunday, January 3, after a two month illness. She served as choir director at St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral (Orthodox Church in America) in Minneapolis for three years.

Resa was admitted to Unity Hospital, Fridley, MN, on Sunday, November 8, after being diagnosed with H1N1 and an aggressive form of pneumonia. By November 18 her condition had become grave. Breathing with the assistance of a ventilator, she remained in an induced coma. In late December, she was transferred to the University of Minnesota Hospital, Minneapolis.

Also surviving are: her siblings Rachel (Clark) Leake, Sallie (James) LaRocco, Suzanna and Mary Ellison; aspiring fiancé, Peter Rhudy; nieces and nephews: Cody, Sofia and Giada LaRocco, and Matea Cunningham; aunts and uncles; three Godchildren; other relatives and dear friends.

Resa went through the Unit Seven School System in Tolono, IL, graduated with honors from Unity High School in 1996, graduated cum laude from Millikin University School of Music in 2000 and cum laude from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in 2003. She performed in many theatrical productions in high school and college.

She was a member of SAI and ISOCM, served as Youth Director at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Houston, TX, and Camp Counselor and Program Director at Antiochian Village. She moved to Minneapolis to direct the choir at St. Mary's and had dreams of returning to St. Vladimir's to teach.

Memorials will be directed to Hogar Rafael Ayau Orthodox Orphanage in Guatemala via St. Mary's Church or St. Nicholas Church; a family blog, www.caringbridge.org/visit/resaellison/journal, features links through which notes of support to her parents and family can be made.

May the Lord Jesus Christ, our Life and Resurrection, grant them eternal rest, and may their memory be eternal.

Continued from page 2

What has occurred in my opinion, is that Western man in particular; and society in general, have lost their reverence for life. A transformation has gradually taken place within this world of ours that has swept away any semblance of a real consciousness or awareness that the created order still somehow belongs to God. Ideally, we were once taught that we are consecrated stewards of His gifts to us. However, this insight has been unfortunately misappropriated.

Of course some will very definitely disagree with me. They will think of their gardens, fishing trips, country retreats and excursions into nature and say, "I behold the beauty of God's creation and appreciate its splendor."

This may be true for a few. I dare say, for most, the world/nature/this cosmos, is but like a passing scene in the theatre of life. We're just too preoccupied to notice. . . And we have abrogated our responsibility to change things when they go amiss.

The Church of the East employs the symbols of life in her liturgical life such as water at Epiphany to constantly reaffirm the evangelical insight that all of creation is transfigured by God, in God and for God.

Epiphany helps to reaffirm our baptismal vows that we are kings and priests over God's creation. "Bless the Lord, O my Soul; Bless His Holy Name. . ." It is in our "use" of the stuff of this world that fulfills for us the ultimate destiny of creation.

It is all summed up in the following perspective: Is our starting point God or man, a Christian humanism or secular humanism. . .?

As students of theology, I am quite sure that I do not have to tell you about all the signs and symbols behind the use of water. Maybe the difference between the Eastern and Western liturgical tradition is that the Byzantines use "matter" so freely and easily. The Orthodox are quite comfortable among icons and incense; in fact, all the senses of the worshipper are "assaulted" by colors, sounds, smells, etc. The whole man is "graped" in the liturgy of the Church.

This particular feast is a revelation of the Trinity; so too, the feasts of Transfiguration and Pentecost are prefigured: God acting in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. An eschatological event! The Kingdom is being announced. . . the Parousia inaugurated.

His love is poured out in Creation and Creation responds by lifting itself to Him, the Source and Ground of all Being. The intervention of God, like a massive earthquake shakes us out of our religious, moral and stupor; there is a call to action. Dare mankind place itself in jeopardy by standing alone on the edge of the abyss of apathy?

The task of theology today I believe is to "quicken" the convergence of Traditions; to recover its lost Catholicity; its wholeness in which man fulfills the Biblical injunction by offering himself, the stuff of this world, as its Priest and King. Our "hosanna" to God must ultimately be the restoration of faith, of ultimate values as we stand face to face to a hostile world. Whether we admit it or not, Christianity is in a similar position as the first Christian era.

We are not and must not be slaves to the machinery of this age or succumb to a minority status. Man is called always to the realization of his mission to transform the world by lovingly offering it in Holy Service to the Divine Master.

Epiphany reminds us, makes present for us, the process of the Sanctification of Life. Yes all of it. You and me! And all of our structures and institutions. It begins with the person and extends outwards. For, God became man, so man can become God, said one Alexandrian; and another, "My book is the whole visible creation, and it lies open before me whenever I wish to read in it the words of God."



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women
of North America

Roberta Royhab
27262 Fort Meigs Road
Perrysburg OH 43551-1230



REMINDER to Diocesan Boards: Please remember the following schedule for submitting your articles and profiles for the *DIAKONIA*. 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 of North America are welcome in every issue.—Roberta Royhab, Editor

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	(Fall) October 2009	Done
2	Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington D.C.	(Winter) January 2010	Done
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	(Spring) April 2010	March 1, 2010
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	(Summer) July 2010	June 1, 2010
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	(Fall) October 2010	September 1, 2010
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	(Winter) January 2011	December 1, 2010
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	(Spring) April 2011	March 1, 2011
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	(Summer) July 2011	June 1, 2011

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