

DIAKONIA

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

Spring 2012



*“O Lord and Master of
my life, take from me
the spirit of sloth,
meddling, lust of
power and idle talk.
But give rather the
spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and
love to Thy servant.
Yea, O Lord and King,
grant me to see my
own sins and not to
judge my brother, for
Thou art blessed
unto ages of ages.
Amen.”*

(The Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian)

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 Most Reverend
Archbishop JOSEPH
Overseeing Hierarch

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His Grace Bishop. JOHN, Spiritual Advisor

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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.

To submit articles, e-mail as an attachment to:
lucy.hanna@sbcglobal.net

Submission Details

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

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
**The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
And**

The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest

In each of the next seven 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"**.

A correction and apology:

It was brought to my attention that there was some omissions in one of the Dioceses featured in the last issue of DIAKONIA. The name “Charleston” was omitted from the “Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and Mid-Atlantic”. My apologies to His Grace Bishop THOMAS and the officers, coordinators and all the women of the above mentioned Diocese for this oversight and also for inadvertently omitting His Grace’s biography and message.

Please find His Grace Bishop THOMAS’ biography and message on pages 5 through 7.

Sincerely,
Lucy Hanna



A NOTE TO DIOCESAN PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS:

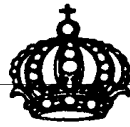
All articles, news from parishes, photos, bios and messages are due the first of the month PRIOR to the month of publication. Please collect and email them to lucy.hanna@sbcglobal.net according to the schedule below:

The following items are needed to highlight your diocese:

1. Bios and photos from your Diocesan Bishop, Spiritual Advisor and Board Members.
2. Messages from your Diocesan Bishop, Spiritual Advisor and President.
3. Photos and news articles from the diocese or parishes.
4. Notices of diocesan gatherings, retreats, conferences, etc.

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	September 2011	Done ✓
2	Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C., Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic	December 2011	Done ✓
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	March 2012	Done ✓
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	June 2012	May 1, 2012
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	September 2012	August 1, 2012
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	December 2012	November 1, 2012
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	March 2013	February 1, 2013
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	June 2013	May 1, 2013

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



2012 Great Lent Message From His Eminence Archbishop JOSEPH

February 24, 2012

Beloved in Christ, the Right Reverend, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and all the faithful of the Holy Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:

Greetings and blessings in the Name of our Lord.

Great Lent approaches, the “springtime of the Fast” (idiomelon of Vespers, Wed eve of Cheesefare). Here is our holy “tithe of the whole year” (sessional hymn of Orthros, Monday of Cheesefare), in which we cast ourselves upon the divine Mercy. Now is the season for each of us, and for our holy parish and monastic communities, to plow the untilled fields of our souls and no longer to sow among the thorns of our passions and sinful habits (Jer 4:3). Rather, through intense and heart-felt prayer, with prostrations, with fasting and tears, let us “break up the fallow ground” of our souls. Then, we shall be prepared to receive the “latter rain” (Joel 2:23) of the Holy Spirit in “the liturgy of the Master in Sion” at Holy Pascha. But what is fasting and tears without mercy and love? What is prayer without flight from destructive desires? “Before Christ’s death upon the saving Cross, sin ruled supreme... Men were counted happy because of sensual pleasures, and only a few despised the appetites of the flesh... But now fasting is held in honour, abstinence is glorified, and prayer is offered up...” (idiomelon, aposticha of praises, Orthros, Friday of Cheesefare).



But even more important than all of this, rich and therapeutic for souls and communities as these ascetical endeavours are, we must conclude with soul-saving and life-promoting Forgiveness! We begin the Great Fast under the echo of the holy words of our Saviour, “if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Gospel of the Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday). My brethren, dear to God, decide today to let go of the offense of your neighbor. Let us bow one to the other and say from the heart, with all purity of intention, “Forgive me, the sinner!” and let us blame ourselves and take full responsibility for our faults, not blaming others any longer. Remember the thief on the Cross who had no opportunity for fasting, alms, or any further action. He repented in humility and “stole paradise with a word.”

I bow before you and I am the first among you to say, “forgive me!” May this holy Lent be truly a “joyful sorrow” (haralipi) leading you to full participation in the Paschal Victory!

Yours in Christ,

† **ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH**

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



An Orthodox University: Higher Education for Orthodox Christians

by the Right Reverend Bishop Thomas (Joseph), Ed.D.

If we were to survey the Orthodox Christian private grammar schools that currently exist in our country, we would discover that they exist for one of two reasons. The first, and probably the more common, is that parents want a place for their children that is safe from the evil influences found in the secular schools that will also give to them an adequate academic education. Such schools do not particularly exist as Orthodox schools for the sake of Orthodoxy, but rather as safe havens, sheltering students reassuringly under the preferred religious branding.

By contrast, the other kind of Orthodox Christian school that exists in our country is dedicated to immersion in the Kingdom of God. Their purpose is not to provide a shelter from the world that happens to give a decent education, but rather it is to use education sacramentally to unite students mystically with Jesus Christ. Indeed, far from providing a shelter, we may think of such places as a barracks or as a training camp, raising up soldiers for Christ's mystical army. Such schools have one purpose: the salvation of students and of the world. For them, education can become a mystery of the Church.

I believe the same sort of twofold distinction exists within the Orthodox homeschooling world, as well. Some homeschooling parents are trying to hide their kids from the world, while others are arming them for the confrontation with the powers of darkness, which they will meet at some point, even if only because they will eventually grow up and move out of their parents' house.

With this in mind, we come to the question of Orthodox Christian higher education, that is, Orthodox colleges and universities. As Orthodox Christians, our basic philosophy when thinking about any educational endeavor must be the theology of the Church. There is no point in seeking to found academic institutions that merely carry a particular label. Our purpose is not to create or reform institutions that will simply rival or exceed the world's achievements, but be done under the auspices of our brand, thereby making them appropriately "safe" for a niche market. We do not build Orthodox schools so that we can train fine doctors, businessmen, lawyers, scientists, writers, and teachers, etc. We build Orthodox schools so that Orthodox Christians can use medicine, business, law, science, literature and teaching for their own salvation and for the salvation of the world.

If salvation is our core and guiding desire, then it is

obvious that certain things should exist in an authentically Orthodox Christian

educational environment.

Clearly, the heart of Orthodox life is worship, and so chapels and churches should be at the center of any school that aspires to being an Orthodox school. The Eucharist and all the mysteries and prayers of the Church should be offered up in such a place. Worship is not some ancillary component or a "chaplaincy" in an Orthodox school. It is the center and purpose of the place.

And if that is true, then our educational vision should be in keeping with the one elucidated so many centuries ago by St. Basil the Great, who imagined whole villages and towns of Orthodox Christians with schools, hospitals and, of course, churches. Such a vision can have many kinds of expression. One of those expressions is monasticism, a life not only of prayer but of every kind of work necessary for sustaining life. Likewise, Orthodox Christian education can be an expression of this same vision.

If we are to pursue such a vision, then we have to ask what the practical road to realizing it might look like. One option is to seek to transform existing institutions from within, saturating them with serious Orthodox Christians, developing within the existing community an authentic Orthodox spiritual life that will shine radiantly through the university like Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration of Christ. Universities that follow the British pattern, where there are multiple colleges that are relatively independent of one another yet all part of the same university, could facilitate this approach.

There may well be other colleges and universities that would be willing to host such an Orthodox community, that would be willing to give some sort of recognition to the Holy Trinity, opening themselves to the Divine Liturgy and all the mysteries of the Church. If such places are found, then by all means, we should accept the invitation to bring into them the mystical life of the Church, sanctifying them and transfiguring them from within, transforming them from secular institutions to holy communities.



I fear, though, that almost all of our institutions of higher learning are not only inhospitable to believers in the Holy Trinity, but are so drowning in the error of secular fundamentalism that we will find that we not only have no invitation to bring Christ into them, but are continually limited and even rejected in what we can accomplish. I know that many have hoped that Orthodox Christian Fellowships (OCFs) would be able to undertake this task of sanctification, and while an OCF may be a lifeline, it is not the ship. Most OCFs function as small pockets of Orthodox exiles, surrounded by a hostile faculty and a hostile administration who are not at all interested in their salvation. Please don't misunderstand me—I am in favor of OCFs, but I do not believe that they can be the instruments of transformation of our secular schools into places of holiness and salvation.

That leaves us with the more viable and consistent option, the founding of explicitly Orthodox Christian schools of higher education. This approach will take a lot more work. Because we will need a faculty and staff who are pursuing their own salvation or at least are willing to sign on to the vision and not oppose it, it will be harder to find such people. But just as we seek out men for the priesthood who are willing to take their lives and offer them up to God “on behalf of all and for all,” we also must seek out men and women who are willing to offer up their academic learning and other educational talents to God for His Eucharistic sanctification for the salvation of the world.

Professors, administrators, counselors, custodians, cafeteria workers, etc., should all manifest Christ's Kingdom into the world, because an Orthodox university should be nothing less than an extension of the Kingdom of God. Yes, we might need to hire some non-Orthodox people if qualified Orthodox Christians are not available for particular roles, but everyone who is on staff at an authentically Orthodox university has to understand that where they're working is an outpost of the Kingdom of God.

Likewise, non-Orthodox students could certainly be admitted to an Orthodox school, but they, too, should know that the school's vision and goal is evangelism, to bring the light of the Gospel into the hearts of both the local community and the world. Only if we are committed to building a community that is centered on salvation will we enjoy the seal of the Holy Spirit in blessing such a pursuit.

Further, because our Orthodox vision will probably cut us off from many forms of grant money and other funding, we will have to find Orthodox Christian people whom God has blessed with both the financial resources and the vision for salvation to fund an Orthodox university. These people are out there. All we have to do is look around at the many glorious churches built in this country to know that God has not kept His Orthodox American people in poverty.

Getting wealthy Orthodox Christians to be inspired by this

vision will probably require an incremental approach, to prove that there really can be such a thing as an authentically Orthodox school of higher learning. Some programs of study are inherently more expensive to maintain than others. Thus, we probably will not begin an Orthodox university by founding a medical school (unless any of you are multi-billionaires and ready to go from day one), but we may start with exploring degree programs in education, business, or some of the humanities, as the budget allows.

Whatever we do, however, it must not be for its own sake, nor even for the lofty secular goal of “education” in itself. Just as bread and wine do not in themselves save us, but can become the very presence of God, education does not grant us salvation, but it can become a servant of salvation. What transforms the mundane into the mystical is the offering by mankind and the sanctification by God in response.

At its foundation, Orthodoxy is about the salvation of mankind. We pursue salvation through every means necessary. If we can be saved where we are, then we stay put. But if we cannot be saved where we are, then we have to go somewhere else. For example, we may even soon find it a necessity to set up a parallel medical community, because there are now legal standards being pursued that would require medical students to perform abortions. We cannot violate our faith in order to pursue our careers, no matter what they are, nor can we violate it in order to be educated.

If that means we can be true Orthodox Christians who are being trained for salvation in existing institutions, then it is blessed. If it means we have to found our own communities of education so that we can train for salvation, then that is blessed. No matter what we do or where we go, our purpose is the same, and that is the salvation of our souls and the souls of those around us. While we should try to become educated people, God will not ask us when we stand before His throne how many or what kinds of degrees we earned or what our grade point average was. He will look at us to see how much we resemble His Son Jesus Christ. How we orient ourselves toward that awesome and fearful Day of Judgment will determine our vision for Orthodox Christian education, whether it is for grammar school, homeschooling or higher education.

What we must not do is pursue this, frankly, silly idea that we should found Orthodox educational institutions merely to shield our children from evil. Make no mistake—sooner or later, they will encounter evil, even if it is simply the evil that resides in their own hearts. And when they do, will their educational training have been dedicated to keeping that evil hidden from them, or will it have been dedicated to arming them to fight the good fight, to finish the course, to keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7)?

ABOUT BISHOP THOMAS:

The following is the biography of His Grace Bishop THOMAS which was inadvertently omitted in the previous issue of DIAKONIA.

His Grace, the Right Reverend Thomas (Joseph) is a bishop of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, serving in the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic.

Of Arab-American heritage, Thomas Joseph was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1953. He attended John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, graduating in 1970. He went on to college at William Paterson College, graduating in 1974. After college, he worked in the Department of Community Improvements in Paterson, then served as a teacher for the Paterson Board of Education. When the Antiochian Village camp opened in the late 1970s, he was recruited by Fr. John Namie to serve as one of the original camp counselors from 1979 to 1982.

In the fall of 1979, Thomas began part-time study at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and was made a subdeacon by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) of New York in July of 1982. He continued his studies until the spring of 1983, when he was assigned to Virgin Mary Church in Yonkers, New York.

In 1984, Metr. Philip assigned him to St. George Church in Houston, TX, where he served as Director of Christian Education and Youth Services. While in Texas, the Archdiocese also assigned him to oversee Christian Education and later teen activities for the churches in the Southwest Region (now the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America). In July of 1988 Thomas was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Michael (Shaheen) of Toledo.

On August 28, 1994, Bishop Antoun (Khouri) ordained Dcn. Thomas to the priesthood, and Fr. Thomas served as assistant pastor at his parish in Houston until August of 1996, when he was appointed pastor of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Pinellas Park, Florida (near St. Petersburg).

Between 1996 and his consecration to the episcopacy, Fr. Thomas served in multiple capacities aside from his work as a pastor. He was an appointed member of the Archdiocese Youth Department Board; Spiritual Advisor to the Teen SOYO (Society of Orthodox Youth Organization) Southeastern Region; Chairperson of the Tampa Bay Orthodox Clergy Association; Director of Programs in Pastoral Bioethics for the International Academy of Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine in the United States; Speaker at Braunels, Germany, and at City University of Hong Kong on Bioethics; author of published articles on Christian Bioethics; Speaker at Antiochian Village and third session camp priest for many years; past President and Vice President of the Tampa Bay

Council of Orthodox Churches. In July 2002, Fr. Thomas was granted a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology jointly from the Antiochian House of Studies and the St. John of Damascus School of Theology of the University of Balamand in Lebanon.

On February 15, 2004, Fr. Thomas was elevated to the rank of archimandrite by Bp. Antoun, and on December 5, 2004, he was consecrated to the episcopacy by Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) of Antioch in Damascus, Syria.

Bp. Thomas was enthroned as Bishop of Oakland and the East at St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh (Borough of Oakland), Pennsylvania, on May 6, 2005. In August of 2006, Bp. Thomas was awarded a Doctorate in Education from California Coast University. His Grace also sits on the editorial board of the journal *Christian Bioethics*, which is published by Oxford University Press.

His Grace is also the author of several published articles, including *Training Up a Child: Educational Options for Orthodox Christians* and *An Orthodox University: Higher Education for Orthodox Christians*. He also co-authored *The Emergence of Local Orthodox Christian Societies in America*.

In 2006, the Church of St. George in Charleston, West Virginia, purchased a chancery for the diocese, and in October of that year was elevated to a cathedral, thus adding another see to the diocese and renaming it to the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic. His Grace's residence is at the diocesan chancery in Charleston.

In addition to his duties in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, Bp. Thomas also served as the locum tenens of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest from December 2010 to December 2011. Within the Archdiocese, His Grace assists Metropolitan Philip in overseeing the Antiochian Village, the Christian Education Department, the Youth Department and the Antiochian House of Studies.

Since 2011, he has also chaired the Committee for Youth of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America.

Bishop Thomas's namesday is October 6 (Thomas the Apostle of the Twelve).



Introducing The 2011 - 2013 Board of Antiochian Women Of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West And the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest

The Most Reverend Archbishop JOSEPH - Diocesan Hierarch



Please refer to the previous issue of DIAKONIA (Fall 2011/Winter 2012) for His Eminence's biography.

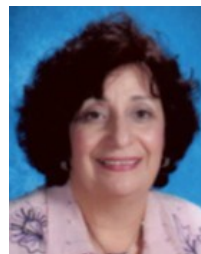
absolutely my joy and I realize an awesome responsibility to serve you as you serve our Lord!

I graduated from Olivet Nazarene University with a BA in Psychology and Sociology. My education from a private Christian College has been a blessing in my life. It helped set a foundation for my professional life and personal life. It was also at Olivet that I started questioning my protestant faith and started seeking the original Church. It was not until I met my husband that I found the Holy Orthodox Church. Since being chrismated into the Church in 1999 by Fr. Stephen Hardy +Memory Eternal+ I have found my home and am extremely grateful for all those who have mentored me, taught me and prayed for me.

My past positions in the Antiochian Women have been as President of my local parish, Public Relations for the Diocese and most recently as Vice-President before being elected to President this past PLC. Each position has allowed me to learn more about my faith and become sisters with women across the Archdiocese. I also serve as Secretary on my Parish Council and choir director for my parish.

Together with my husband, Bill Bentz and our 3 daughters Brigitte, Ginger and Brittany, we worship at Holy Cross in Palmdale, CA. My hobbies include cooking, photography and singing

Georgette Malouf - V. President and NAB Project Coordinator



The Orthodox Church and church community have been a part of my life since 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 35 years, Ed Malouf. We have three children, Christian, Natalie, and Lauren.

Very Rev. David Hovik - Spiritual Advisor



I am the pastor of Saint Andrew Orthodox Church in Arlington, WA. I have been married to Kh Debbie for 36 years and we have raised four children. Our oldest 3 are married and between them we have 10 grand- children who all attend Saint Andrew and live in the Arlington

area. Kh Debbie is a high school special education teacher. I was an evangelical Protestant pastor for 19 years and a graduate of Fuller seminary. After a six and a half year journey our entire parish was received into the Holy Orthodox Church, by His Eminence Archbishop Joseph, on February 8, 1997. I thank God for all his blessings in my life, which include overseeing all of the Antiochian Women in our diocese.

Melinda Bentz - President



Born in St. Louis, Missouri, I was baptized Roman Catholic then my family converted to the Nazarene Church. Growing up a Nazarene Preacher's kid my parents instilled a deep love for God, the Church and serving others as the foundation in my

life. I am blessed to be the President of the Antiochian Women for the Diocese of Los Angeles & the West and Diocese of Eagle River & Northwest. It is

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 officer positions and many coordinator positions in the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of the West. I have also been active and held positions in the NAB as an officer and coordinator.

Jill Benza - Recording/Corresponding Secretary



Thank you for the opportunity to serve as secretary for the Antiochian Women for our diocese. I look forward to meeting new people and learning more about what we as women can do to support our churches and our communities.

Here's a little info about me: I have been married to John for 43 years; we have three adult children John M., Jeffrey and Jill N. I am originally from Ohio and the Orthodox Church of America and lived in Arizona for 31 years. I have been a member of the Antiochian Orthodox Church since 1985. I attended St. George in Phoenix until I became a founding member of the St. Ignatius of Antioch Antiochian Orthodox Mission Church in Mesa, Arizona in the mid 1990's. I have served the church in various capacities from Teen SOYO advisor, to church school teacher to festival chair to parish council chairman.

I retired in 2007 from Mesa Public Schools as the assistant superintendent in charge of business and support services. Currently my time is filled with being blessed with the opportunity to care for my grandchildren (have four beautiful grandchildren, three granddogs and four grandcats), working on behalf of my parish and being active in the community by serving on the board for my home owners association and on the board of the United Food Bank, a major provider of food to over 250 community assistance agencies. I also run a women's nonpartisan political organization. I am looking forward to working with the Antiochian Women's Organization.

Michele Baba - Treasurer



Michele was born in Altoona, PA. and grew up in Anaheim, CA, attending St. Luke Orthodox Church in Garden Grove, which is where she met her husband Danny. After their marriage, they participated in the founding of St. Mark Church in Irvine.

Michele continued her deep involvement in the church life by teaching Sunday School for 15 years at both St. Mark and St. Luke and was an active parent in Teen SOYO at both parishes. She served as Ladies President at St. Mark and worked on many committees. She served as board member on the St. Nicholas Camp Committee over her last 12 years at camp including director, arts and crafts, sports, and most recently as supportive medical staff.

Michele received her Bachelors Degree from California State University Long Beach. Her working career has included teaching at Prince of Peace Lutheran School in Anaheim and as an account executive for Shesido Cosmetics. For the past 12 years she has been employed by Saddleback Valley Unified School District, working in Special Education and Elementary P.E. teacher. She enjoys being outside working with children, especially her own: Lauren, Michael, Daniel, and Alexander. With all her children currently in college, Michele and Danny now have more time together to enjoy their favorite pastime of listening to music and attending concerts.

Melody Bahu - Public Relations Director



I have been a parishioner at St. Luke in Garden Grove, CA for the past 25 years (my entire life). My family have been members since 1975. I am the middle child of 6 children born to Mazen and Mona Bahu. I have been involved in Teen SOYO, OYO, Camp St. Nicolas Night Time Activities

Director and currently teach the College Sunday School class, co-chairwoman to prepare meals for FOCUS, Secretary of our Ladies Group and Public Relations Director for the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West.

Outside of church, after graduating from Chapman University with a degree in Public Relations/Advertising/Marketing, I have continued to be involved in my community through different nonprofit organizations and charitable events. I own

an insurance agency with Farmers Insurance Group in Newport Beach, CA and help family and friends with Real Estate part time.

I am one of the youngest members in our women's group at St. Luke and I try to be involved as much as I can and find comfort from the other women. I see them as my mentors and Godmothers. In the movie "My Big FAT Greek Wedding", the mother makes a comment "The man may be the head but the woman is the neck that makes it turn" That hits home with me not only with my own family but also our church communities. We as women are blessed with the gift of a gentle hand and heart, wisdom and guidance. Through this we are able to influence each other, our youth, other groups in our church and even in our own communities outside of the church.

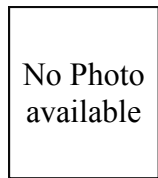
I pray that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ continues to bless us, guide us towards His grace and speak to our hearts.

Lucy Hanna- Immediate Past President and Membership Coordinator



Please refer to the previous issue of DIAKONIA (Fall 2011/Winter 2012) for Lucy's biography.

Madeline Heffelfinger - Humanitarian Coordinator



My husband Subdeacon Stephen and I were married in November of 1993. We have three children Daniel, Caleb, and Sarah. We have been members of Holy Cross Palmdale, CA since 2003. I have been an active member of the Antiochian Women and also have served as a Sunday School Teacher for the past several years. I enjoy spending time with my family, the outdoors, riding motorcycles and horses, kayaking, reading and spending time with friends.

Elizabeth Krammes - Spring Retreat/Scholarship



My family attends St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Riverside. We sing in the choir and assist as needed with various activities such as the weekly bulletin, coffee hour, patronal festivities and older members' social events. My immediate family consists

of husband, Barry-an art professor, two sons and one daughter. I homeschooled my children for many years. The youngest has just started college and the others are out on their own. I am now an "empty nester". In 1996, we came into the Orthodox church at St Michael, Whittier, CA, from Protestant backgrounds.

Originally from the Midwest, we've lived in CA for the last 28 years; most of the time in Whittier, but 4 years in the mountains of Big Bear. I have a Master's degree in Intercultural Studies and taught English classes to international students part time. I hope to resume teaching or tutoring. I'm involved with student and university events through my husband's work. Lifelong learning, needs of the less fortunate, missions, reading, and music are interests of mine. Our family enjoys traveling and have been blessed to visit many places in Western and Eastern Europe as well as Turkey and China. We try to have an open home and often have guests staying with us.

Establishing ways of strengthening women's fellowship and mutual support is very important, at the parish level and beyond. Hopefully, by helping plan and organize the spring retreat I can contribute to that in a significant way for our participants. I would love to hear ideas for increasing the number of ladies coming to the spring weekend retreat. I know I myself have attended sporadically over the years but am greatly rewarded when I set aside the time to come. It is exciting to become more involved and to get to know other Antiochian women through this work.

Allyson Gross- Religious Coordinator



I am married (30 years!) and have 3 children adopted from Asia. One daughter is in college, another daughter is in Junior High, and my son is homeschooled in 5th grade. Teaching him is my major occupation right now. I also teach music lessons 3 days a week and am very involved in 4-H programs, both as a leader and a mom. My husband and I recently had our marriage blessed at St. John's (see picture). I am a chanter there and also the choir director. This is my second term as Religious Coordinator for the Diocese. I look forward to getting together with the new officers.



Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

(The Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian)

Nearly each time I recite The Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian I reflect also upon the prayer of the Antiochian Women.

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.



Both prayers challenge us to put aside idleness and to turn our hearts, our minds and our energies toward God and to His work. At this most blessed time of year we are given the opportunity through fasting, increased prayer and increased services to truly turn our attention to God and away from idleness and self-focus. As busy Antiochian Women, we are often distracted by the endless to-do lists and with them the stress of not trusting in God and doing His work in His time. Both the Prayer of St. Ephrem and the Prayer of the Antiochian Women call us to work, to not be idle, but that the most important focus is to have our hearts and spirits attuned to God. St. Ephrem's prayer entreats God to take away from us the lust of power and idle talk. The prayer of the Antiochian Women is that we serve without seeking personal gain and without judging others. Like so many prayers of the Holy Orthodox Church, these are simple prayers with profound meaning. Prayers, within their few well chosen words, express the focus of an Orthodox Christian's life; which is to serve God with our whole heart, mind and soul.

As Antiochian Women of the West, one of our top goals is to increase the roles of younger women in our diocese. To in essence, help them find ways to develop and utilize their strengths to God's glory through the work of their respective chapters and at the Diocesan level. We are blessed to have a board of women with varied experiences including several of whom are new to service on the diocesan level. It is my prayer that our younger women across the Diocese find their roles in service through the good work of the Antiochian Women.

Through the intercessions of our Holy Ever-Virgin Mother, the Theotokos may each of us this Lent, be graced with the gifts of these two prayers

In Christ,

Melinda Bentz

President

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

Southern California Diocesan Antiochian Women's Retreat

**33rd Annual Spring Retreat
Camp St. Nicholas, Frazier Park, CA**

March 30 - April 1, 2012

THEME: THE FIRST DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY

SPEAKER: MOTHER VICTORIA, ABBESS, ST. BARBARA MONASTERY

His Eminence Archbishop JOSEPH, Presiding

The Very Reverend David Hovik, Spiritual Advisor

DO'S: BRING SLEEPING BAG OR SHEET & BLANKET,
PILLOW, WALKING SHOES, WARM CLOTHING, TOILETRIES,
TOWEL, FLASHLIGHT, BIBLE & PRAYER BOOK.

DON'T'S (RANGER RULES): NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES,
DRUGS, FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS, PETS, FOOD IN SLEEPING
ROOMS, CARS IN CAMP AREA (ONLY IN PARKING LOTS),
SMOKING IN BUILDINGS.

All participants must be 18 and older.

For those of you who prefer to stay in nearby accommodations, The Best Rest Inn is now: Motel 6, Lebec, CA by the Flying J Travel Plaza. Phone: (661) 248-6625. Prices for the weekend retreat remain the same whether you sleep at the Camp or not.

For More information contact Beth Krammes (562) 906-0902 - email: indeedandintruth@yahoo.com

**To ensure availability of space, please fill out and return the application below with your
check no later than March 21, 2012.**

Make checks payable to "Antiochian Women, Diocese of the West" and write "Spring Retreat" on the Memo line

Mail to: Elizabeth Krammes
10431 Nashville Ave.
Whittier, CA 90604-1451

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Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

Parish _____ City _____ State _____

For a lower cabin please specify need: ☐ Senior ☐ Medical ☐ Other

Whole Weekend including Friday Dinner, (Early bird before March 1, 2012): ☐ \$90

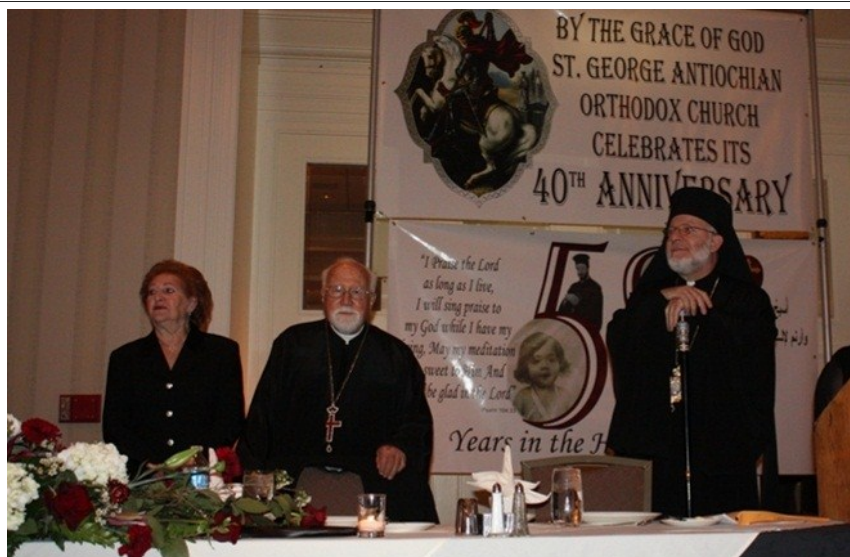
Whole Weekend including Friday Dinner, (after March 1, 2012) ☐ \$100

Saturday Only (All Saturday Attendees must pay): ☐ \$60

I plan to attend the Friday Dinner (included in whole weekend price): ☐ Yes ☐ No

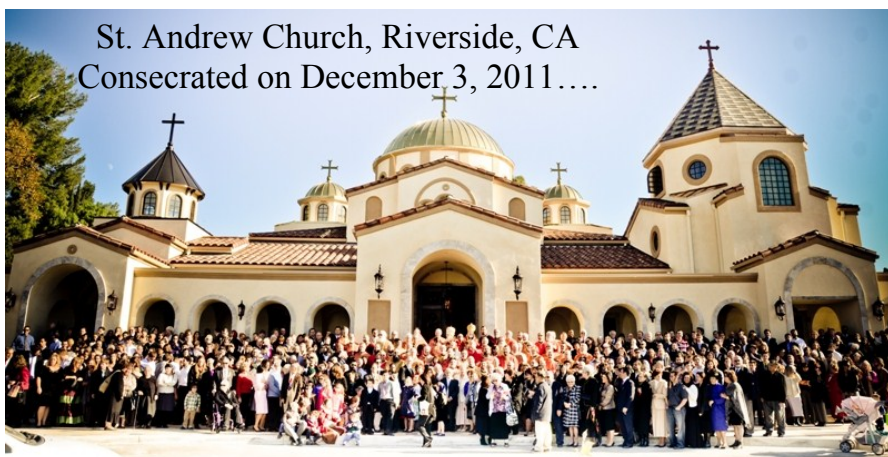
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NEWS FROM AROUND THE DIOCESE...



On the weekend of February 18 & 19, 2012, St. George Church in San Diego, CA celebrated her 40th anniversary. At the same time Archpriest Hanna Sakkab retired from the pastorate of St. George and given the title "Pastor Emeritus". He will remain the active pastor until the new pastor is assigned. An elegant banquet worthy of the occasion followed. His Eminence Archbishop JOSEPH presided over the festivities.

Archpriest Hanna Sakkab Retires



St. Andrew Church, Riverside, CA
Consecrated on December 3, 2011....



Over 60 Clergy and 800 Faithful attended the Divine Liturgy of Consecration. A banquet attended by about 500 people followed in the parish hall.



60th Annual Parish Life Conference - July 5-8, 2012



The 2012 Diocese of Los Angeles and the West Parish Life Conference is being hosted this year by the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer, Los Altos, CA. The PLC will be held at the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel, 2700 Mission College Boulevard, Santa Clara, CA 95054. Phone: 1-408-988-1500.

For room reservations, please contact the hotel directly.

If you are making your room reservation by phone, please request the special rate of \$109 per night (includes free breakfast) and mention the Group code PLC or

Parish Life Conference. The hotel is 4 miles from San Jose airport, 30 miles from either San Francisco or Oakland airports.

Early Bird Registration deadline is June 1, 2012.

To download the registration form or register on line, please go to:

<http://www.plc2012.org/registration>

Our **Keynote Speaker** will be the newly-consecrated Bishop ANTHONY (Michaels) from the diocese of Toledo and the Midwest



Bishop ANTHONY attended the University of Michigan where he received his B.A. in Literature, Science and the Arts, having a double major in History and English literature. He graduated Magna Cum Laude. Following his university degree he attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY, where he graduated as a valedictorian of his class. He earned an M.Div. from that seminary. Besides English, he has a reading knowledge of biblical Greek and is currently learning Arabic, at the request of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP.

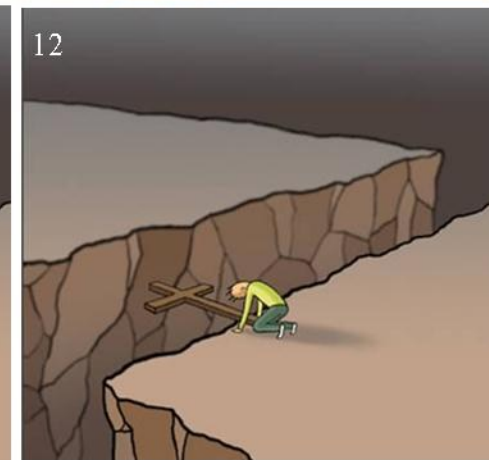
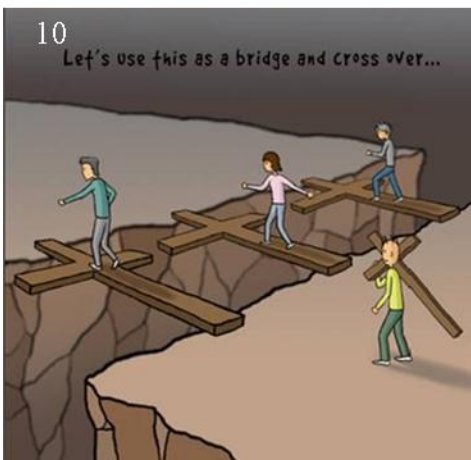
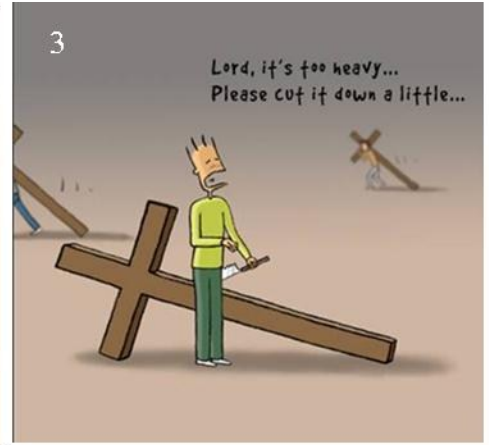
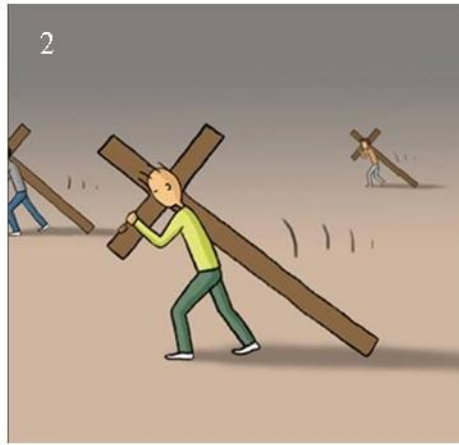
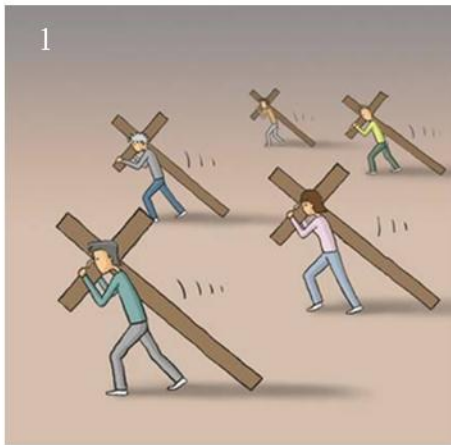
He taught modern philosophy at Gogebic Community College in Ironwood, Michigan before becoming a pastoral assistant and youth director at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Montreal, Quebec, Canada for two years. He and fellow seminarian, Fr. Patrick Kinder, held positions of youth coordinators at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Akron, Ohio, while they toured the country giving concerts and retreats while with the group KERYGMA. Bishop Anthony also spent two years based in Nashville, Tennessee, at St. Ignatius Antiochian Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee, recording for KERYGMA with Fr. Patrick and Fr.

Michael Shanbour. Bishop Anthony has lectured extensively in North America, giving lectures to youth groups and as a speaker at church retreats for various jurisdictions besides his own, the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

Bishop ANTHONY was ordained to the diaconate on September 18, 2004, and to the priesthood on September 19, 2004, at St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in West St. Paul, Minnesota, under the pastorate of the Very Rev. John Khoury, of blessed memory, and by the laying on of hands of Bishop ANTOUN. He was able to serve his home parish for seven months before he was given the assignment to lead the faithful of St. John Chrysostom Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Bishop ANTHONY was consecrated to the Holy Episcopacy by His Beatitude Patriarch IGNATIUS IV on December 11, 2011.

Be careful what we ask for....we may get it and it may not be the best thing for us....



We complain about the cross we bear but don't realize it is preparing us for the dip in the road that God can see and we cannot.



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

Lucy Hanna
1853 Kensington Road
Corona, CA 92880

