

DIAKONIA

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA



SUMMER 2016

Highlighting Diocese of Miami and the Southeast



In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world; for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

☞ A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS ☞

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

His Eminence, the Most Reverend JOSEPH,
Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of All North America
and Hierarchical Overseer

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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.

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES:

Deadlines

- Please submit your articles by the first of the month prior to the month of publication so we can ensure they are all included.

To submit articles, e-mail as a word attachment to:
antiochianwomenna@gmail.com

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 each issue 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 Founder, Metropolitan PHILIP of blessed memory, it is "**Theology in Action.**"

To read the DIAKONIA online, or for general information regarding the Antiochian Women, please go to the Antiochian Women website at:
<http://www.antiochian.org/women>

To read past issues of DIAKONIA, go to:
<http://www.antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA>

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Introducing the Officers for Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

Dawn Evancho, Diocesan President

I was born and raised as a Protestant in a small town in “upstate” New York. When I married my high school sweetheart, Ron, I converted to Orthodoxy. When we moved from Denver, CO to Raleigh, NC almost 19 years ago, our family started attending All Saints, and that is when I fell in love with Orthodoxy. I learned everything I needed to know by teaching Sunday School, starting with the kindergarteners. I am happy to report that I have worked my way up to the 4th/5th grade class! In addition to teaching, I have served as a Teen SOYO Advisor, President, Vice-President, and Secretary of our local Antiochian Women’s chapter, and Humanitarian Coordinator of this Diocese. In my secular life, I work as a Family Practice Physician Assistant, which I love. Many of our parishioners at All Saints are my patients! Ron and I have been blessed with two beautiful and kind daughters. Sarah will be a senior in college and Lauren attends middle school. This is my first attempt at President of the Diocese, so I am grateful for the help and prayers received from all the wonderful women of Miami and the Southeast, especially from my mentors, Kh. Dannie Moore and Dorothy Tampary.



Sh. Shell Keim, Vice President/NAB Project

My name is Shell Keim, and I am privileged to serve as Vice-President of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. I was received into the Orthodox Church 18 years ago with my husband, who now serves as a deacon, and our three oldest children. Since that time we have added three more children and all eight of us are blessed to worship together at All Saints Orthodox Church in Raleigh, NC.

I am a stay-at-home mom who has just completed 21 years of homeschooling all six of our children. I stay busy in the church by helping to coordinate our local ladies group’s efforts and serving as our parish’s Director of Education. We are very blessed to have over 100 children in our church school program and many ladies who are active in our St. Thekla Ladies group – so there is a lot to be done!



I am grateful to be living in a Diocese with so many loving and holy Christian women, who have been amazing role models for me. My hope is that I will learn to serve and love Christ with my life as they have demonstrated with their lives. So, I go on serving, keeping the myrrh-bearing women close to my heart as the template of what each of us as Antiochian women are called to do: serve Christ’s body.

Board Members (continued)

Angela Hays, Secretary

I am a member of St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church in Murfreesboro Tennessee where we have attended since April 2007. Previously, we attended St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee for 10 years. We came to St. Ignatius from The Dormition Orthodox Church (OCA) in Norfolk, VA where in 1996 we were Chrismated. My husband Brent and I chose to become Orthodox after learning about the Church from some friends that we met while my husband was attending law school at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



I have been married for 24 years. I am originally from Virginia Beach and my husband is from southern Illinois. We met while attending Belmont College (now University) in Nashville, TN. We have 14-year-old twin sons, Andrew & Peter, and a 7-year-old daughter, Teagan Elizabeth. I own my own business as an Independent Sales Director with Pampered Chef. Currently; I have a team of 20 consultants that I train and coach while maintaining my own schedule of 4-6 cooking shows a month.

In the past, I have served as Secretary for both the women of St. Ignatius and the women of St. Elizabeth, serving a total of five years between the two parishes. I accepted this position of Secretary for the Diocesan organization after being asked by Shell Keim, current Vice-President, and a dear friend from our days back at Dormition in the late '90s. Thank you for allowing me to serve the women of our Diocese as Secretary.

Dorothy Tampary, Treasurer and Immediate Past-President



It is with thanksgiving to Christ our God, our beloved Bishop ANTOUN, my priest Father David Bleam, and the women of our diocese that I serve as Treasurer of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. The women of our diocese consistency support their parishes and priests, NAB and diocesan projects, and their communities. They lovingly and willingly serve Christ by serving others. It is a blessing and a joy to work with our AWDMS, President Dawn Evancho and the other members of our Board, along with the chapter presidents and others throughout our Diocese. Prior to serving as Treasurer, I also served as Vice-President & Project Coordinator and President. I humbly thank those who have bestowed their trust in me.

“Coming home” to the Orthodox Faith in my early twenties was, and continues to be, a great blessing in my life. My husband Anthony (Bubba), a cradle Orthodox, introduced me to the fullness of Orthodox Christianity. I have embraced it ever since. Along with our son Tony, daughter-in-law Stacy, and grandchildren Mason and Marina, we joined 24 other families as founding members of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church (2007) in Pensacola, Florida. Bubba and I teach the Middle School Sunday School class and I sing in the choir and am active in the Sisterhood of St. Photini AW of St. Andrew.

Originally from Mississippi, I received a B.S. in Biology from Millsaps College in Jackson. Bubba and I have been married for 49 years this summer. We have two married children and four grandchildren. I loved my career of 31 years teaching high school biology, anatomy & physiology, marine biology, and science research. After my retirement from teaching, I worked with Bubba in his real estate sales.

In addition to serving the Antiochian Women of our Diocese, I am also the NAB Humanitarian Coordinator.

Dorothy Tampary continued

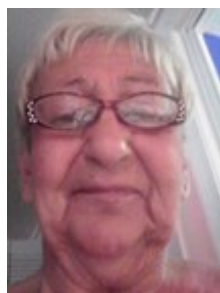
I am committed to spreading the Gospel to build the Body of Christ, both within the framework of my home parish of St. Andrew, our diocese and archdiocese, and beyond.

Kathryn “Cassie” Tysinger, Public Relations

I am Kathryn Ann Tysinger “Cassie” I was born in Hendersonville, North Carolina. My Father was a Doctor, and in 1955 he moved our family to Dothan, AL, they need a Cardiologist and my father specialized in the heart and lung, so we left the mountains of North Carolina, to a town called Dothan which became our home. It is referred to as “LA” Lower Alabama. (We are 10 miles from Ga. And 10 miles from FL.). In 2008 after years of being Presbyterian, and to find out my 9th Great Grandfather was John Knox, I left the Presbyterian Church, and God in his wonderful ways sent me to St Michael Orthodox Church in Dothan, Alabama! I knew I was where God wanted me to be and I really felt his presence. My Priest is Fr Andrew Moore. He and his wonderful wife Kh. Dannie, have taught me so much about the Orthodox Church. In 2009 I was received in the church by Holy Chrismation. Fr. Andrew and Kh Dannie drive down from Atlanta to give us a service once a month. We are truly blessed to have Fr. Andrew and Kh. Dannie and their willingness to make this trip. We really need a full time priest and I know God has a plan we have been patiently doing this for 26+ years! I am past President of the Antiochian Women for St. Michael Orthodox Church and Co-Treasurer. I feel I am truly Blessed!



Carol Larson, Membership



I was elated when I became the Membership Coordinator for the Diocese of Miami and Southeast. I am a cradle Orthodox originally from New Kensington, PA. I have one son and he resides in N. Canton, Ohio with his wife and four children and a daughter that resides in the outskirts of Pittsburgh, PA with her husband and two children.

I am retired, enjoy the beach and doing for my church by being President of our chapter now for four years.

My main goal is to meet all of the chapter presidents and help them to build their chapter's membership.

Myrna L Martin, Religious Coordinator

I was born in Guatemala. I came to the United States as a nanny and maid when I was seventeen years old. My journey to Orthodoxy began in 1982 through Fr. Gordon Walker who also introduced me to my husband.

I have been married for 38 years to Edward Martin who is a Deacon at St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, TN. We have three adult children, two of whom are married. I'm blessed to be able to work at church, and I enjoy the opportunity to serve in any way. I enjoy meeting people and speaking about the faith. I also teach Spanish at a small private school and help the Pre-K boys and girls learn to love a new language. I serve now as the Religious Coordinator. I have learned that attending and participating in services are such strength to my soul; I never thought I needed to be strengthened by the word of God in such a way. Thanks be to God also for my priest Fr. Stephen Rogers who has always encouraged me; his guidance and prayers are of great help to all in our church. May God Almighty give us strength to serve Him well.





Sue Ann Young, Humanitarian

Greetings from Pensacola, Florida!

I am Sue Ann Young, the Humanitarian Coordinator for our Diocese. My Orthodox journey began with my best friend. After our marriage at my non-denominational Navy chapel in 1974, we began attending his childhood Greek Orthodox Church. I was completely entranced with the sights and sounds. After attending for about a year, I volunteered to teach Sunday School, as I thought it would be a natural fit for someone working on their education degree, and I would learn more about Orthodoxy in the process. After reading several books, I informed my husband that he was not allowed to participate in the sacraments of the church because his marriage had not been blessed. We soon took care of that. After a few more months, the local priest asked if I was interested in joining the church. My response was, "Oh, you can do that?" After some more months of reading and studying, I was sponsored by my wonderful Godmother Aspasia Bokas, and was Chrismated in July of 1976.

Since then, I have had a most rewarding 35-year career teaching middle school students with special needs. As our family grew to include three beautiful daughters, we all worked together to serve the church as a family through Philoptochos, Sunday School, Choir, GOYA, and of course a Greek Festival each year. As our daughters completed college and moved on to start their own careers and families, Greg and I shared feelings with other members of our church that Orthodoxy needed to expand in Pensacola. In February of 2008 Bishop ANTOUN blessed our Orthodox journey, and we attended the first service of St. Andrew the Apostle Antiochian Orthodox Church.

I continue to serve the Orthodox Church at St. Andrew through our local Antiochian Women group, The Sisters of St. Photini. With the encouragement of other faithful women, I applied to serve our diocese as the Humanitarian Coordinator and have been in this position since March. I am thankful to all the Orthodox women who have nurtured and educated me in the Faith. Your example of faithful prayer and tireless efforts inspire me to continue my service to the church. Finally, I am thankful for our family. Greg and I are blessed to have our daughters and their families near us. We are thankful for the Christian men they have married and who have chosen conversion to Orthodoxy. We look forward to the baptism of our fifth grandchild later this year.



NAB Humanitarian Effort— IOCC Health Kits

These 40 Kits were assembled by St. Michael's, Dothan, Alabama. Parishes across all Dioceses assembled health, baby and back to school kits for IOCC. Many parishes reported this effort as a unifying activity for the Ladies and the youth of their parish to work together assembling these kits. Teaching through example the blessing of doing good works.

A Message from President Dawn Evancho

Christ in our Midst! He is and ever shall be!

Greetings from Raleigh, NC, down here in the heart of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast! Our diocese spans from Tennessee to the Carolinas, South to Florida and West to Louisiana. In our 35 parishes and missions, we have 25 active Antiochian Women chapters! We are blessed with some very dedicated and hard-working ladies, and I'd like to take a moment to let Y'ALL know what we have been up to.

We get together on a Diocesan level twice a year, in June at our Parish Life Conference, and in January for our Mid-Winter delegates meeting. We also have monthly conference calls with our Spiritual Advisor, board members and coordinators, to keep in sync when we can't be together in person. We adore our Bishop ANTOUN, who tirelessly answers our questions when we call his cell phone in Miami and our Spiritual Advisor, Father Stephen Rogers, who encourages everything we do and sees only the good in our works. We have several on-going projects that keep us busy and make us a little unique.

Many years ago, our ladies started a "Friends In Need (FIN)" list that keeps track of people all over our Diocese who might be sick, might be a shut-in, or might just need some words of encouragement. Our humanitarian Coordinator updates our list and sends it out often to all the individual chapters. On one of our recent conference calls, a suggestion was made to send our missions some cards, stamps and the FIN list to help them participate, giving them a sense of being part of the AW around the Diocese. When one of our friends on the list passed away last month at 102, her daughter donated over 500 cards to help us with this project! God is Good!!

Another ongoing project, that is very near and dear to our hearts is the fundraising we do for Father Bittle and his family, a priest in our Diocese who has a young daughter born very prematurely, resulting in multiple handicaps. We have a goal to help them purchase a special van to transport the entire family with all her medical equipment.

We collect \$100 per year (after dues) from each chapter to help support our "Benevolence Fund" which we use to sponsor two girls through the Children's Relief Fund. We also use this fund to send kids to Camp St. Thekla in South Carolina, contribute to St Paul Skete, the monastery in our Diocese, and to help our Diocesan Officers with travel expenses to our meetings.

Many of our chapters support our NAB projects and acts of mercy, including making IOCC Emergency health, baby, and school kits for those in refugee camps displaced by war and natural disasters. This year, we have made at least 399 health, 113 baby, and 150 school kits. We are also fully dedicated to Metropolitan JOSEPH's annual appeal, and I just recently learned that the ladies of our Diocese raised over \$32,000 for this year's call- helping to feed "Hungry Children At Home and Abroad!" God is GREAT!!

Finally, we are looking forward to being together in Pensacola, Florida for our PLC June 15-18th. We are excited to discuss our NAB group book, "Royal Monastic- Princess Ileana of Romania" by Bev. Cooke. We might be giving out some prizes in our question and answer session! Also, this year we are going to try something new: to share our chapter reports electronically through email and Facebook in an effort to better respect our natural resources.

May God Bless our wonderful women all over North America and Canada, in our efforts to Serve Christ through Serving Others. Amen!!

Dawn Evancho, President AW-DMS

For All The Saints

by V. Rev. Stephen Rogers

Antiochian Women Spiritual Advisor

Diocese of Miami and the South

On the Sunday after Pentecost, the church celebrates the Sunday of All Saints, the day on which the faithfulness of the host of saints throughout the world and throughout the ages is celebrated.

During the Praises in Matins we hear: "Let the prophets, apostles, and all the righteous, the teachers with all the hieromartyrs, the just, and fervent choirs of women who did contest and those who strove in ascetic deeds, yea the multitude of saints and the host of the righteous ones, let them all be praised with most sacred hymns, for they have inherited the Kingdom in the highest and they abide now in Paradise."

For all the thousands of saints commemorated by the church, there are thousands and tens of thousands of godly men, women, and children who attained sainthood in anonymity, whose names and circumstances are known only to God and the citizens of Heaven. In every place, in every time, saints have stood fast for the faith as shining examples of complete devotion to Christ.

Sometimes it is easy to forget as we read of their faith and their deeds that the saints were real people - mothers, fathers, men and women from all walks of life. Men and women who were poor and rich, young and old, intellectuals and uneducated, "blue collar" and "white collar" - men and women from every conceivable circumstance.

The saints are as diverse as humanity, yet they all hold one thing in common - an abiding faith and commitment to Jesus Christ that transformed them to the point that they became vessels of God's grace, sanctifying the world.

In our icons, in our hymnody, in choosing a baptismal name, we honor the saints, not as persons who are beyond us, but because they are people like us - real people. And we, like them, have the opportunity to be transformed by the grace of Christ into vessels of holiness.

Ofentimes we fall into the trap of thinking that our circumstances, the demands life places on us, or our lack of ability prevents us from serving God in any meaningful way. All Saints Sunday proclaims just the opposite. There is no circumstance or situation, however exalted or humble, that prevents us from being what God intends us to be. It is only our own unwillingness that hinders us. All are called to sainthood as St. Paul said to the church in Corinth: "To the Church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours." (First Corinthians 1:2). "Both theirs and ours..." The same Jesus who sanctifies the saints sanctifies us. The same Jesus who transformed them transforms us. Their calling is our calling.

We also sometimes fall into the misconception that the Antiochian Women is just an organization - a group assigned certain tasks to accomplish certain goals. But it is much more than that - it is a collective sainthood. The shortest path to the Kingdom of Heaven is service rendered from love. That is what the Antiochian Women provides - a way to serve; a small step toward sainthood; furtherance along the pathway to the kingdom.

As we celebrate the memory of the host of God's saints, let us also celebrate that Christ freely offers us what

Message from V. Rev. Stephen Rogers, Spiritual Advisor Continued.

we offered them: "That the God of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance toward the saints" (Eph. 1: 17-18). Being part of the Antiochian Women is not just a membership, it is a calling which results in riches.

Through the intercessions of all the Saints, may each of us in our own place, in our circumstances, with all our strengths and weaknesses, strive to attain that which has made available to all of us, the sanctifying grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Chapter Reports, Photos and Happenings



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Coffee Hour

Our chapter has been organized into teams to serve our Coffee Hour. We check in and visit on a regular basis those that are shut-in. We feed the hungry one Saturday every month along with continually giving to Helping Hands.

St. Michael Church, Dothan, AL

We are blessed to have Fr. Andrew Moore and Kh. Dannie Moore whose dedication to us has been a gift from God!

Fr. Andrew & Kh. Dannie have been driving down to Dothan (about a 4 1/2 hour drive one way) for about 24 years! After Liturgy in Hiram, GA, they drive down to Dothan to hold service after which they drive back to Hiram. In the past they did this twice a month. We are blessed to have them once a month. They have driven in good weather as well as rain and snow. We here at St Michael know God has a plan for us and someday we will have a full-time Priest!!



**St. Michael Orthodox Church
Dothan, Alabama**

Chapter Reports, Photos and Happenings

Sisterhood of St. Photini

The Antiochian Women of St. Andrew the Apostle

Pensacola, Florida

The women of our parish are usually *doing* something! Whether it is our annual Sweet Shop & Freezer Sale or cleaning the church, we can always depend on helping hands to perform the labor that is translated into service for others. Some of the things we have been *doing* include:

- ♦ organizing creative and delicious receptions that honor new parents, graduates, and Baptisms/Chrismations
- ♦ preparing and donating appetizers for a community “Learn to Read” fundraiser
- ♦ packaging weekend meals for needy students at a nearby elementary school
- ♦ providing some sweet appreciation for local teachers with trays of Baklava and chocolate
- ♦ donating and delivering Christmas meals to local families
- ♦ involving our SOYO in the hands-on aspect of charitable works
- ♦ celebrating the tradition of St. Basil’s bread (Vasilopita) as a fundraiser for our charity account
- ♦ remembering our fellow parishioners with cards, meals, visits, and prayers

All of this *doing* keeps us connected to the purpose of our sisterhood. We have much to be thankful for at St. Andrew's and we appreciate the time we spend together. We pray, we work, we grieve, and we party together and we always remember the source of our joy and many blessings.



St. Anthony the Great in Florida Celebrates a Consecration, Ordination and Elevation

May 7, 2016

The consecration of a church is a once in a lifetime event for a parish.

It was especially eventful for this struggling mission parish, which had been meeting in various rented facilities for its 15-year existence.

As a convert who only just celebrated my first Pascha as an Orthodox Christian this year, I beheld these events with wide-eyed wonder, and what follows is my feeble attempt to share this wonderful story with you.

But first, you should know how the story almost never came to be...

The mission was established by Fr. Paul Moses in 2001. After a few years, we purchased four acres in Palm Bay, FL with the plan of building our own church, but the various fees, permits and other financial requirements by the city proved prohibitive, and the land was sold. Over the next several years, we had looked for properties and found a few possibilities, but nothing panned out. Parishioners had been getting discouraged, with some predicting we would soon close our doors.

Then in June 2015 we got the news that we would be getting a new priest. Hopes began to rise as we heard of the other parishes and churches he had built during his career.

Fr. Elia Shalhoub came in like a whirlwind in July 2015, stirring up the faithful to action and challenging our faith in God to provide. By the end of December, we had found and purchased an existing Nazarene church building on six acres.

Within a few days, we got word that a local family was selling their chapel, and because of their friendship with Fr. Elia, Calliope Karas and her family donated nearly the entire contents of the chapel to St. Anthony. Most notable is the iconostasis and all the iconography, and the altar, but there were also pews (which we learned later had originally come from the Nazarene Church!), a beautiful baptismal font, much furniture and other items too numerous to mention. (Because of this great gift worth untold thousands of dollars, Mrs. Karas was honored with the Antonian Silver Medal at our consecration banquet on Saturday afternoon.)

The building was in need of renovations to make it suitable for our needs, and this was accomplished quickly on a shoestring budget. Unbelievably, we moved in on Thursday, March 10, and we celebrated our first Divine Liturgy in the new building on Forgiveness Sunday, March 13, 2016.

The following is an account of a most wondrous day in the life of a parish:

The festivities began with Bright Week Great Vespers on Friday night with Bishops ANTOUN and THOMAS in attendance. Our choir was greatly enhanced at Friday and Saturday services by the voice of Mr. Jackson King, Choir Director at St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, FL. After Vespers, the Parish Council hosted a potluck dinner.

Saturday morning Matins began quietly, but the anticipation grew as the people began to gather. There were visiting clergy and laity from all over the State of Florida.

Matins with its abundance of joyous Paschal hymnology moved into the Consecration Service, presided over by our beloved Bishop ANTOUN of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast, and Bishop THOMAS of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic. The clergy were all gathered by then: our own V. Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub (St. Anthony the Great; Melbourne); V. Rev. Fr. John Hamatie (St. George, Orlando); V. Rev. Fr. Ernesto Rios (St. James, Port. St. Lucie (OCA); V. Rev. Fr. Peter Shportun (St. Mary's, West Palm Beach); V. Rev. Fr. Antoun Araaj (St. Ignatius Mission, Boca Raton); V. Rev. Fr. Michael Byars (Holy Cross, Daytona Beach); Fr. Gustavo Alfonso, (Miami); Archdeacon David B. Nimer (St. George Cathedral,

Continued... St. Anthony the Great:

Coral Gables); soon-to-be Deacon Stephen (Salim) Adili, (St. Anthony the Great; Melbourne); and Subdeacon John Najjar (St. Anthony the Great, Melbourne); Subdeacon Elie Bardweil (Miami)and Chairman of the Order of St. Ignatius for the Diocese; Subdeacon Christian Proano (St. Philip, Davie, FL) and Subdeacon Douglas Hamati (Orlando).

The relics of St. Raphael of Brooklyn and St. Elizabeth the New Martyr were sealed into the altar, which had been previously consecrated in the chapel. We knelt as the Bishop prayed that the altar be appointed as a haven for the tempest-tossed, and place of healing for the passions, a refuge for the weak and a place that puts demons to flight.

The altar was vested in a white linen cloth representing the Lord's burial shroud, and then covered with a beautifully worked piece done by Fr. Elia's mother, the late Bahige Chalhoub of blessed memory. The walls, the icons, everything was anointed with Holy Chrism, by Bishop THOMAS, followed by Bishop ANTOUN sprinkling Holy Water, and the whole retinue of priests and deacons, while we joyfully sang the Troparion of the Holy Cross.

After standing prayerfully before the icon of Christ for most of the Hierarchical Liturgy, our beloved Subdeacon Salim was ordained to become Deacon Stephen. Amid shouts of "He is worthy!" "Mustaheq!" "Axios!" the new deacon was vested by Bishop ANTOUN and Fr. Elia.

Last but not least, Bishop ANTOUN called forth our beloved Fr. Elia, recognized him for his achievements, and elevated him to the rank of Great Ekonomos for his tireless efforts in managing the finances of the church. Bishop ANTOUN then presented Fr. Elia with the gift of his own precious cross from Russia.

After the ceremonies and the Blessing, we all headed over to the parish hall of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, which graciously gave us the use of their hall for our celebratory luncheon. We enjoyed a great time of feasting together, as a fitting end to a day we will always remember with thanksgiving.

It is impossible to relate these facts without attempting to express the overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude to God for all His abundant provision that brought us to this day, and for the beauty of our surroundings in our new church with its priceless iconography, and the rising sound of the most glorious chanting, with joyous exclamations of "Christ is Risen!" This day with all its blessings was just the icing on the cake of Bright Week!

As my fellow convert Michael Clevenger put it, "Matins, double Hierarchical Liturgy with seven priests and two deacons, an ordination, an elevation, and a consecration of a parish all before noon. Oh what a time to be alive!"

AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!"

Submitted by, Deborah Thiem, St. Anthony the Great, Melbourne, Florida



Consecration of St. Anthony the Great in Melbourne, Florida



All Saints
Raleigh, North Carolina
Pysanky Tea



In 2016 the St Thekla Women of All Saints Orthodox Church in Raleigh, NC have enjoyed gathering for a new program called “Ladies Tea”. Our teas are informal social events with an educational component centered around living Orthodoxy in the home.

During our first tea Mary Kliewer taught us to make koliva, the boiled wheat dish blessed during memorials for our departed loved ones. Many of us are converts to the faith and had never learned how to make koliva. It was wonderful to have women from varied backgrounds there so we could learn the many different ways that koliva can be prepared. The converts left inspired to try it at home!

Our second tea was a pysanky egg making class. Two of our women from Slavic traditions taught a group of 12 ladies, including two non-Orthodox visitors and women from other local parishes, to make the highly decorative eggs. We also talked with each other about Pascha traditions in Orthodox homes.

This program was a huge hit and we will definitely repeat it next year.

Future teas may include a prosphora making class and an icon writing class.

Additional photos here:

<https://m.facebook.com/ElinaPelikan/albums/10209095190674397/>



St. Stephen, Hiram, GA

Each year, in November and December, our Parish prepares food boxes and gifts for several families in the community which might not otherwise have Christmas.

We prepared and delivered gift bags (toiletries, gloves) for 20 children at Calvary Children's Home (which is located near our Parish) in December.

Several parishoners attended/assisted with the Paulding County Right-To-Life (Pro-Life) display booth at the county fair in September 2015.

Our ladies hosted a "Valentine Tea Party" for the ladies in the community who we give the food boxes to at Christmas.



St. Ignatius Antiochian Orthodox Church Franklin, TN

The sisterhood of St. Ignatius has been very busy this year!

We began the church year with our annual fall retreat, *A Feast of Faith*. Fr. Stephen led us through the beauty and deeper meaning of the great feasts of the church by instructing us using the festal iconography in the Temple. We also enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship and delicious food!

The ladies meet once a month at the church, where Fr. Stephen leads us in the Akathist prayer to the Mother of God for our children. Every Tuesday from September through May, we meet at a member's home for a Bible/book study. All of this instruction helps to deepen our spiritual growth as women.

Our sisterhood is in charge of all festal events throughout the year, including Lenten meals after the Pre-sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings, organizing the Paschal feast following Pascha Liturgy & the Agape Picnic with BBQ and an egg hunt for the children.

We completed a successful fundraising effort in March for our NAB project, *Feed the Hungry Children At Home & Abroad*, by raising \$7,200 from donations from our parishioners!



The entire parish is able to participate in the *AW Friends In* ministry, including children and teens, by sending cards, notes and artwork.

We have also enjoyed our sisterhood luncheons and our ministry of taking meals to our many new moms and to those parishioners who are sick or infirmed.

Life at St. Ignatius is vibrant, busy, and blessed! Our AW sisterhood works ceaselessly as we serve Christ through serving others.

Ann Elliott, Chapter President



The Beautiful Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast



Presentation of a check to Metropolitan JOSEPH in the amount of \$157,653.43 that we, the Antiochian Women across our Archdiocese, raised in support of our annual project, assigned to us by Sayidna at the 2015 Convention in Boston, "Hungry Children at Home & Abroad."

All of your hard work yielded this great result!!

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 antiochianwomenna@gmail.com 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 chapters. All articles must be about or of interest to the Antiochian Women.
4. Notices of diocesan gatherings, retreats, conferences, etc.

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, and His Grace Bishop JOHN)	October 2015	Done
2	Diocese of New York and the Archdiocesan District (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH & His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS). Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic (His Grace Bishop THOMAS)	January 2016	Done
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH)	April 2016	Done
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (His Grace Bishop ANTOUN)	July 2016	Done
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY (His Grace Bishop ALEXANDER)	October 2016	Sept. 1, 2016
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest (His Grace Bishop ANTHONY)	January 2017	Dec. 1, 2016
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (His Grace Bishop BASIL)	April 2017	Mar 1, 2017
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England (His Grace Bishop JOHN)	July 2017	June 1, 2017

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

A NOTE TO ALL OUR READERS:

While preparing the Diakonia, it is always so exciting to see the photos and read the reports of chapters across our Archdiocese. It is a blessing to offer this Summer issue of the Diakonia to you. Perhaps you will find encouragement to take on a new project, to reach out to those in your parish whom are unable to attend services or to stay the course as a parish and trust God has a plan for your parish as the parishes of St. Anthony the Great and St. Michael's demonstrate.

Our Fall Diakonia will highlight the Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY. We all look forward to hearing about the great work these ladies are doing in their diocese.

As always, if you have suggestions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me at antiochianwomenna@gmail.com.

In Christ,

Melinda Bentz, Public Relations Officer