

# SOPHIA!

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BOARD OF THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007



*DID YOU KNOW . . . that, while Orthodox Christians celebrate the Conception of the Theotokos on December 9, the Roman Catholic Church celebrates the same “feast” on December 8, but call it the “Immaculate Conception”? In fact, the Roman church did not officially recognize this day until 1854 and teaches that the conception of Mary by Joachim and Anna was without original sin. In fact, many confuse the “Immaculate Conception” with the conception of our Lord Jesus Christ. Orthodox Christians have celebrated the Conception of our Most Holy Theotokos since the days of the Early Church and reject the dogma of the church in Rome.*

## TOPIC OF THE MONTH . . . PRAYER PARTNERS

As a follow-up to the last edition of Sophia where we discussed establishing a prayer life, we now move to the blessing of having a “Prayer Partner” to help us achieve the ultimate goal of *theosis*.

### Discussion Topics:

1. *Why Should We Pray for One Another?* SHOULD we pray for one another? Isn't it enough when we pray together in church? What are the reasons for prayer? Is it important that two or more people join together to approach the Father in prayer?
2. *What is a “Prayer Partner?”* While is both personal and private, we can ask others to assist us in our prayer lives. A Prayer Partner is designed to give you someone to pray with and for. The Prayer Partner also prays for YOU (and You for THEM). Through praying with another person, you can see God at work, and through prayer we can overcome a sinful world.
3. *Who should I choose for a “Prayer Partner?”* A Prayer Partner can be anyone in your life – a relative, friend, neighbor. Perhaps it's someone you just recently met at coffee hour, or it could be a spouse, sibling, or child. They can even live in a different city or state (or country!).
4. *What do I have to do to be a “Prayer Partner?”* As a Prayer Partner, you're telling someone, “I care for YOU!” Surveys have shown that the “average American” only spends approximately five minutes a day in prayer! You may say, “I don't have time to pray – for myself or for someone else.” But, as we saw in the last edition of Sophia, there are several prayers that you can say while performing other tasks. Also, the prayers are done on YOUR schedule – set a time of day and commit to it. There is no appointed length of prayer or number of prayers.
5. *How do I get started?* Again, you can pick someone you're close to – or someone that you've just recently met. For example, one woman began to call members of her Adult Sunday School Class and began praying for them. If they were absent from class (or even church), she called to check to see if they were okay (they appreciated it to know they were “missed”). She also asked, “How may I pray for you?” which led them to share their problems. Listen to them and pray for them. In fact, you should say, “I'll pray for you.”

“Prayer Partners” in the Bible. Pull out your Orthodox Study Bible and read the following passages: Matthew 6:8-13, 21:21-22, 10:8; Luke 18:11, 22:32; Acts 8:14-15, 10:30-31; and Colossians 1:3-9 and 4:3.

