

# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN MONTH

## “Message”

(MARCH 2019)



Good morning!

*Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!*

I am so glad that I can speak to all of you today on behalf of our *(name of parish)* chapter of the Antiochian Women. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly tell you about the important work we have been given by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH for our 2019 PROJECT. Because God has blessed us with much growth at the Antiochian Village Camp and in our Organizations, we simply must develop adequate facilities to meet these needs. This is the basic impetus for our 2019 PROJECT.

Some of you may remember that in 1973 Metropolitan PHILIP, of thrice-blessed memory, announced his vision of guiding and enriching the spiritual lives of our youth by creating a camping program for our Archdiocese. After five years of searching, a camping facility became available for purchase in the Laurel Mountains of Western Pennsylvania. This 280-acre campground had cabin accommodations for 160 campers and counselors, and needed only cosmetic enhancements for its initial use.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1978, our Archdiocese signed the final sales agreement to take ownership of what is now The Antiochian Village. Later that year, during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Archdiocesan Convention in Houston, Metropolitan PHILIP announced the purchase of this property. He described this momentous event as one that opened *“a new spiritual dimension to our lives, one which will inaugurate a new era of religious maturity in our Archdiocese.”* This announcement added much excitement to the Convention, but was just the beginning -- Metropolitan PHILIP made it clear that *the work had just begun!*

He then challenged our members to prepare to grow the Antiochian Village beyond just a camping facility to include a conference and retreat center; a historical archive and library for theological research; a monastery; a retirement facility for our clergy and laity; and a museum which would attract Christians from around the world. This astounding concept was all part of the founding vision and long term plan for our Antiochian Village.

In the forty-plus years since that initial vision was articulated by our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP, of establishing a spiritual/social/theological focal point for our Archdiocese, some, but not all, of his vision has been brought to fruition. This year, our esteemed Metropolitan JOSEPH wants all of us to be inspired to imagine what our Antiochian Village might look like in the next few years as we strive to fulfill the dream upon which it was founded.

Metropolitan JOSEPH has given us a very special mandate, a very sacred task, for our 2019 PROJECT. He has asked the Antiochian Women to spearhead the effort to completely fulfill the original vision of Metropolitan PHILIP, and to crown that vision with a Cathedral, built to the Glory of God, overlooking and blessing our beloved Antiochian Village.

As our fundraising efforts bear fruit, we hope to be an inspiration for all of the members of our Archdiocese to take up this challenge as their own. The Antiochian Village is a “light” shining upon the mountain, it is the “heart” of our Archdiocese, it is a point of unity for our geographically vast Archdiocese. As Metropolitan JOSEPH says in his letter, the Antiochian Village is a precious “jewel” that is looked upon by many Orthodox, here and abroad, as a model for their own jurisdictions.

Metropolitan PHILIP’s founding vision was God-inspired; and now we add to it the vision of Metropolitan JOSEPH to “lift high the Cross” upon the domes of a beautiful cathedral so that the light of the Gospel will shine as an inspiration and as a beacon of hope for all. May almighty God be pleased with our efforts this year, and may the All-Holy Spirit fill our hearts with zeal to bring the Godly visions of our blessed Hierarchs into reality.

Finally, I would ask all of you for your prayers for our Antiochian Women. We thank all of you for your generous support. May God bless this parish, and the work of the Antiochian Women as we seek to serve God by serving others, to the Glory of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of His Kingdom. Amen. ❖

