

Message from
Metropolitan
Joseph

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A Recounting
of a Beautiful
Pilgrimage

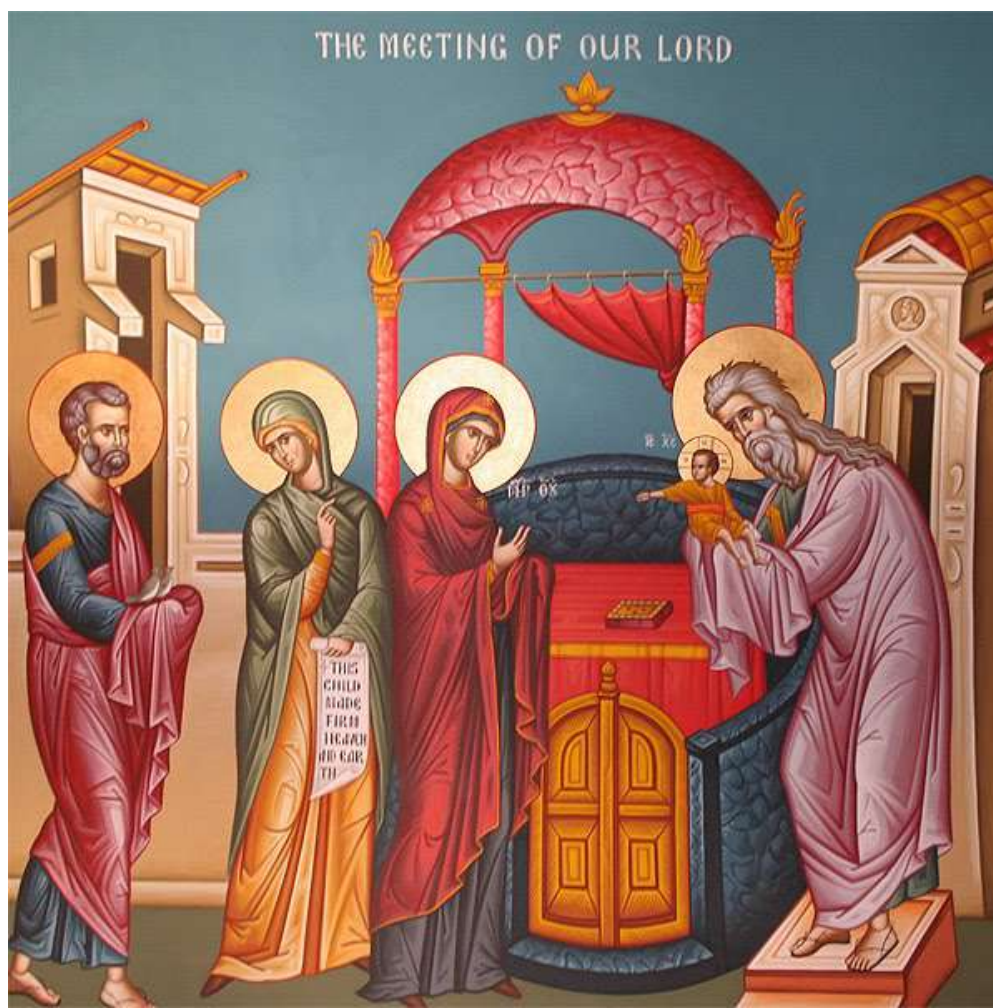
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Photos from
AW events
across our
Diocese

...AND MUCH
MUCH
MORE,
INSIDE!

The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S WINTER NEWSLETTER





ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

January 7, 2022

Beloved Sisters of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West,

Blessings to you and your families as we begin another year, by God's grace.

Just a short time ago, we celebrated the joyful news of our Savior's birth in the flesh and His holy baptism by St. John the Forerunner. I hope all of you were renewed by the joy of this holy season and that your family bonds were strengthened by time spent together in worship and celebration.

At the feast of Theophany (or Epiphany), when we celebrated the Lord's baptism, we heard these encouraging words from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus: "The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men" (2:11). This reading is very fitting for Theophany, which celebrates Christ's appearance on the world's stage—it was only after His baptism that He began preaching, teaching, and working miracles. The joyful proclamation of Christ's appearance changes our perspective on everything. Through the divine grace He brings, we can overcome all the fearful darkness around us. He has redeemed and purified us and promises us a glorious eternity in the presence of our loving God. Therefore, we can confidently proclaim with St Paul "that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

On behalf of our archdiocese, I want to thank you for diligently supporting so many of our ministries. In particular, I echo the thanks I have heard from those clergy to whom you have provided assistance as they faced various financial needs. I also thank you for your support of our multifaceted building project at the Antiochian Village. The women of this diocese and throughout the archdiocese were the first to respond to this vision, and I will never forget your eagerness to help. You have been a force for good in our parishes and archdiocese from your inception as an organization, and you continue this legacy through all the good works you undertake now.

The New Year is a time for looking forward and making resolutions. I hope that the joy of this holy season strengthens your resolve to continue working together in

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

harmony for the good of the archdiocese, doing your best and never giving up. And I pledge myself to always be here for you, to encourage and help you as God gives me strength.

Your Father in Christ,



+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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An Active Virtue

A message from our Spiritual Father, Fr. David Hovik



In 1941, during World War 2, Nazi Germany occupied Yugoslavia and the future St. Nikolai Velimirovich (who was a Monk) was first confined to a monastery (which was like a house arrest) but eventually he was imprisoned at the Dachau Concentration Camp, near Munich. After the war he immigrated to the United States and reposed at St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania.

“And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the

unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” (Luke, 6:31-36)

Here is St. Nicholai’s understanding of this passage from Luke:

*“Love your enemies.” He does not say: “Do not render evil for evil”, for this is a small thing; it is only endurance. Neither does He say: “Love those who love you,” for this is passive love; But He says: “Love your enemies;” do not just tolerate them, and do not be passive, but **love** them. Love is an active virtue.”*



When we hear homilies about loving our enemies it is often like “Blah, Blah, Blah – we’ve heard it all before.” But listen to how St. John Chrysostom approaches this teaching of our Lord!

“If the Emperor had laid down a law that all those who were enemies should be reconciled to one another, or have their heads cut off, would not every one make haste to be reconciled with his neighbor? Yes! Truly, I think so!”

What excuse then do we have in not ascribing the same honor to the Lord and to the commandment He gives in the Gospel of Luke?

It is remarkable that Jesus is allowing us to determine the Rewards we will receive when we stand before God as our Judge! In Matthew, Chapter 6, Jesus tells us that our forgiveness before God will be based on whether we have forgiven others.

If you forgive few things, He forgives you few! If you forgive many things, He forgives you many! If you pardon from the heart, and sincerely, God in like manner also pardons you!

It is about the actions we display particularly toward those who we would classify as our **enemies**. St. Nicholai reminded us that love is an **active** Virtue! So, what might that look like?

Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol told one of most beautiful stories about what active love looks like:

When I was on the Holy Mountain (Mt Athos) some journalists came with a camera and interviewed the worst monk on Mount Athos. They were trying to show the worst that you can imagine, the ugliest picture of a monk who was unhappy and had completely lost his way.

When we learned that they had actually interviewed this unfortunate brother of ours, we said to ourselves, “Most Holy Theotokos! What did he say, how did he introduce himself to them?”

The Reporter asked him, “Father, are there saints here, on Athos?”

He answered, "Yes!"

"Can you name us any holy person?"

"Elder Paisios."

And they asked him, "Well, why is he a saint?"

"Well, you see, they call him a Saint. I don't know if he's a Saint, if he observes fasts, does vigils, prays on a prayer rope and does prostrations, I don't know about such things, maybe he does all this. But one thing I know for sure. As you can see, I am a bad monk and I confess this: I drink, I get drunk, I never fast at all, I don't go to services ...The other fathers despise me, do not want me to live with them, they don't give me a penny and would be happy to get rid of my presence. But every year, since I do not know any other way to earn my bread, Paisios called me to his place so that I would chop wood for him. Although there were others who wanted to, good monks, he was the one who called me, 'Come, father, we will cut wood for this year.' And so, I go to him, and he asks me, 'How much do you want, father?' Facetiously I say, 'I want about ten thousand drachmas.' (That's close to \$300,000) 'I'll give you fifteen thousand! (\$450,000) You are a good man and poor, I will give you \$450,000.'

You have to understand that Father Paisios was extremely poor by choice. He owned nothing. Many people left money for him. Since he would never take it - they hid it so that he would find it later. But when the Elder found the money, he usually placed it in books or magazines and gave it away without them knowing it.

This monk said, "Others are ready to kill me with work, they force me to cut firewood, and carry it, and put it in a woodpile, whatever they can think of! But Fr. Paisios kept asking me, 'Father, aren't you tired? Sit down a little, rest!' And while I was chopping wood, carrying it, stacking it,

he helped me all day, as if he were my worker and servant. He would pay me extra and take care of me.”

“Fr. Paisios didn’t know how to cook, but he made sure that there was canned food and wine, so that I could eat well. He gave me all sorts of drinks all the time and said, ‘Take a little rest, let me treat you with something, let’s have a bite!’ Moreover, when a visitor came, he praised me and said, ‘Look what a good monk, take his blessing!’ And I think this man is a SAINT because he does so.

*After seeing the interview, the future Metropolitan Athanasios noted, that his Monastic Brotherhood said to themselves, “Look, the worst monk on the Holy Mountain gave the best sermon. This Monk was able to give this sermon about St. Paisios because St. Paisios’ **life** was a sermon about **love!**”*

In the end, that is what Jesus is saying in this Gospel! Our life must especially radiate love toward our enemies. To people that treat us poorly, who hold views that are the polar opposite of ours!

Jesus took all of the Old Testament Law (and according to Judaism there are 613 Commandments) and reduced them to **two** Commandments:

- (1) You shall Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your
mind, and
- (2) You shall Love your Neighbor (and that includes
your **enemies**) as Yourself.

You might ask, “Father David, how will I know when I am drawing close to the Lord?” When you demonstrably start loving your enemies!

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE MOST REVEREND METROPOLITAN PHILIP – FOUNDER
A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS



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NORTH AMERICAN BOARD

❖ DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES & THE WEST ❖



January 2022

Reverend Fathers & Beloved Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Happy New Year!! Hard to believe it's 2022 – time these last couple years seems to be blurred together. Another impact of this pandemic – we lose track of time & lose awareness of life around us.

Last year, I chose the word "ENGAGE" for us & challenged you to ENGAGE more with each other through this, our Antiochian Women's (AW) ministry.

For 2022, I am choosing the word: "**AWARE**" and asking that you all strive to be more **AWARE** in our activity with our Antiochian Women's ministry.

For all of us, it's important that we are **AWARE** of how we currently participate and equally important that we're **AWARE** of those things we do not participate in that perhaps we could & probably should. I'm committed to striving to be more "**AWARE**" and would love if you joined me. But how?

The first step to being **AWARE**, needs to be taking an honest inventory of what you currently are involved with as an Antiochian Woman in your parish. I'm big on lists – this is a perfect example of a good time to make a list! Do you serve as an officer? Do you chair a particular event? Do you step up when volunteers are needed? Do you participate in Book Club?

But remember – just as important is being **AWARE** of what we are not participating in & considering the reasons why not, recognizing that *everyone* is busy & our calling as Antiochian Women is to be a "Sisterhood Serving Christ, Through Serving Others."

So my invitation to each of you is to take inventory & become **AWARE** & then let's all commit to determining how we can become more involved with our Sisters In Christ in each of our parishes.

From participating in meal trains or visiting shut-ins. To supporting IOCC or FOCUS or local soup kitchens. Or baking for fundraisers to support assorted ministries. Once we take inventory we will no doubt become **AWARE** the possibilities are likely endless!

As a reminder, please submit photos of your ongoing activities & gatherings – thereby helping us become **AWARE** of what's going on with our Sisters throughout our Diocese of LA & the West!

My prayers for you & your families to stay safe & well.

With Love in Christ,

Charmaine E. Darmour, AW President
Diocese of Los Angeles & the West

Sweets for Seminarians

By January Al-Zouhbi and Johanna Cates
of St. Timothy Orthodox Church in Fairfield, CA

The Sisterhood of St. Timothy decided last year, for one of our projects, to help financially support our own Diocesan seminarians on an on-going basis. We “adopted” five young men and their families, all of whom have been attending St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary in New York.



We set up a table in our refectory to hold sweets for our weekly Agape meals, which we have lovingly called our “Sweets for Seminarians” table. There is a donation box next to the goodies into which our very generous parishioners donate any amount of money in exchange for a sweet treat. All donations are entirely voluntary, with no one denied a treat if they do not wish or are unable to contribute.

It has been wonderfully successful, raising \$1,930 this year (through November 2021)! Paired with on-line donations of \$3,270 (in the same time-frame), we were able to gift our seminarians, \$200.00 each last Pascha, and \$400.00 each this past Nativity. The Sisterhood will be continuing this project for the foreseeable future. Our Seminarians are always in need of our financial support, and this has been a huge success.

**Congratulations to Varvara Gulina,
a member of St Barnabas Orthodox Church in Costa Mesa
and one of 2021 recipients of the
Antiochian Women's Educational Grant!**



Varvara, a mother of a six-year-old daughter, has returned to school to earn her online Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Colorado Denver. Her studies focus on designing programs and policies that support women experiencing domestic violence and sexual abuse. She aims to work on behalf of women not only in the U.S. but in Russia, where she was born. Varvara also dreams of empowering women to live up to their fullest God-given potential.

As the first woman in her family to pursue a graduate degree, Varvara wishes to become an example of a strong woman for future generations. Varvara states: "It is my dream to give my daughter a future where she grows up free to pursue her own goals and ideals, deeply knowing her power and worth as a woman of God."

The Antiochian Women's scholarship has allowed Varvara to continue on the vocational path to which God is calling her. "I hope that other orthodox women feel inspired to apply for the Antiochian Women scholarships and equip themselves to

serve in critical leadership professions," she remarks. Varvara is grateful to the organization for their support to forge ahead in her education and to make a strong impact in the world.

Each year applications for the Antiochian Women's Educational Grant become available in March - Antiochian Women's Month. They will be posted on our Diocese Facebook page as well as the Archdiocese website - Antiochian Women's page.

The qualifications for grant applicants are as follows:

- Be a female, 26 years of age or older
- Be a member in Good Standing in their Antiochian parish
- Be actively involved in the worship, service, and social life of her parish
- Be applying for, or registered in, an academic or trade study program
- Demonstrate financial need

“Get wisdom! Get understanding!

Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;

Love her, and she will keep you.

Wisdom *is* the principal thing;

***Therefore* get wisdom.**

And in all your getting, get understanding.

Exalt her, and she will promote you;

She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

She will place on your head an ornament of grace;

A crown of glory she will deliver to you.”

Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,

And the years of your life will be many.

I have taught you in the way of wisdom;

I have led you in right paths.

When you walk, your steps will not be hindered,

And when you run, you will not stumble.

Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go;

Keep her, for she *is* your life.”

(Proverbs 4:5-13)

Reprinted from the
AW NAB November E-Bulletin

FALL gathering



For the first time, since the Fall of 2019, the Antiochian Women (AW) - Diocese of LA & the West (DLAW) were able to come together in person at our 2021 Fall Gathering - Oct 8 - 10th. The DLAW Fall Gathering was graciously hosted by the parish of St John the Evangelist in Orinda, CA & included not only our Antiochian Women but the Young Adults & SOYO. The weekend was especially blessed to have our beloved Sayidna JOSEPH with us the entire time. We were able to hear his messages, in person, both Saturday morning & Sunday at Liturgy, as well as, break bread with him and visit.

Our Antiochian Women's meeting, on Saturday, had nearly 40 women in attendance, representing 14 parishes in our Diocese from Arizona & California. We even had a delegate from one of our Alaskan parishes! We discussed the new Book Club selection & how Zoom allows for women of multiple parishes to join together - such as our sisters from St Herman in Wasilla, Alaska with our sisters from St Raphael in Cathedral City, CA - how cool is that?

Also discussed was our new partnership between AW and Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) and how to best bring this ministry to our parishes.



A most gratifying part of our meeting was voting to donate funds to two of our Diocese newest mission parishes. This donation will include three altar boy robes for each mission. One of our Sisters in Christ is a professional seamstress who is experienced in making vestments & generously offered her time and service, to make the robes. When we reached out to the priests at these missions, we learned one of them had their preteen altar boy wearing an adult robe that had been shortened with safety pins. Glory to God for this opportunity to aid these new missions.

One of the biggest pluses of coming together, for this year's Fall Gathering, was the opportunity for our ladies to break up into discussion groups to share with each other about their individual Antiochian Women's chapters as we continue to learn from each other.

It was an uplifting weekend! At the services, the voices blended together with great beauty under the direction of Mareena Boosamra Ball - Chair of our Archdiocese Department of Sacred Music. We departed with love in our hearts & inspired to carry forth the work of this ministry in our parishes.

Thank you again to St. John the Evangelist for your hospitality and loving kindness. God bless you for all you do in His name.

Charmaine, DLAW President

FOR WHERE
two or three
GATHER
IN MY NAME
I am with them
MATTHEW 18:20





THE ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE PROJECT

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THE MONASTERY
& CEMETERY



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RETIREMENT RESIDENCE



AN INDEPENDENT/
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Sometimes The Miracle We Get Is Not The One We're Looking For

By Tabitha Sherman of St. Herman Orthodox Church in Wasilla, Alaska

Father Matthew, in our parish of St. Herman's in Wasilla, Alaska, announced in a homily shortly before Pascha his intention to lead a pilgrimage to venerate the relics of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, and of St. Sebastian of Jackson, as well as visit monasteries and other parishes in the area that coming Fall. He said it was good to have something to look forward to. I knew immediately that I had to go on this pilgrimage. I wasn't sure how I was going to afford it, but I knew I had to go. I was hoping for a miracle!

Summer came, and my seasonal position in the school district ended for the year, and I wasn't chosen for special education summer school. I thought maybe I couldn't afford to do the pilgrimage after all, so I decided I was going to enjoy a summer of not working instead. And then the school district called me and asked if I would like to be a job coach for the summer—more hours and easier work than summer school. I told my husband if I took that position, I would go on that pilgrimage. Little miracles do happen if you look for them.

Fall finally came, and it was time for the pilgrimage! I went three days early to attend the Fall Gathering, representing the parish of St. Herman in Wasilla. I experienced lots of love and care as St. John's Church, where the Gathering was hosted, made sure I had transportation from the airport and to and from the hotel. I met many lovely women at the event, as well as Metropolitan Joseph, and learned more about what is going on in the Diocese and what visions the Archdiocese has. I also experienced loving hospitality at the home of Kh. Lisa of St. Athanasius Parish in Sacramento, which was our base for the Pilgrimage. The miracle of new friends!

Somehow, it was a probably a combination of things, including slinging a big bag off the carousel, I developed acute pain in my left knee. It felt like the meniscus tear I experienced in my right knee nearly ten years ago. Surely not, I thought, it's just

from sitting so much on airplanes and riding so long in cars. Walking was painful, sitting was painful. It was not the way I wanted this incredible week to start out. Maybe I needed another miracle!



Three days later the Pilgrimage officially started. Father Matthew and family and one other parishioner (Aaron), who is my son's age, were in California. We met in San Francisco, and our first stop was the Old Cathedral where St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco served from 1962 to 1965. The Old Cathedral had a rich brown, wooden keel-shaped ceiling, and was graced with beautiful stained-glass windows. It was quiet and peaceful, and evoked in me a feeling of reverence. Bishop James gave us a tour, then we sang a Moleiben a supplication prayer service before St. John's mantee, after which we all took turns kneeling and being wrapped in it as Bishop James said a prayer. Father Matthew whispered to me to say a prayer for my family while I was there. I also said a prayer for my knee, which continued to be locked up like the other one was with a torn meniscus, which is only treatable by surgery. Surely not, I thought. I just started a new position with the school district and can't keep being away. The week of the Pilgrimage was already enough time off. St. John is a Wonderworker, I thought, maybe he will heal me. Maybe that's why my knee got hurt. I tried to tell myself that no, I'm not worthy, but maybe St. John will take pity on me.

As I limped back to the place where the people were standing who had already prayed in the mantea, I knew nothing special had happened, yet. Would I experience a miracle?



From there we went to the St. Tichon's Orphanage, where St. John lived as an Archbishop. Bishop James met us and the local contingent of pilgrims that had accompanied us to San Francisco. He told stories from St. John's life, and about how he rescued orphan children from the streets in Shanghai and raised them in the Church. I was struck at how their upbringing is so different from modern American children. We seem to suffer a great spiritual lack in the midst of such material abundance. Bishop James emphasized how close St. John and all the saints are to us, and that they want us to call on them. Somehow, that had never really sunk in before. We all got to see St. John's cell and to sit in the chair that he slept in, the chair that his grateful orphans lovingly provided him with. Maybe this is where the knee gets healed? Alas, no miracles!

From there we all drove to the New Cathedral, an impressive edifice with golden domes, and the very church that you can see St. John holding in some icons. Sadly, the interior, which looks so splendid in photos, was dark, and a huge scaffold filled the center of the nave. The dome had been leaking moisture, so repairs were

underway. We took turns reverencing the incorrupt relics of St. John. I put a list of names I wanted St. John to pray for under the coffin as well as a request for my knee. At this point, I accepted that this was a serious meniscus tear, and not just soreness from sitting. Maybe now I would get my miracle?



A drive over the Golden Gate Bridge took us onward in our pilgrimage. The next stop was in Fairfield at St. Timothy's Antiochian Church where Fr. John Christianson is the rector. A cacophony of redwing blackbirds in a tree by the parking lot greeted us as we stepped out into a warm, summer-like (for us Alaskans) late afternoon. Fr. John gave us a tour, and we got to admire the new church which was well under construction. We gathered in the nave and sang the Akathist: "Glory to God for All Things." Does that include a bum knee? Yes, indeed. The parish showed great hospitality, as they prepared us an excellent meal and hosted us for the night. Hospitality lovingly given is a miracle!

On Wednesday we went to the Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga (an OCA church). The Monastery sits neatly in a quiet neighborhood, bordered on one side by a stream in a gully and an elementary school on the other side, where the shouts and laughter of children at recess can be heard. A "nun crossing" sign sits in front of a cheerful-looking gate and garden paths within, along with a long, rectangular

fish tank filled with colorful koi fish. Mother Melania met us and gave us a tour. She told us how the garden soil wouldn't grow anything until they placed an icon of the Theotokos in it. The nuns have been there for the past twelve years, and it's like a small piece of paradise. After we had a chance to look around, we volunteered to do some work for the nuns. Fr. Matthew and Aaron cleaned pine tree litter from the patio roof, and I shelled pecans with Mother Macrina. In no time, it was time for 6th hour prayers, and we all went to their chapel. They have several old and remarkable icons there, including one of St. Peter the Aleut. We enjoyed a tasty Lenten meal with the nuns before heading back to Sacramento. It was a miracle, a piece of Paradise carved out of an ordinary neighborhood.



On Thursday, it was off to a hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by Bishop James of the Old Cathedral in San Francisco at St. Silouan Monastery (a ROCOR Church) in Sonoma. From Sacramento, the drive at first took us through flat country, with many vineyards. However, the road soon started climbing as the terrain became more uphill, and soon we were in the foothills on windy roads with green trees dotting golden hills. Fr. Stephen, who was our knowledgeable guide and driver, had arranged for me to be taken care of. I was given a ride down the hill to the site of the service by

a young monk named Brother James. It felt rather humbling to have so many people concerned for my well-being. The service took place under the blue sky in a clearing surrounded by oak and evergreen trees. It had been a while since I attended a Russian-style Liturgy. I had to sing along with many of the familiar tones and chants. Hospitality was again extended, and we enjoyed a lunch of monk-friendly burritos. We headed back to Sacramento where we sang Small Compline at Fr. Stephen's parish, St. Athanasius Antiochian Orthodox Church, followed by pizza out on their covered patio. We Alaskans marveled that we could be outdoors on an October evening. Outdoor miracles!



St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Elk Grove was our Friday morning destination. Fr. Matthew wanted us to see a church and parish hall that were roughly the size we need to build. Fr. Constantine, or “Dino,” gave us the tour. The part that amazed us most was their Biblical Garden, something that would never grow in Alaska. It consisted of plants that are mentioned in the Bible, such as olive trees, cedars of Lebanon, pomegranate trees, date palms, and other plants that thrive in the Mediterranean climate of California. Most impressive was the “Burning Bush”, grown from a seedling obtained from the original in Sinai. In the evening we chanted small compline again at St. Athanasius and enjoyed a Lenten meal. By this time, I was

starting to reconcile with the fact that my knee was not going to be miraculously healed, and that I would have to take off from my job and undergo surgery. Everything happens for our salvation. Sometimes the miracle we get is not the one we're looking for.



St. Sava's Serbian Orthodox Church in Jackson, California was our Saturday destination. It was founded in this remote gold mining valley in 1894 by St. Sebastian to serve the immigrant Serbian population who worked in the gold mines. The church was beautifully frescoed with Old and New Testament saints, and panels that told stories of historical events that have a bearing on the parish. The Deacon explained several of these icons. Outside was the cemetery, with many large marble headstones that marked the resting place of departed members. While we were there, singing an Akathist to St. Sebastian, a couple walked in. She had come to search out some of her ancestors in that cemetery. We venerated the relics of St. Sebastian, which emitted a heavenly fragrance. After the Akathist, we were treated to a tasty meal outdoors next to the fellowship hall by some of the ladies of the parish. We were all given an icon of St. Sebastian, who is actually the first American-Born saint. That evening we went to

Vespers at Fr. Stephen's parish, St. Athanasius in Sacramento. The rich heritage of Orthodoxy in Northern California is a miracle!



Sunday wrapped up the Pilgrimage with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at St. Athanasius. What I gained from this week is a treasure of miracles that will take a long time to unpack. I will have some time to reflect on it, as I am laid up from my upcoming knee surgery.



SAVE THE DATE

Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat!!!

***43rd Annual Antiochian Women's Lenten Retreat
for the ladies of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West***

April 8-10, 2022

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW!

**PLEASE CONTACT KHOURIEH JEAN BABA
@jeanbaba68@gmail.com or by calling: 916-955-4736**

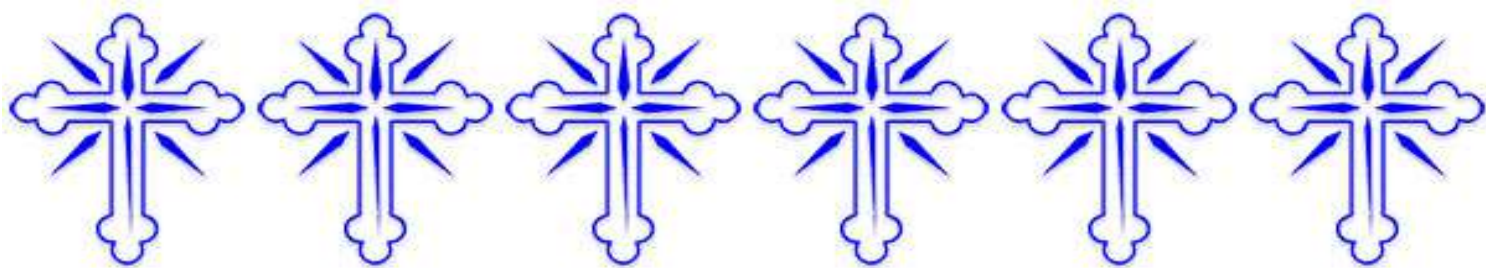
GUEST SPEAKER Father John Valadez



Photos from Around Our Diocese



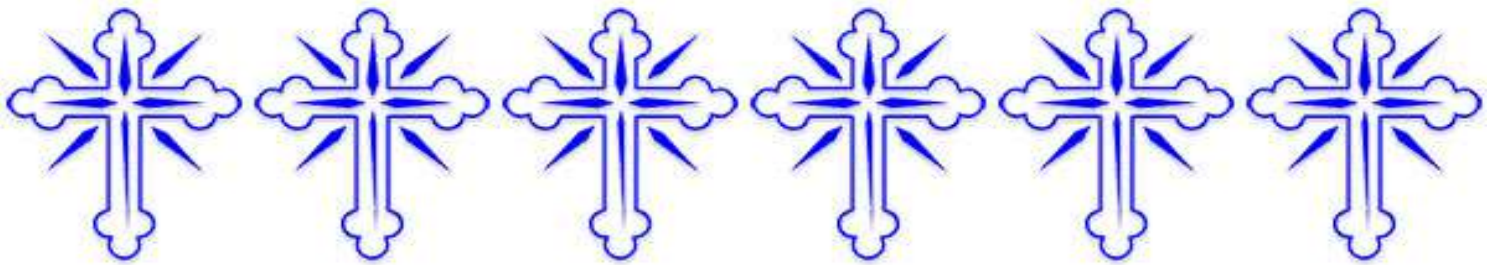
*Antiochian Women of
St. John the Baptist
in Post Falls, ID
are meeting for their Book Club!*



*Antiochian Women of
St. George
in Upland, CA
at their Christmas Gathering!*



Photos from Around Our Diocese



*Antiochian Women of
St. Timothy
in Fairfield, CA
decorating their Christmas Tree
dedicated to the Holy Theotokos!*

Photos from Around Our Diocese



*The future of the Antiochian Women is bright at
Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Ben Lomond, CA,
as they celebrate the Feast Day of St. Lucia.*

“I was in prison, and you visited me.”

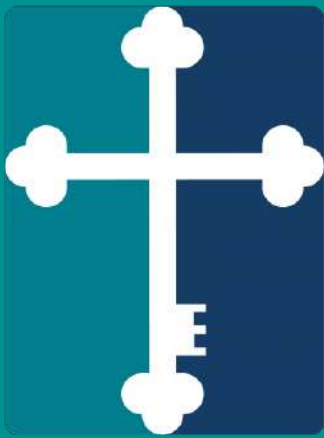
- Matthew 25:36

Each year the Antiochian Women North American Board (NAB) Humanitarian Coordinator identifies a charitable Act of Mercy that we, as Sisters in Christ, can participate in together on behalf of our ministry.

This year, we are being called to serve the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM). OCPM and the Antiochian Women of our Archdiocese have entered into an official partnership.

Please visit this dedicated webpage to find out the ways in which the women of your parish family can participate in this vital ministry.

<https://theocpm.org/Antiochian-Women/>



Orthodox Christian
PRISON MINISTRY

Serving a Community in Need

By Lisa Shive of St. Matthew Orthodox Church in Torrance, CA



We have all heard the story: A young woman finds herself in a “crisis pregnancy” and there are many options available to her. As Orthodox Christians we know that one of these options is unthinkable; the choice to end the life of the baby inside this mother’s womb.

Our parish, St Matthew, has had the incredible privilege of partnering with The Pregnancy Help Center which is just blocks away from our church building!

For over 35 years, their goal has been to take the “crisis” out of the pregnancy and to offer this expecting mother all the aid, services, care, and love that they can give so she can choose life for her baby. All services are free, and it is a ministry that continues long after the baby or babies (there have been many sets of twins over the years) have been born. We wanted to be a part of this legacy and to also shine the light of God’s love in our community.

An idea to host a community baby shower for the Center began to take root. We toured the clinic and asked how we could best meet the needs of their clients. Because they offer many varied on-line classes, the moms-to-be accrue points for class completions and can use these points to “shop” at the center in a small closet area converted into a small store. It was decided that we would try to replenish the store.



We sent out invitations to the shower via social media posts, texts, and hand delivered them to our neighbors throughout the local community. We asked for gift cards, diapers, new baby boy/girl clothes, new car seats, blankets, and any monetary gift. We decorated our church front lawn and guests could pop in and have some refreshments, meet Father John and the ladies of St Matthew, and pick up information about the center.



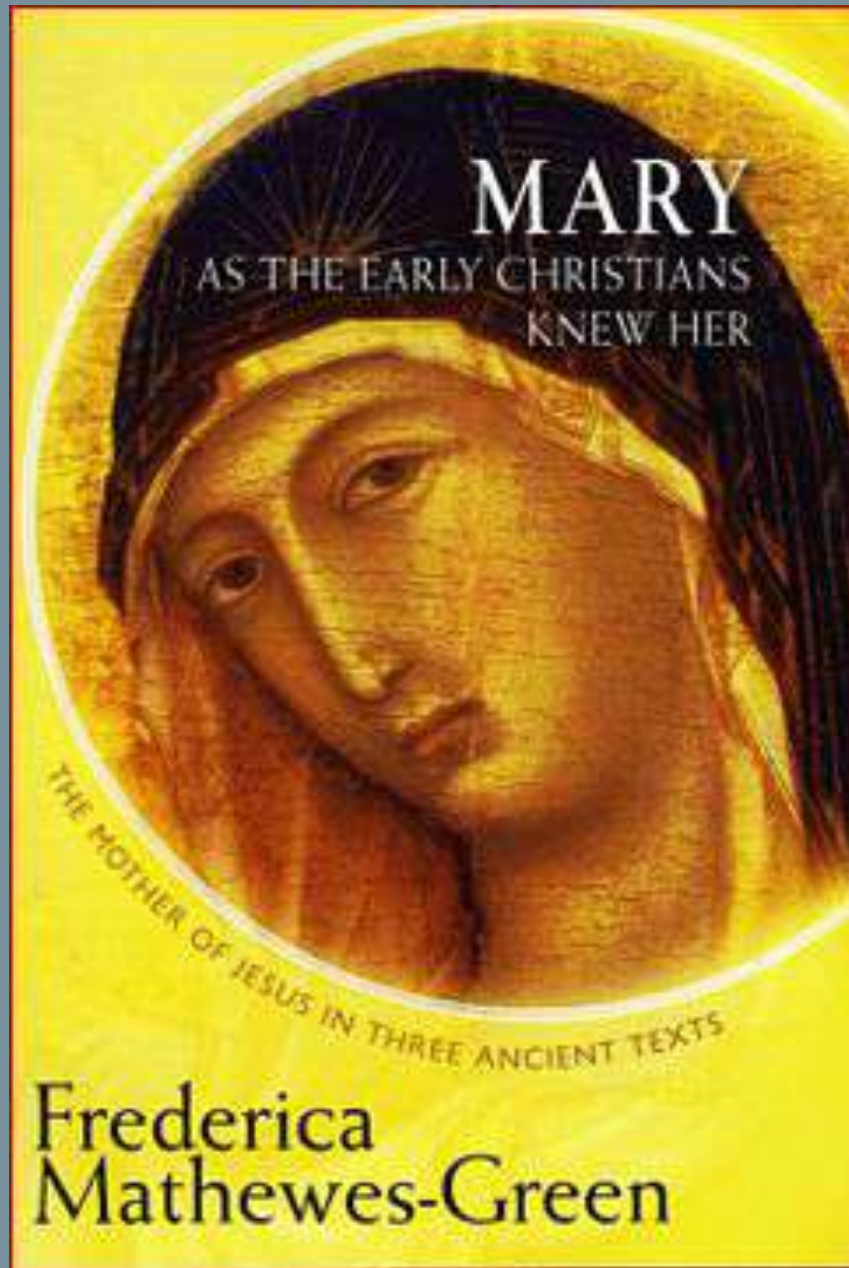


The outpouring was tremendous, and we were able to resupply the store, to meet many new neighbors, and to introduce the community to a couple of the women who oversee the daily operations there at the center. It is our great joy to use this year's November 2021 Pregnancy Help Center Baby Shower, as the first in what will be an annual event!

Needs are all around us and sometimes the need and the answer to that need, is standing right in front of you. This has been our experience as we join with The Pregnancy Help Center in Torrance, which lies a stone's throw away from the Orthodox Cross which shines brightly from the peak of our St Matthew roof.



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A Spiritual Tradition

Submitted by the Antiochian Women of
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in San Francisco, CA



Each year at St. Nicholas Church in San Francisco, on the Sunday nearest to the Feast Day of St. Barbara as observed on December 4th, members of our Parish come together to donate Burbara which is a barley, wheat, and sugar pudding. Many different toppings are also offered such as nuts, coconut shavings, sprinkles, anise seeds, and so on. This is a tradition, not only in our parish, but also in other parishes within the Archdiocese.

All the money we raise from this goes to our charity committee for distribution for Food For The Hungry during the Holy Season. This is a tradition we inherited from our roots back in the Middle East. St. Barbara is from Heliopolios, Phoenicia which is modern day Baalbek in Lebanon. Each year in Baalbek, people paint their faces, children travel from home-to-home singing Psalms and chants, and ladies pass out candies and treats in remembrance of St. Barbara who is so dear to our hearts.



Recipe for Eid El Burbara/Emih

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of peeled wheat grains
- 8 cups of water
- 3 tablespoons of cinnamon powder
- ¼ cup of ground aniseed powder
- Sugar to taste
- (Optional) Rose Water

Choice of toppings:

- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pomegranate
- Raisins
- Dried Apricot
- Shredded Coconut

Cooking Instructions:

1. Wash wheat grains.
2. Boil wheat grains in water while stirring occasionally.
3. Allow your wheat grains to simmer and add cinnamon and ground aniseed.
If wheat is not ready to be served, or mixture is too thick, add some water before adding sugar.
4. Within the last few minutes of cooking time, while your wheat nears simmering, add sugar depending on your sweetness level and continue to stir.
5. Pour in a bowl when finished.
6. (Optional) Add Rose Water.
7. Add toppings as you like.



Generally, cook time is about 1 to 1½ hours.

Cooking time depends on the type of wheat grain and how much you use.

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We are a Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others. Our members are all Antiochian Orthodox women over the age of 18 in t...



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Antiochian Women 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.

