

DIAKONIA

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

FEATURING THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO AND THE MIDWEST

WINTER - JANUARY 2019



Feast of Theophany
(manifestation of God)
Celebrated on January 6.

Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.
Luke 2:22

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:13-17)



Feast of the Presentation of Christ
Celebrated on February 2.

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 Antiochian Women 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 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 a Word 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 Toledo & the Midwest

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>

"Like" and follow us on Facebook:
Antiochian Women of North America

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

January 23, 2019

Beloved Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Name of Our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Once again, God has blessed us with the completion of another secular year. In the life of the Church, we actually celebrate the new year on September 1, which falls each year between the feasts of the Dormition of the Theotokos and her Nativity. We start each new year celebrating the birth of the Virgin Mary, who was to become the Mother of the Son and Word of God. Through her wondrous childbearing, Our Lord entered into human history, united divinity to humanity, and made our redemption possible. At the end of the ecclesiastical year, we celebrate the falling asleep of the Theotokos and her reception into the heavens by her Son – showing the salvific fruits borne by her childbearing in her own life.

Interestingly, the secular world has marked the ending of a new year with the Nativity of Christ and its beginning with His Circumcision in the Flesh, followed closely by His Theophany and Presentation in the Temple. Whether the world acknowledges it or not, we as Orthodox Christians do not “close out” a year in late December – we celebrate a beginning! We celebrate the beginning of Christ’s redemptive work – His birth in the cave, His Circumcision and His Presentation according to the Law, and His Baptism which marked the beginning of His public ministry.

As we begin 2019, let us reflect on the critical role played the Theotokos in our salvation. She gave birth to the Son and Word of God. She had Him circumcised and brought to Temple as a babe to fulfill the precepts of the Law. She nursed Him, taught Him to speak, and helped Him to take His first steps. The Church teaches that Christ sanctified all of human life from His birth to His death. I would say that when the Theotokos did all of these things that helped Our Lord to “grow in wisdom and stature,” motherhood itself was also sanctified in a new and glorious way. In both of our “new year” celebrations, we see the honor the Church pays to the Theotokos, and I believe, to all women through her.

Asking the prayers of our All-Holy Lady for you, beloved sisters in Christ, that this new calendar year will be full of God’s grace and blessings for you, your families, and your parishes as well as our Archdiocese, I remain,

Yours in the service of 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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His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Toledo and
The Midwest

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

December 2018

Dear Antiochian Women,

Glory to Jesus Christ! *Glory Forever!*

I pray this finds you well as we have begun our journey to our Lord's Nativity.

This time of year, we look forward to the holy days ("holidays") in and out of our church. In America, we celebrate our national holiday of Thanksgiving. Though we are in the Christmas Fast beginning on November 15th in preparation of our Lord's Nativity, we in America suspend our fasting for the day to celebrate and give thanks to the Lord. And on December 25th, we celebrate and thank God for sending our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to become like one of us; his creature to save us! In fact, as right-believing Christians, our daily prayers call us to give thanks to the Lord every day!

From our Morning Prayers: *Arising from sleep, I thank Thee, O Holy Trinity, because of the abundance of Thy goodness ...*

From our Evening Prayers: *Now that the day has ended, I thank you Lord, and I ask that the evening and the night be sinless. Grant this to me, O Savior, and save me.*

A prayer after meals: *We thank you, Christ our God, for providing us with Your earthly gifts. Deprive us not of Your heavenly Kingdom. Lord, as you entered among Your disciples to give them peace, enter among us, give us Your peace and save us. Amen.*

At Divine Liturgy, there are more prayers thanking God than not! In particular right before the Anaphora Prayers, Priest: *Let us give thanks unto the Lord.* Faithful: *It is meet and right!* After the Holy Gifts have been offered and before they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, *We hymn You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, O Lord. And we pray to You, O our God.*

Our life as Orthodox Christians following the example of the Apostles, the saints, and all those who passed down our faith to us, we are called to always give thanks. As we near these holy days, do not forget to every day, *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Yours in Christ,

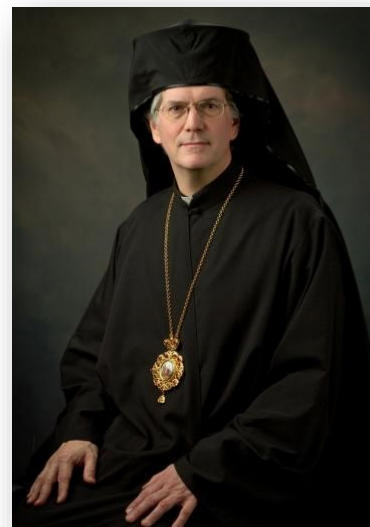
+ Bishop Anthony

+Bishop ANTHONY

**Bishop of Toledo
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

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

Midwest Diocesan Chancery
5549 Ginger Tree
Toledo, OH 43623

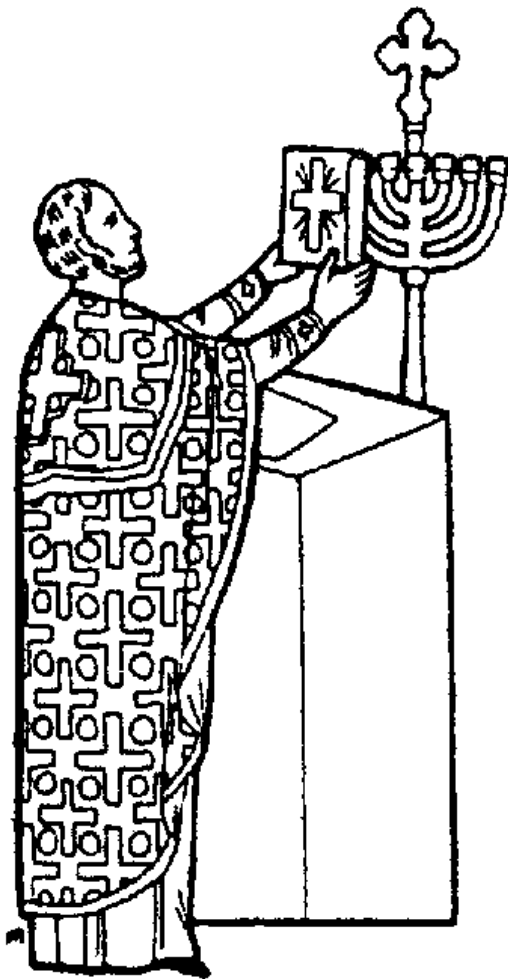


MESSAGE FROM THE DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

V. Rev. Joseph Abud



*“Help us, Save us, have mercy on us,
and keep us O God by Thy Grace*



*“Salvation only comes
from God through
Jesus Christ by the
Holy Spirit”.*

Sound familiar? If not, you are not listening☺! At every service, we use this petition seeking God’s support in all aspects of our lives.

We ask for “*help*” knowing we cannot do anything on our own and humbling ourselves acknowledging to our heavenly Father that we can do all things only with His help.

All of God’s servants have realized from Old Testament times we cannot “*save*” ourselves. God promised His people, as we read the Old Testament prophets, He would send a *Messiah* (in Hebrew is “the Anointed One”; Greek is *Christos*; and English is Christ). In the New Testament (New “covenant” or “contract”), salvation only comes **from** God **through** Jesus Christ **by** the Holy Spirit.

As Orthodox Christians, we are constantly begging God to “*have mercy on us*”. What service or prayer do we have when we do not ask for His mercy? Why do we ask? Without it, there is no forgiveness; without it, we are not humbled before Him; without it, our relationship with Him is not right.

What is “*grace*”? For us, we can *partake of the divine nature* (2 Peter 1:4) when we work with God. Our church teaches it is possible and necessary for our human will to cooperate with divine grace for us to be saved, or healed from the disease of sin.

“*Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep O God by Thy grace.*” It is a short petition, but as you have seen, loaded with everything we need to begin experiencing God’s love and His Kingdom in our lives now.

MESSAGE FROM KH. JEANETTE GALLAWAY DIOCESAN PRESIDENT



Your Grace, Reverend Fathers, and Our Sisters in Christ,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

It's hard to believe I have completed my first year as the President of the Midwest Antiochian Women and still have so much to learn. I would like to thank our board for all their continuous dedication and taking on the job of trying to keep me on task. Special thanks to Fr. Joe, our spiritual advisor, for answering my endless emails and phone calls.

Our Parish Life Conference was held at St. Elias in Sylvania, OH. I would like to thank our host parish and Father Ayman for all their hard work in providing us with this wonderful Conference. We had a very productive meeting and wonderful Luncheon that was bursting at the seams. We had over 50 members at the meeting and 80 women at the Luncheon where we presented the Metropolitan Philip Award to Nora Mike from St. Michael's parish in Louisville, KY. Congratulations on all you've done in serving the women at St. Michael's and the Midwest. A special thanks to all the women who worked very hard to make the meeting and luncheon so enjoyable.

As we plan our new year, we are pleased to announce that our beloved Bp. ANTHONY finally has a new home after being homeless for 1 year. The women of the Midwest are sponsoring a Virtual Housewarming Party via Bed Bath and Beyond under the "Toledo Chancery". If you would like to join us in this project, please sign in and shop. We are also purchasing the desk for his home office.

The Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest has 50 parishes (8 missions) and we cover from Michigan to Kentucky, Ohio to Iowa. Therefore our main goal is communication. We have a newsletter called the Torch which is emailed to everyone 3-4 times a year, and have recently started a Facebook page under "Midwest Antiochian Women". If you are on Facebook, please "like" us so we can reach our goal of 500 "likes".

We also sponsor a Speaker's Fund in honor of Bp. ANTHONY'S Names Day/ Birthday so he can help pay for speakers at conferences and parishes who need help. This was started 2 years ago and is growing each year.

It is wonderful hearing from parishes across our Diocese and knowing that through their hard work and dedication our Churches are truly Christ-centered. Many sponsor charity events such as feeding the homeless, buying gifts for children of women who are in jail so that their children don't follow the same path. Some sponsor soup kitchens, work with domestic violence shelters, make linus blankets for cancer patients and much, much more. May God continue to bless all our women in our Archdiocese as we continue to do His Work.

Kh. Jeanette Gallaway

President of the Antiochian Women in the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest

Introducing The 2017 - 2019 Board of Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest



Very Reverend Joseph Abud, Spiritual Advisor



Fr. Joe was born February 18, 1958 in Detroit, Michigan to Laila (Shehab) and the late Joseph Abud. He is the oldest of three children. His brother, Tommy, and sister, Vicki, currently live in the Detroit area close to their mother. His childhood church was St. George Orthodox Church (Antiochian) in Detroit and he, with the advice of

the assistant pastor, Fr. Alexander Atty, sought the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip to begin the 4-year Pre-Theological College Program at St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY in the Fall of 1980. While living on St. Vladimir's campus, he commuted to Concordia College-Bronxville, NY and graduated in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work. During these years, two life-changing events took place: he was honored and privileged to be asked and tour the United States with seven other seminarians in the summer of 1983 on *Octet '83*; and during this tour, he and his best friend at St. Vladimir's, Leslee Nicola, daughter of the late Leerese and Lester, were engaged. They were married in June of 1984, lived in San Francisco, CA for a year, and then returned to St. Vladimir's to begin the 3-year Master of Divinity program.

Joe petitioned Metropolitan Philip to be ordained to the Holy Diaconate and consistently pestered His Eminence to have the ordination take place at St. Vladimir's. With His Eminence's blessing, His Grace Bishop Antoun became the first Antiochian bishop to ordain a student at St. Vladimir's. Deacon Joseph was ordained on December 13, 1986, the feast day of America's first saint, the Venerable Father Herman of Alaska and Wonder-worker of All America. Seven months later on July 26, 1987 during the Archdiocesan Convention at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, MI., Father Joe was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by the hand of Metropolitan Philip who concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Metropolitan Elias Audi of Beirut, Lebanon, Archbishop Michael of Toledo, OH, and Bishop Antoun of Englewood, NJ.

In 1988, Fr. Joe graduated from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in Crestwood, NY with a Master of Divinity and assigned by Metropolitan Philip to begin his priestly ministry as pastor of St. George Orthodox Church in Flint, MI on June 1, 1988 where he continues to serve as pastor to the present. Kh. Leslee and Fr. Joe arrived in Flint with 2 ½ year old Nicholas and 8-month old John. They were blessed with Fr. Joe's favorite daughter Joanna in 1991!

Fr. Joe was elevated to the rank and dignity of Archpriest by His Grace Bishop Demetri of Toledo and auxiliary bishop to Metropolitan Philip on May 24, 1998.



The New Midwest Diocese Chancery

The Midwest Diocese Antiochian Women are sponsoring a Virtual Housewarming Shower to help get necessities for our Bishop's new home. If you would like to participate go to:

Bed, Bath and Beyond - Registry - Toledo Chancery

2017 - 2019 Diocesan Board, (cont.)

Khouria Jeanette Gallaway, President



I am an identical twin born in Midland, PA which is a small steel mill town north west of Pittsburgh, to first generation Serbian Orthodox Christians. Our town had a population of 10,000 but the Serbian Orthodox Church had 350 families with over 100 children in our Church School on Sunday

morning. All of our activities centered around the Church which included a youth choir, folklore Tamburitza group who travelled around the country performing Serbian and Eastern European song and dance, and Church youth group (SOYO). We were raised with great love of the Church and practiced many traditions in our home to help us live a life focused on Christ. After graduating high school, I attended nursing school and became a Registered Nurse. At the same time, I also worked at the Serbian Orthodox Diocese in Pittsburgh and wanted to learn more about the church. While working with the College Student Ministry, I became motivated to learn more about the Christ and His Church and decided if I could get an education in my profession I should get an education in my way of life "being an Orthodox Christian". Soon I entered St. Vladimir's Seminary and received a Masters of Divinity in 1980. Shortly after, my sister's husband decided to go to the Seminary and is an Orthodox Priest in the Pittsburgh area. We truly are identical twins, both nurses, both have 3 children, both are married to Orthodox Priests. Never thought that would happen, but it's nice to have someone to talk to who truly knows what the challenges are of a priest wife and his family.

After graduating from seminary I continued my education in nursing and specialized in Critical Care and eventually went to a Cardio Thoracic Unit where I worked for the past 28 years. In 1981 I was swept off my feet by my now husband, Father

Thomas Gallaway and started a whirlwind summer in 1982. We were married in May, he was ordained to the diaconate in June, priesthood August 1 and we moved to Beckley, WV on August 15th to our first parish where my husband served for 6 years. There we had 3 beautiful boys Patrick, Michael, and Timothy who are the joy of our lives.

After Timothy was born, we received a phone call from the Archdiocese and were informed we were to move to Lexington, KY. St. Andrew was a mission parish and had just built a building which would become the church. We had services in the basement in the middle of a day care for about a year. Wow that seemed so long ago. We have been here at St. Andrew for over 30 years and have had the joy of seeing it grow to a wonderful Pan-Orthodox Parish. Now we are looking to build a new church since we have outgrown our present church.

I have recently retired from nursing after 41 years and am enjoying another phase of my life – grandchildren! We have one grandson, William, who is 5 years old and a granddaughter Anna who is 3 with another one on the way in April. God is Good. When I had my children, I learned how wonderful God's Creation is by seeing it through the eyes of my children and now I am blessed to see it through the eyes of my grandchildren. I am the choir director at St. Andrew, love to cook, work on crafts, and travel. Our lives have always centered around the Church and I pray I can help my grandchildren to learn the Love of Christ and walk in His way.

It has been my honor to work with the dedicated women in the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest. They have guided me and nurtured me throughout the years as I have worked as membership coordinator, Public Relations, Vice President, and now as President. These women have been great examples of the Myrrh Bearing Women at the Tomb of Christ as they untiringly work for Christ and His Church. May God bless each and every one of them.

2017 - 2019 Diocesan Board, (cont.)

Cynthia Beckes O'Connor, Vice President/NAB Project

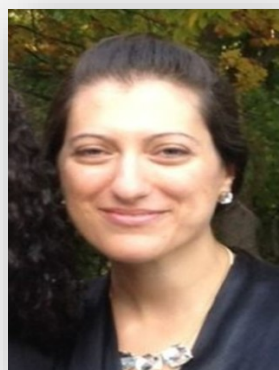


Cynthia Beckes O'Connor is the immediate past President of the Antiochian Women of Toledo and the Midwest. She currently serves as Vice President. Prior to her role as President, she served for 4 years as Secretary to the group.

Cynthia is a member of St Mark Parish in Youngstown, Ohio where she serves as "Secretary for Life" not only to the Parish Council but also Fr. Daniel Rohan. She also coordinates the parish outreach mission at a local soup kitchen where St Mark provides a home cooked meal once a month.

She is a graduate of Kent State University where she received two Masters Degrees. In her spare time, Cynthia is a writer and is currently working on a mystery/thriller. She lives in Brookfield, Ohio, with her husband John and their Border and Welsh terriers and 4 cats of mixed origin.

Janalyn Salhaney, Recording Secretary



I am a member of St. Nicholas Church in Grand Rapids, MI, where my family has attended for four generations. Thanks to my grandmother, Linda, who faithfully brought all her grandchildren to Sunday School and Liturgy each week, and brought me back to the Church in later years, I

joined our parish's women's organization in my early 20s and became chapter president a few years later, serving five terms. Since becoming a member of our parish chapter, one of my favorite events is our annual Lenten Pancake Breakfast which serves as our main fundraiser for the Antiochian Women's Project. We hold the breakfast on the first Sunday

of Great Lent, and together with my friend Melissa Adolphson, I help prepare 200-250 vegan pancakes. Outside of the women's organization, I'm having a lot of fun teaching the Preschool/Kindergarten Sunday School class this year.

For six years I was parish secretary at St. Nicholas Church and served as chanter for weekday Orthros, as well as helping with feast days and weekend services. I also love chanting weddings! I currently author the blog Orthodox and Vegan, and am pursuing a career in the food industry.

I am in the first year of my two-year term as secretary for the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest. As Midwest secretary, I take minutes at two to three diocesan meetings throughout the year, and during conference calls. I've enjoyed getting to know my fellow officers and other women from around the diocese and look forward to serving in my second year.

Mary Polson, Treasurer



I'm a native Kentuckian with Lebanese roots. I grew up attending St. Michael's in Louisville, but now that we have Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission in Bowling Green, KY, our drive time is cut in half and is in the same time zone, a

huge blessing! At Holy Apostles, I serve as the Church School Director and help with the Youth and am active in our Antiochian Women chapter. During the week, I keep the books at a family business and work part time at YMCA. Life is full of goodness! Being involved with the Midwest Antiochian Women and attending the PLC has brought my family so much closer to our Orthodox fathers, brothers, and sisters. I'm honored to serve as treasurer and look forward to many years of gatherings with my sisters.

2017 - 2019 Diocesan Board, (cont.)

Rudaina Swais, Public Relations



I have been a member of St. Mary's church in Palos Hills, IL for 15 years and a previous member of St. George Orthodox Church in Cicero IL, for 25 years.

I was married to a wonderful man for 41 years. I have three daughters and 5 grandchildren, they are my True North. In my professional life I am a medical coder, I tough

medical billing and coding for 10 years, I am still working in the field.

I am honored to serve as the Public Relation Director for the Midwest Antiochian Women, under the tutelage of President Kh. Jeanette Galloway, the previous and present board members. It has been a God sent opportunity at a time in my life when I needed it the most.

I can't pass the opportunity without asking the readers to like our Facebook page **Midwest Antiochian Women**

Sheryl VanderWagen, Religious Coordinator/ Midwest Project



I am a member of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan where I am active in the Antiochian Women chapter (currently serving as Vice-President), former Superintendent of the Sunday School, and sing in the choir.

I am also Secretary of the Antiochian Women NAB (North American Board). Along with my husband, Guy and two daughters, Abby (27) and Emily (22), we have been members of St. George for 22 years. Guy and I recently celebrated our 33rd wedding anniversary. Guy and I were both raised in and attended various Protestant churches before becoming Orthodox 22 years ago. I enjoy reading, cooking, and baking.

Several years ago, a very dear friend (may her memory be eternal) taught me how to bake the Holy Bread for Divine Liturgy. I bake almost every week. It is always an honor to be a participant in the remembrances of our parish's loved ones.

In my daily life, I am the ILS (Integrated Library System) Manager for the Lakeland Library

Cooperative based in Grand Rapids, a position I've held for 16 years. Before that I served as the public library director for 18 years in Jenison, Michigan.

We live in Lamont, Michigan, a small town located midway between Grand Rapids and Muskegon. I graduated from Hope College in Holland, Michigan and earned my Master's degree in Library Science from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

I have been so privileged and blessed to have been a part of the Antiochian Women for so long, first as Midwest secretary for 4 years and then Midwest president for 6 and NAB Secretary for the last 3 years. I have met so many women from all over the Archdiocese who have had an impact on my life. In a very real sense I have so many sisters. I am so very grateful to be part of this sisterhood, the Antiochian Women.

I encourage you all to consider taking an active role in the Midwest Antiochian Women by either volunteering to serve as a coordinator, run for an office or simply to help on a project. You won't be sorry and you will gain so many beloved sisters and friends.

This year, I am praying through the Psalter using the "Jordanville" Psalter for Prayer. I am looking forward to receiving my copy of Songs of Praise: A Psalter Devotional for Orthodox Women by Sylvia Leontaritis (Adventures of an Orthodox Mom blog) which is due for release in November 2018.

2017 - 2019 Diocesan Board, (cont.)

Kh. Michelle Dresdow, Humanitarian Coordinator



I am Kh Michelle Dresdow, from St. Barnabas the Apostle Antiochian Church, in Sunbury, Ohio, a town northeast of Columbus. My husband is the priest assigned to St. Barnabas. It brings joy to my heart to minister to the people here in our parish. I currently help with the prosphora bakers and with the teen group with my daughter.

My husband and I came to Central Ohio from the

Chicago area. He was formerly the Deacon at Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in Warrenville, IL. We both joined the Orthodox Church in 1994 at that parish, and have many good memories of our time spent there. I was on the parish council, and served as parish council chair for two years.

We have two daughters, the oldest, Elizabeth, who is engaged to be married next year. Christina, the youngest is in her Junior year of college.

I also volunteer as a 4-H county committee member throughout the year and am currently working on by-laws revisions and with the county endowment fund. My other interests include acrylic and oil painting and organic gardening.

Liza Nahas, Membership Coordinator



Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I have lived in three countries and four states, though Indiana has been home for the majority of my life. As the daughter of a Polish-American father and a Sicilian immigrant mother, I was raised Roman Catholic with a large extended family. When I met my husband, Oussama, a native of Syria, I embraced Orthodox Christianity and we were married at St.

George Orthodox Church in Indianapolis in a ceremony that was both in English and Arabic. My mother-in-law (memory eternal) introduced me to her church family and included me in many of the Ladies Aid activities. Oussama and I were blessed with our daughter, Gabriella, and it's been a joy to watch her grow in her faith and embrace our fellow parishioners as part of her family. I'm a member of our Charity Ministry Team and President of the Ladies of St. George and I love to connect with our parishioners. I work full time as a retail manager, but in my spare time I'm an avid reader, always up for a new adventure, and enjoy spending time with all our family.

Barbara Thomas, Financial Coordinator



As a lifelong member of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I have been active in several organizations beginning with Teen SOYO many, many years ago. I later taught Church School and became Church School Superintendent for ten

years. Since our life centered around the church, becoming active in our ladies group was very natural. I was treasurer for many years and became Midwest Treasurer which was an easy transition and now hold the position of Finance Coordinator.

My husband of nearly 51 years, Steve and I are the parents of three daughters, grandparents of seven, and great grandparents of five. Hard to believe! We are both retired, so there is plenty of time to spend with the grandkids and to help chauffeur them around.

Happenings Around The Diocese Of Toledo and the Midwest

St. Mary Orthodox Church - Palos Heights, IL

by Nihad Sweis, Chapter President

The Antiochian Women of Saint Mary are an integral part of Saint Mary since its inception fifteen years ago. They are a group of faithful, dedicated and hard working women who are committed to their church and to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a short synopsis of some of the fundraising activities that the ladies are in charge of.

- * Ladies Gathering takes place at the beginning of the year, we invite women from outside our diocese and encourage them to join our church and our organization.
- * March is our busy month , we have many events such as cheese fare, falafel sale, spinach pie and Lenten bake sale
- * Easter cookies prep “kaek and Mamoul” very successful event
- * Adorning our church during the Paschal Season
- * Mother’s Day Dinner
- * Thanksgiving Dinner



The ladies also spend countless hours on preparing potluck dinners, luncheons and Prospora for Holy Communion. Our organization has been always very supportive to all the projects the archdiocese request from us. We are also happy to support many local humanitarian projects such as, The Martha and Mary’s House and the Kidney walkathon. We’re also blessed that our beloved Bishop Anthony participate every year in our walk for humanitarian support.

The ladies of Saint Mary are always striving to bringing new members to join our parish. They work well together with an atmosphere of sisterhood and love among each other for the one and only goal that’s to serve our Lord and Savior.



St. George Orthodox Church - Grand Rapids, MI

by Patricia Tabachuk, Chapter President

The Ladies Golden Links Society at St. George Orthodox Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan have a long history of ministry to our church and our community. The church was one of the early churches established by St. RAPHAEL and the Ladies Golden Links have been an important part of the ministry from the beginning. One of the group's original charges was to raise funds to support the St. George Church School, which is now funded from the church funds. The ladies established the annual Middle Eastern Dinner when the church moved to its current location in 1925. Since then the dinner has become an all-church fundraiser. This year's dinner was held on November 13. The St. George chapter also collects items for our local Veterans Home in November for Veteran's Day. The items range from hygienic needs (toothpaste, shaving cream, etc. to decks of playing cards, puzzle books, gum and candy). We hold an annual used clothing/household item drive for a ministry in our neighborhood, called "In the Image". This year, we delivered 3 van loads of items to them. We assist the parish council with various church events, lunches, coffee hours and more. We also enjoy an annual Advent luncheon every December where we invite our daughters and our friends to enjoy a nice lunch and fellowship. In November and December, we adopt 1-2 families (depending on their size) to provide Christmas gifts for them. Organized by the Ladies Golden Links, parishioners take a tag from our "Gift Tree" and purchase the named item. In this way, we are able to provide gifts to families in need at Christmas and the entire parish participates, including our Teen SOYO who make blankets for each one of the kids. The Ladies collect and deliver the gifts to the families we sponsor.



Happenings Around The Diocese Of Toledo and the Midwest

St. Mark Orthodox Church - Youngstown, OH

by Cynthia O'Connor

St. Mark Parish, located in Youngstown, OH, recently celebrated their 2nd year anniversary serving at a local soup kitchen. Part of St Mark's outreach ministry, it is supported by the Antiochian Women and the church. We provide a main course, two vegetables, and tossed salad. Bread and dessert are donated by a local bakery. We have striven to keep meals healthy and have served everything from stuffed pork chops to Cracker Barrel's recipe for meatloaf. Our anniversary meal was a Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings!

In the past two years we have served approximately 3000 meals, about 125 each day we serve, to the hungry and disadvantaged citizens of Trumbull County, OH. We are very proud of the fact that our priest, Father Daniel Rohan, comes each month to bless the food and to interact with the people. Our customers tell us that he is the only clergy to do so, among the various denominations that serve the soup kitchen.

Teen SOYO often provides the "cleanup crew," and "a few good men" make up the "heavy lifting" part of this endeavor. Husbands and friends have been drafted and each person finds it a rewarding experience. We are lucky to have a devoted chef, who is not a member of our church, who donates his time as well.

We plan to be at the soup kitchen indefinitely, thanks to the financial support of the St Mark Parish Council.



St. George Orthodox Church - Cicero, IL

by Samar Rihani, Chapter President

The St. George Ladies Guild of Cicero, IL, was founded over 50 years ago. Our dedicated, hard-working women pledged to serve God and the Church to the best of their ability and to build a strong foundation in order to attract members to the Ladies Guild. Today we have over 50 active members. Our activities throughout the calendar year range from humanitarian efforts, bible studies, religious retreats, health awareness workshops, art workshops, countless fundraising events like the annual church dinners and parties, bake sales, charity to IOCC, the annual St. Jude fashion show, Feed My Starving Children Program, Department of Family and Children Services Toy Drive, and lots of other interesting projects in a fun and loving atmosphere.



Happenings Around The Diocese Of Toledo and the Midwest

St. George Church, Fishers, IN (formerly Indianapolis IN)

by Liza Nahas, President

After a brief hiatus while our new church was being built, the Ladies of St. George reformed under the direction of Vicki Mesalam, to be better than ever. Under Vicki's mentorship and now with President Liza Nahas, the Ladies have taken on a great variety of tasks in support of our parish. From Mercy Meals to grand dinners in celebration of St. Thekla and Thanksgiving, to making Meat Pies and Spinach Pies, to preparing food for the annual St. George Festival, the Ladies' cooking prowess is ever present.

But, these women do more than cook! The Ladies have organized fundraisers, earning enough to pay for beautiful iconography in the new church and to put in the much-needed baseboards as well. Annual and semi-annual fundraisers include bake sales, fish fries, and "souper Sundays".

As natural caregivers, the Ladies look after the sick, needy, and shut-ins of the parish, extending gracious outreach as they would to their own family. The Ladies provide rides, freezer and fresh meals, clothing, gifts and comfort. The warmth of the Ladies' care also reaches parish college students and members of the armed services to whom cards and care packages are regularly delivered.

It's not all work, though! The Ladies get together at least twice a year for dinner and socializing. A book club has also developed, the first book read together was *Becoming a Healing Presence*, with a lively and engaging discussion that followed. The *Sweetness of Grace* is next up for the readers. During Lent the Ladies participate in daily readings of the Psalms which includes prayers for all the parish family.

The Ladies of St. George is a group of women bonded by Christ, Church, family, sisterhood, and love. They are the backbone and the heart of the Church and continue to grow in faith and good works.



St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Lexington, KY

by Doreen Natour, President

The Women of St. Andrew have a busy schedule as we enter into the Christmas season. As in the past year, we will be conducting a drive collecting needed articles for our homeless population with an emphasis on cold weather survival. We will also be supporting Project Linus this winter, meeting to make and deliver blankets to infants and children in need. We are also focusing on giving our parishioners and community members practical knowledge for daily living, as well as helping to address various concerns of our families, such as safety and well-being.

The Women of St. Andrew always strive first and foremost to grow closer to Christ through our relationships with our community, our parish and each other. We pray for continuous guidance and pure hearts as we focus on our ministries.



Antiochian Women Announce 2019 Project: "Building A New Cathedral"

Kh. Suzanne Murphy

Vice President/NAB Project Coordinator

"What is more precious to all of us than the Antiochian Village?"

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH asked the members of the NAB and Spiritual Advisors this question as he prepared to tell us the theme of our 2019 NAB PROJECT.

The question immediately brought to mind what His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, of Thrice-Blessed Memory, used to say about the Antiochian Village: "The Antiochian Village is the HEART of our Archdiocese".

When Metropolitan JOSEPH told us of his inspiration to build a new and beautiful cathedral on the grounds of the Village, we all immediately understood why this is such a wonderful vision. Not only does the building of a new cathedral give form to Metropolitan PHILIP's metaphor of a beating heart in the center of our Archdiocese, but a new and inspiring cathedral will also satisfy several practical and pressing needs. This vision of Metropolitan JOSEPH is one that I'm sure the Antiochian Women will be eager to help bring into reality.

As Metropolitan JOSEPH pointed out, the success of the Village has brought us to a point where we have outgrown our current facilities. The success of our camping program means that the St. Ignatius Chapel is not large enough, and does not have enough flexible space to meet the needs of our children. And the continual growth of our Archdiocese means that the Ss. Peter & Paul Chapel cannot hold all of the clergy who now attend our Symposia. They have been forced to break into smaller groups and feel separated from each other. A new cathedral, with well-designed meeting spaces, is needed so that we will have one physical place which serves to unify us.

Also, a cathedral is meant to serve as a beacon to everyone as they gaze upon the symbol of the Heavenly Jerusalem, that perfect "new creation" which spans the infinite chasm between the world and God. In the Revelation to St. John, in witnessing this miracle descending from Heaven, the Angel of the Apocalypse cried out, "Behold, the Tabernacle of God is among men!" (Revelation 21:3) The architecture of our Orthodox churches is meant to proclaim, in stone and mortar, this mystical reality of God descending to dwell among His people. It also, simultaneously, serves as the gateway to Paradise – an entrance that has been re-opened to mankind by the sacrifice of our Lord's fleshly tabernacle upon the Cross. Metropolitan JOSEPH reiterated that the Holy Orthodox Church has one mission: to evangelize the world for Christ. He said that we evangelize by word, by music, by prayer, and also by architecture and the Holy Icons. He gave us several examples of how this evangelism can happen through the wordless – although powerful – testimony of our Orthodox architecture. He described our new churches built in Yakima, and Tucson, and Salt Lake City. He said that many people have been drawn to join these parishes because in beholding the physical church building, they had an intuitive sense that this place was where they could find God. They were drawn to hear the good news of the Gospel through the proclamation of our architecture that "Christ is in our midst!"

We often refer to the Antiochian Village as being our "holy mountain." Metropolitan JOSEPH has the vision of building this new cathedral on the highest point of the Antiochian Village, near the entrance road, so that it can be seen over a great distance. The inspiring testimony of its domes and crosses will send out the blessing of God across the Ligonier Valley. And then when our many groups gather at the Village – our children for summer camp; our bishops, priests, and deacons for the Clergy Symposium; our families for Family Camp – and when we host the Special Olympics and the OCF College Conference, or when outside groups come to the Village for their meetings and events, as we ascend the path up to our new cathedral, we will have the sense that we are literally ascending the "mountain of the Lord" (Psalms 24:3).

So, let's immediately start our fundraising for this inspirational, "once-in-a-lifetime" Project. Building a cathedral that will truly bring us all together at the Heart of the Archdiocese is going to require a large investment of time and money. Let's make a special effort this year so that we can see the results in a very special and splendid cathedral for our Archdiocese at the Antiochian Village.

On behalf of the entire North American Board of the Antiochian Women, I thank you in advance for your tireless labor for this worthy cause.

2019 PROJECT

Antiochian Women - North American Board



“ BEHOLD,
THE
TABERNACLE
OF GOD
IS AMONG
MEN! ”

Revelation 21:3

❖ *Building a new Cathedral* ❖
for our Archdiocese at the Antiochian Village

Memory Eternal! + Jean Sam



Memory Eternal! Dedicated servant of Christ and benefactor of the Antiochian Archdiocese Jean Sam reposed on January 8, 2019 in Bonita Springs, Florida. Her parents, her brothers Fred and John, and her sister Mary, all preceded her in death.

Jean was born in Detroit on September 1, 1928 to parents George and Catherine Sam. Jean received her education at Wayne State University up to a post-graduate level, and worked at General Motors in Detroit.

A longtime member of St. George in Detroit, Michigan, Jean sang in the choir, was a member of the ladies of St. George, served as the bookstore manager and as a member of the Parish Council, and also chaired the Council. She was the recipient of the Midwest 2007 Metropolitan PHILIP Award and she also became involved in the greater Archdiocese in many ways, serving as President of the Antiochian Women in the Midwest and then as Public Relations Coordinator of the NAB of the Antiochian Women, conducting workshops and seminars throughout the Archdiocese. Jean also collected articles prior to the building of the existing structure of the museum at the Antiochian Village before serving as Curator. Jean was also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Archdiocese, and Co-Chair of the 1987 Archdiocese Convention in Dearborn, Michigan, as well as a dame of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. She was also a tireless supporter of the Department of Charities.

In honor of her outstanding service to the Archdiocese, Jean was awarded the Antonian Silver Medal.

In 1990 she moved to St. Elias in Atlanta Georgia, and later to Bonita Springs, Florida. There, she was a founding member of the St. Paul's parish in Naples, Florida.

Dear Sisters in Christ,
I wish to congratulate our sister in Christ, Melinda Bentz, for her job promotion. A promotion which involved her relocating from California to Texas.
Because of this move and her busy schedule, Melinda has resigned as NAB Public Relations Director. We appreciate your work Melinda and wish to thank you for serving the last 3 1/2 years.
I have been asked to step in and fill her position for the remainder of her term and to publish this issue DIAKONIA and the remaining 2 issues, Spring and Summer.

In Christ,
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 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)	September 2017	Done
2	Diocese of New York and the Archdiocesan District (His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP & His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS). Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic (His Grace Bishop THOMAS)	December 2017	Done
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest (His Eminence Archbishop JOSEPH)	March 2018	Done
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (His Grace Bishop ANTOUN)	June 2018	Done
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY (His Grace Bishop ALEXANDER)	September 2018	Done
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest (His Grace Bishop ANTHONY)	December 2018	Done
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (His Grace Bishop BASIL)	March 2019	Feb 1, 2019* See note below
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England (His Grace Bishop JOHN)	June 2019	May 1, 2019

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

* Due to the late publication of the Winter issue, I am extending the deadline for submitting news and information for the Spring issue of DIAKONIA to March 1, 2019



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

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