

DIAKONIA

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN
OF NORTH AMERICA

Reflection of Summer 2018 Featuring the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE)



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA
✿ A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS ✿

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

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

NAB Board

His Grace Bishop JOHN, Spiritual Advisor

Officers:

President:	Dianne O'Regan
Vice-President/ Project:	Kh. Suzanne Murphy
Recording Secretary:	Sheryl VanderWagen
Treasurer:	Fadia Juzdan
Public Relations:	Melinda Bentz
Immediate Past President:	Violet Robbat

Coordinators:

Constitution & Bylaws:	Anne Bourjaily-Thomas
Humanitarian:	Lauren Ferris
Membership:	Mary Lou Catelli
Parliamentarian:	Laila Ferris
Religious:	Kh. Dannie Moore
Scholarship:	Cindy Nimey & Laila Ferris

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 the newsletter of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women, an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and is published quarterly.

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES:

Deadlines

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

To submit articles, e-mail as a word attachment to:

antiochianwomenna@gmail.com

Submission Details

- Please include your name and the phone number where you can be contacted for questions.

Content

- All articles must be of interest to or regarding NAB, Diocesan or local Antiochian Women.
- All articles may be edited for length and clarity.

In each issue we will highlight one of the Dioceses. We encourage everyone, however, to submit news and articles from all Antiochian parishes of North America for publication in every issue so we may keep in touch with each other.

What is DIAKONIA?

The word **DIAKONIA** is a Greek word meaning *Service*, usually pertaining to service in the Church. The purpose of the Antiochian Women's organization is primarily spirituality and humanitarian service. In the words of our Founder, Metropolitan PHILIP of blessed memory, it is "*Theology in Action.*"

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

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

"LIKE" and Follow us on Facebook:
Antiochian Women North America

A Message from His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS

Diocesan Bishop Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

June 2018

Dear Antiochian Women,

As we start a new chapter in the life of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast, we have been working diligently on many fronts to build all aspects of the diocese according to a new vision of rejuvenation and growth. The main theme is that we, the faithful, need to increase our knowledge noetically and spiritually with regard to God in accordance with Jesus' prayer to His Father: "this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (John 17:3). As I have been emphasizing during my weekly pastoral visits to the DOMSE parishes, we need to "up our spiritual game" a notch or two on a continuous basis and while remaining humans work conscientiously on acquiring the attributes of God. It is true that other administrative, financial, etc. aspects of a diocesan life are necessary. However, we need to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added" (Matthew 6:33) to us. This is not to say that we should be slothful in working on those tasks. To the contrary! We need to work on them attentively to organize and structure the diocese while giving the highest priority to spirituality.



In order to start this large effort, spiritual retreats are scheduled during every parish visit to explicate and live this new vision. Every weekend, I travel to visit a parish according to a typical schedule adapted to the needs of every church. Characteristically, I meet with the clergy and the Parish Council on Friday evening, with the Sunday School children on Saturday morning, with the teens after lunch, with the Young Adults before Vespers, and the Antiochian Women after Vespers. The weekend is crowned on Sunday morning with the Divine Liturgy followed by more meetings with the Antiochian Men and other organization.

The annual Delegates Meeting held during the last long weekend of January has been changed to the Winter Retreat to reflect the new vision. A monumental effort was put forth by the multi-parish organizing committee for several months to organize the Winter Retreat. A record number of faithful, who were thirsty for spirituality, showed up in Atlanta to participate in the spiritual retreats. Based on all the positive feedback, this is only the beginning of increased participation. At the end of the weekend, excitement was in the air as the participants declared the sessions a great success and requested to continue this path. In an unprecedented move, the host parish requested to host the Winter Retreat again next year. In the future, other retreats are planned to be introduced like a Spring Retreat.

For the first time, an Antiochian Men (AMEN) organization has been formed diocese wide, which is the counterpart to the long standing Antiochian Women organization. Every pastor is working on starting a chapter in his parish to take care of men's spiritual needs, and in turn, the men will help grow the parish. There will be an official constitution that summarizes its vision and goals.

The Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) was also very active at the Winter Retreat. Their meeting planned their future while their two sessioned retreat was greatly received. The Teen SOYO was no different in their meeting and two retreats. The Antiochian Women broke the record in the number of participants that we plan to assign them a larger room for their meeting and retreat.

The Parish Life Conference (PLC) has been planned by St Mary Church, West Palm Beach, FL in the same manner as the Winter Retreat, at the Palm Beach Airport Hilton during June 13-16, 2018. It is worthy to note that the hotel is sold out and an overflow hotel is being used. I encourage all to participate in the PLC. Come and see!

The point of all of this is that there is excitement in the air in DOMSE and great anticipation for events to come. Through God's grace on us all, we are full of enthusiasm and eagerness for a brighter spiritual future leading to further structure and organization of the DOMSE diocese for the glory of God.

In Christ,

+Bishop Nicholas

A Message from Diocesan President

Dawn Evancho

CHRIST is in our midst! HE is and ever shall be!!

Greetings from the women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE!)

Our chapters span from Raleigh, NC to Miami, FL and from Myrtle Beach, SC to Springdale, AR! We are dedicated women from over 35 parishes and missions who serve Christ by serving others in so many ways. My hope is that thru these pages, you will get a glimpse into how we do this “southern style!”

As life goes, it has been a year of “ups and downs” for our diocese. Last summer we celebrated our beloved Bishop ANTOUN’s lifetime of service at the Archdiocese Convention in his hometown of Miami. A few months later, we laid him to rest at the Antiochian Village. We welcomed our new Bishop NICHOLAS and had our first Winter Retreat with him in Atlanta in January. We said a reluctant goodbye to our Spiritual Advisor, Father Stephen Rogers, as he started his retirement and welcomed him as our first Mid-Winter retreat speaker! We are now excited to open another chapter with our new advisor, Father Kamal Al-Rahil, and we are looking forward to where he and Bishop NICHOLAS will lead us over the upcoming years. We have turned our focus as a diocese greater spiritual growth by turning our twice a year meetings into retreats with time for business discussions. In this way our gatherings can be spiritually uplifting for all. Our most recent meeting was in West Palm Beach June 13-16, 2018 for our Parish Life Conference. In addition to our regular Antiochian Women’s meeting and luncheon, we met to discuss the NAB book club selection: “Becoming a Healing Presence”, by Dr. Albert Rossi.

We have several ongoing projects that have been unique to our diocese, including a FIN or “friends in need” list of folks in our diocese in need of support and encouragement. We ask all the ladies to send cards and pray for these friends on a regular basis. We also individually fundraise on a chapter level to help support the medical needs of one of our own priest’s children who was born prematurely and suffers from multiple handicaps. We also collect \$100 from each chapter once a year to help support our “Benevolence Fund” which we use to send kids to Camp St. Thekla, and contribute to St Paul Skete, both of which are in our diocese and to help our officers with meeting travel expenses.

I hope that if you are ever in the Southeast, you will visit one of our churches and let us be blessed by your presence.

In Christ’s Love, I am your servant,

Dawn Evancho



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

Dawn Evancho, President

My name is Dawn Evancho, and I have been a member of All Saints Orthodox Church in Raleigh, NC for the past 20 years. I was chrismated into Orthodoxy when I was engaged to my wonderful husband Ron 27 years ago. I learned almost everything I now know about Orthodoxy from Father Nicholas and my All Saints family. Through the years, I have taught Sunday School, mentored the teens, and led the Antiochian Women. I have 14 Godchildren; most of whom attend All Saints with me.

In the last few years, I have been blessed to serve as the Humanitarian Coordinator, and now the Diocesan President of the DOMSE. I love going to meetings, both Diocesan and NAB, and getting to know all the wonderful Antiochian Women of the US and Canada. In my spare time, I work as a Family Practice Physician Assistant and help guide my two loving daughters, Sarah, a 2nd year medical student, and Lauren, my feisty 9th grader and talented musician.

Sh. Shell Keim, Vice-President

My name is Sh. Shell Keim, I attend All Saints Orthodox Church in Raleigh, NC. I have served the women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast for the last few years as the Vice President.

I am the wife of our Deacon at All Saints. We have six beautiful children who keep us busy and bring us much joy!

At All Saints I keep busy teaching the middle school Church School class, welcoming new families into our midst, and helping out wherever there is a need.

I love serving the women of our Diocese and have been active with the Antiochian Women for many years. I cannot express with mere words the love that I have for the ladies of the Southeast. From young new mothers to seasoned ladies with words of wisdom to share, they are all each an important part of our diocese and of the Church.



Deborah Abdo-Dambrosio, Recording Secretary

I am a member of St. Ignatius Orthodox Mission in Boca Raton, FL. I am the secretary of the Parish Council and Secretary of the Antiochian Women at our mission church. I also chant and fill in for the choir director when needed. I am originally from Syracuse, NY, where I attended St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church. I have been a resident of Florida since 1979. I recently retired from a 40 year career in teaching. I was married to a wonderful man, Jack Dambrosio, who reposed in the Lord in 2015. I grew up in the Orthodox Church and was active in SOYO in my teens and young adult years. I was President of Eastern Region SOYO from 1988-1990 where I made many life-long friends. I am honored to serve as the Secretary of the Antiochian Women for the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast.



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

Dorothy Tampary, Treasurer

To serve on the Antiochian Women Board of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE) is an honor and a great responsibility. I am humbled by the commitment, dedication and energy of my sisters in Christ who also serve on our AW Board, as well as of those who serve on the NAB and the other Diocesan Boards. I am thankful for the leadership of Metropolitan JOSEPH and our DOMSE Bishop NICHOLAS.

In addition to presently serving as treasurer, I am the current Past-President and a past Vice-President of AW DOMSE and a past Humanitarian Coordinator on the NAB.

My beloved husband, Anthony (known affectionately as “Bubba” to many), fell asleep in the Lord on October 26, 2017. He is the one who introduced me to the blessings and fullness of the Orthodox Christian Faith. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary as of July. Our priest, Father David Bleam, and church family of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Pensacola, Florida, continue to help me through this difficult time with their prayers and loving attention. We have two married children and four grandchildren who bring me great joy. Tony, Stacy, Mason and Marina live in Pensacola; Mary Alex, David, Ella and Lena live in Colorado Springs.



My youth was spent in Starkville, Mississippi, home of Mississippi State University and where I met Bubba. I attended Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, graduating in 1967 with a B.S. in Biology. I joined Bubba as a resident of his hometown of Pensacola, FL upon marriage. Our children grew up with the white sand beaches of Perdido Key, FL, Orange Beach, AL, and the beautiful waters of the Gulf of Mexico as their playground!

Vocationally, I taught biology, anatomy & physiology, science research, and other science classes for thirty-one years to high school students. Upon retirement from teaching in 1998, I switched to full-time agent in resort real estate sales and condo rentals, retiring in 2015.

As an Orthodox Christian, I am committed to spreading the Gospel to build the Body of Christ, from the framework of my home parish of St. Andrew, our diocese and archdiocese, and beyond.

Kathryn (Cassie) Tysinger, Public Relations

I live in Dothan, AL, and I stay busy both with my church and studying genealogy. I am a member of various Linage organizations including, Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, War of 1812, Colonial Dames 17th Century, and Daughters of the Pilgrims. I am on the National Advisory Board to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the State of Alabama. I also do Heirloom sewing and sewing for the church.

I distribute any articles sent to me to all chapter presidents and mission presidents as a way of keeping us all connected.

I send out the DIAKONIA, the NAB publication, to all chapter presidents so they can distribute them to the ladies in their parishes and missions.

For this issue of the DIAKONIA, since our Diocese of Miami and the Southwest is featured, I sent out a letter to encourage every chapter and mission to send me information. I then gathered the information shared with me and forwarded to the NAB Public Relations officer.



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

Sue Ann Young, Humanitarian Coordinator

I have been serving in this position since March of 2016. My service is to encourage the women of our diocese to participate in and/or develop programs, fundraisers, etc. that provide for humanitarian needs. These Christian acts of charity and love should serve the local community and also support diocese and archdiocese annual efforts.

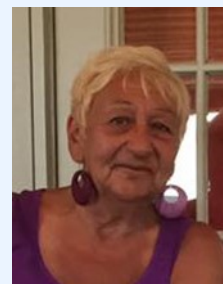


I have been blessed to be a part of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church since its beginning in February 2008. Through my husband, I was introduced to Orthodoxy in 1974 and was Chrismated in 1976. We have three daughters and many fond memories of their childhood and family life at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. Fast forward forty-four years and we are now grandparents of five beautiful grandchildren and three amazing sons-in-law. I am grateful to say that they live Orthodox Christian lives and that we are able to visit frequently along the beautiful Gulf coast. Glory to God!

My activities at St Andrew's include cooking for our annual Holiday Freezer and Bake Sale, singing in the choir, co-teaching our Sunday School Pre-K class, making altar cloths, serving on the Parish Council, helping with flowers for feast days, and working with our amazing Antiochian Women's chapter, the "Sisters of St. Photini" on the many charitable projects that they accomplish for those in need. Thanks be to God for all His blessings!

Carol Larson, Membership Coordinator

I am a cradle Orthodox originally from New Kensington, PA with two children, one son who resides in Canton, OH with his wife and four children, and one daughter who resides in the outskirts of Pittsburgh, PA with her husband and two children. I am retired and once again President of our local chapter at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church located in Myrtle Beach, SC. I am proud to be serving as Membership Coordinator for our Miami & Southeast Diocese for a second year and look forward to helping our chapter presidents increase their membership.



Sh. Myrna Martin, Religious Coordinator

Joy is not the absence of suffering, but the presence of God.

I was born in Guatemala, Central America. I came to the U.S. as a nanny and a maid when I was seventeen years old. I met and married Edward Martin who became a Deacon at St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, TN. My journey to Orthodoxy began in 1976, along with my husband and many others, through the love and guidance of Father Gordon Walker. Now, years later, I am the mother of three adult children, an adorable grandson, another on the way, plus two in heaven. Our journey as a family in the church has involved helping in many ways for orphans in my birth country, working especially with Hogar Rafael Ayau, which takes care of abandoned children. A group of Orthodox nuns was given the task of serving there, working faithfully, and ministering in any capacity for the children. Our family has seen the miracles that have occurred, and I'm blessed to be able to work for the church and for the opportunity to serve.



I enjoy meeting people and speaking about the Orthodox faith. Often they become very good friends and sometimes Dcn. Edward and I are blessed to act as their sponsors. I also teach Spanish at a small private school and enjoy being available for anything that needs to be done in our parish.

I serve now as Religious Coordinator for DOMSE. I have reached an age that shows me where I need to be. I have learned also that attending and participating in services are such a strength to my soul. I never thought I needed to be strengthened by the word of God in such a way. Thanks be to God for my former priest Fr. Stephen Rogers, who encouraged me to serve the church and attend the services. His guidance and prayer has been of great help for me. May God Almighty give me strength to serve Him well.

Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

Ladies of St. Peter Orthodox Church Madison, Mississippi



The Ladies of St. Peter have a very good relationship with ladies from the other Orthodox jurisdictions in the Jackson area. Three years ago, we began holding a joint one-day retreat in the month of November with the ladies from Holy Resurrection (OCA) and Holy Trinity/St. John the Theologian (Greek Archdiocese) Orthodox churches. Our first speaker was Mother Nektaria from St. Paul Skete in Grand Junction, TN followed a year later by Father Stephen Rogers from St. Ignatius in Franklin, TN. Last year our speaker was Father Barnabus Powell from the Greek Archdiocese. The Ladies of St. Peter will be hosting the retreat again this November, and plans for the event are underway.

With the coming of the wonderful spring weather, we enjoy holding Ladies' meetings on the patio at the church under our live oak trees (see photo).

Women of St. George Vicksburg, Mississippi

Recently our church was blessed to have a visit from His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, which is when the photo below was taken. He met with several of the women and talked to us about his vision for our diocese.

The Women of St. George work throughout the year on the following activities – Mercy Meals, cards to Friends in Need and sympathy/get well/congratulation cards to our own community, Prayer Chain, and making Prosfora for communion.

We have one main fundraiser a year, "The Lebanese Dinner", which helps pay for needed church repairs or improvements, sending Teen SOYO members to camp or church conferences, and other projects. The fundraiser dinner is a one-day event that brings people from all around to enjoy good food and fellowship. Church members, from young to old, work on the dinner. We are humbled at the amount of non-Orthodox in our community that help with the preparations. At Thanksgiving, we provide three needy families in the community with \$100 gift certificates for food. The women sponsor a collection of Christmas gifts for 12 children in the community; each child receives at least six gifts of clothing, coats, and toys. We also provide refreshments for fellowship after the Christmas Eve and Paschal Liturgies, as well as Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday meals.

We are blessed to be able to support the NAB Project each year and support three children through the Children's Relief Fund.



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

St. Michael Orthodox Church Dothan, Alabama

We are a small Parish in Dothan, AL. We meet the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month when either Fr. David Bleam or Fr. Ernesto can make it. We are so blessed for their loving faithfulness to drive a great distance to serve our small but strong and loving parish. For twenty-four years we have been served by traveling priests.

Several members have participated in the Book Club that Kh. Dannie Moore does every year. Another way we stay connected is through our Facebook page for St Michael .

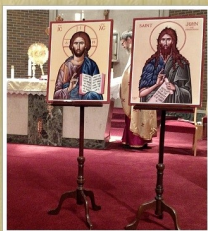
Altar needs have been provided through the ladies of the church. We maintain the altar cloths, prepare the Prospora, and Qurban, as well as Koliva when we have lost church members.

One member made the altar cloths, Father's aer, chalice covers, and the acolyte robes.

We always have a lady in our church read the Epistle in March. Two members hosted Akathist and little Compline when we couldn't have church. One member hosts our Christmas Lunch at her home.

We have always participated in things asked of us, like the Health kits etc, all projects of the Antiochian Women. We might be a small church, but we always try to do our part and participate in the life of the Church through the Diocese and Archdiocese.

St Michael Orthodox Church Dothan, Alabama



Qurban



Prospora



Koliva



Red Eggs



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

**St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**

Our chapter meets once a month with Fr. Gabriel opening the meeting with our Ladies Guild prayer and sitting in our meetings as our Spiritual Advisor.

This year we have been involved in:

- ◇ Helping with our monthly feeding for the homeless.
- ◇ Donating clothing to give to the homeless each month.
- ◇ Donating staples on a weekly basis to Helping Helping Hands.
- ◇ Donating ten turkey baskets to the Department of Social Services to give to the needy for Thanksgiving.
- ◇ Baking the cookies for our annual church Holiday Cookie Sale in December.
- ◇ Uniting at our Pascha Feast with all the families bringing a covered dish.
- ◇ Taking turns attending to the candle stand and reading the Epistle.

Ecclesiastical New Year

From Kh. Dannie Moore, NAB Religious Coordinator



In Roman times, the calendar year began on September 1.

The Jews also observed this day as the beginning of their civil year. After the First Ecumenical Council, Christians observed September 1 as New Year's Day. Constantine the Great called it his day of taxation. September was the month of the harvest and an offering of the first fruits to God in thanksgiving. September 1, the time of this feast, is the day that Jesus chose to go into the synagogue in Nazareth and to read from the book of the Prophet Isaiah (61: 1-2) to announce His ministry at the age of thirty. The reading started with, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek." September commemorates the victory of Constantine the Great over Maxentius, the enemy of Christianity, the result of which allowed Christians to confess their faith freely throughout the Roman Empire.

September is believed to be the month that Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt.

*Taken from:
2006 Daily Lives, Miracles and Wisdom of the Saints
and Fasting Calendar*

Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

St. Ignatius Orthodox Church Franklin, Tennessee

The women of St. Ignatius can be found serving the Church and community in the following ways:

- ◇ Organizing feast day meals and potlucks
- ◇ Preparing and serving weekly Lenten meals
- ◇ Coordinating Paschal events
- ◇ Delivering meals and helping parish members when they are sick, new to town, or blessed with a baby
- ◇ Writing to the sick and shut-ins on our Diocese' "Friends In Need" list
- ◇ Preparing and delivering "Meals on Wheels"
- ◇ Singing, chanting, and reading during services

To fellowship and grow in faith together, our ladies enjoy:

- ◇ Annual luncheons at the start of the Church year and at Christmas
- ◇ Weekly book club discussions
- ◇ A one-day spiritual retreat

These are some of the things our women do, just as many other women throughout our Diocese do daily, with a smile. Not to mention the countless jobs and activities they manage at Church, home, and work outside the purview of our official "Antiochian Women" organization.

I could give you details about the events listed above but what I'd really like to share is an example of the amazing beauty and love that is present every time our women gather together...



Last November, we held our annual spiritual retreat. The theme was "God's Gardens" and talks were given by the Very Reverend Father Stephen Rogers. More than sixty women came to hear Fr. Stephen and spend the day together. From the beginning, the energy in the room was palpable. Every seat was filled and the sound of friendship and laughter rolled across the hall in gentle waves. During the talks, pens were poised on paper to eagerly capture Fr.'s words of wisdom. During breaks, pens were poised on cards to eagerly express encouragement and admiration for one other. Delicious

food was eaten. Quiet reflection was savored. I witnessed lots of hugs and even some joyful tears. It seemed to me that the sun was shining from inside our parish hall. But it wasn't just me who noticed something special, something beautiful but indescribable in the room. One parishioner on entering the Church as the retreat concluded came to me and said, "All the women's faces are glowing!"

Doesn't this exemplify the love and warmth so unique to women? We listen, we share, we support and encourage whoever is around us. I suspect that women in all our parishes reflect the light of Christ so beautifully! I know for sure though, over the last year the women of St. Ignatius have brought (and continue to bring) this energy, this care, this joy to ALL things they do.

With love in Christ,

Kristi Perkins
President, St. Ignatius Antiochian Women



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

Greetings to our Sisters in Christ, from the Ladies of **St. Nicholas in Springdale, Arkansas!**



We compose our chapter news submission following this joyful Paschal Season. Adorning our beautiful church during this Paschal season were new banners heralding, "Christ is Risen!" and "Truly He is Risen!" The banners were designed and hand-crafted by several very talented ladies, who also added flower garlands and warm lights for our midnight Paschal sharing of blessed baskets, and for the Lamb Dinner following our Agape Vespers on Sunday. We had many volunteers to help light our church grounds with almost 300 luminaries for Pascha! Our children created panoramic Easter Eggs on Lazarus Sunday, and they celebrated Pascha with the traditional egg hunt and games, braving chilly weather to collect their prizes.



Further reflecting on how our Ladies of St. Nicholas are involved in our growing parish, many activities come to mind as well as an ongoing giving of time and talent. From choir direction and participation, working with our Sunday School and youth activities, to organizing dinners and our annual Holiday Baklava fundraiser, there are so many highlights during 2017 and 2018. While not all ladies can attend our monthly business meetings (we have 6-14 members attend), there are countless women who jump in and participate in special projects, giving however and wherever needed.

Each year, we gather and donate items for two of the I.O.C.C. projects, both the Health Kits and the School Kits. In September, we begin planning our Fall Bake Sale and Holiday Baklava fundraiser. Last year, over 20 dozen orders of baklava were baked and packaged for Christmas. We are gaining many repeat customers! This time of fundraising helps us to meet our goals for giving to the NAB Annual Project, the Bittle Project and Benevolence funds, as well as local needs. At this time of year, we also remember our Friends in Need by sending seasonal greetings.



In the "Acts of Mercy" category, many are close to home. We work toward finding a balance between local needs and the NAB directives, fulfilling as many as possible each year. On Meatfare Sunday, we collect funds for C.A.L.M.M. (Carrying Autism in a Loving, Miraculous Manner). This local organization helps families with autism by maintaining a food bank, and the cause is very near and dear to the family of Kh. Marilyn. Locally, we are also working to gather clothing and items for those with disabilities to be worn at the annual Prom event, "A Night to Shine."

Our special ministry called "Cradle Care" seeks to hold celebratory events and offer support for expectant mothers including baby showers as well as meal assistance once the new baby arrives.

Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

St. Nicholas in Springdale, Arkansas (continued from previous page)

Also in 2017, a group parish effort (with special help from our ladies group) was to assist one of our Antiochian Women with the goal of participating in a mission trip to Togo, Africa as a midwife. A wonderful fundraising dinner was held, and she worked very hard to make this trip possible. The trip was a miraculous, life-changing experience!



Our 2018 year began with our first visit from His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, who met with many ladies heading up various ministries within our parish. The Ladies helped to organize a Sunday evening banquet in his honor. We enjoyed our time together immensely, and look forward to future visits.



During March, Antiochian Women's month, our ladies participate in serving during the Divine Liturgy and other special activities. We skip the business meeting during this month, rather choosing a night to dine out together for a Lenten meal and much-needed fellowship.

This year, for the first time, we held a Saturday afternoon Lenten Retreat, focusing on themes from the Book Club's "Becoming a Healing Presence." It is hoped the retreat will grow into an annual event, reaching out to area Orthodox Christian women.



Whether a business meeting or an informal coffee hour conversation, discussion often includes exciting ideas for activities and ways to serve God, growing in faith and love. We are blessed to have such a wonderful group. Glory to God for all things!



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

All Saints Antiochian Church in Raleigh, North Carolina is truly a parish bringing together people from many different backgrounds. In the spirit of respecting varying customs, the St. Thekla Women's group has adopted some traditional activities, like baking Baklava in November, and developing some new, All-American activities like Undie Sunday- when the women set out plastic bins in the entry of the parish hall, and people fill them to the brim with packages of new underwear for those in need.

March brings traditional Lenten dinners of bread and soup after Presanctified liturgies. Socktober is the month when those plastic bins are again placed in the church hall entry and filled with new socks for the homeless.

Most months of the year, we have a book study during the first week of the month. After a potluck brunch and fellowship time, we discuss our current book. Our current study focuses on "Becoming a Healing Presence", by Dr. Albert Rossi. Our Matushka -Presbytera-Khouria Barbara Sorensen leads the discussion, and always leaves us with thought-provoking questions. She also responds to her title in any language!



In mid-March, we enjoyed a tea and traditional pysanky (Ukrainian Easter egg) decorating class. One of our members, Kyra, is a knowledgeable and talented egg decorator, and she provided dyes, tools, patterns, wax, examples, and most of all, encouragement! Carolyn set a lovely pink and green (and Lenten!) table for us, and about 25 women participated in the event. Several women remarked that with work and family commitments, an event like this is the only time they have to catch up with one another.

During the Lenten periods before Christmas and Pascha, St. Thekla's women prepare bread and soup for sale to benefit the Bittle family. The ladies make lentil soup, vegetable soup, and this year, sourdough bread. Usually the quarts of homemade soup and loaves of sourdough bread sell briskly during Sunday coffee hour. Again, old and new are woven firmly together: a group of American women, some born here, some born overseas, gather in a modern church kitchen to bake bread and make soup. When the loaves are set out to rise, they are covered with hand-woven cloths, made a century ago by the Romanian grandmother of one of the women present.

At Christmas time, the women gather for tea and card writing. Christmas greetings are penned for the homebound and parish families.

During Women's Month in March, the St. Thekla's women serve as ushers, greeters, and Epistle readers at Sunday liturgies.

Last Father's Day, St. Thekla's Women surprised fathers in the parish with custom wrapped chocolate bars.

St. Thekla's Women's group is very active in the parish life at All Saints Church, providing support for one another, members of the parish, and the community around us. Some of their work is visible for all to see; much of their work is done quietly, pumping life into the community through planning, encouraging, and teaching.



Meet our Sisters from DOMSE!

**Myrrhbearers of St. Stephen
Hiram, Georgia**

Our ladies meet for afternoon tea and refreshments every other month, usually on Saturday before Vespers. We read and discuss the books recommended by Kh. Dannie for the Archdiocese, hear words of wisdom from Fr. Andrew and Kh. Dannie, and share together about our upcoming plans and events.

Throughout the year, we are busy with the normal activities and events of parish life: baptisms, chrismations, bridal showers, weddings, graduation receptions, Mother's and Father's day lunches, and on and on. We sponsor various fundraisers throughout the year for the annual project including a donation table during September and March and bake sales before the fast begins in the fall and Valentine's Day.



At least twice a year, we have a luncheon for the grandmothers, mothers, and children of the families we help through our food closet ministry. We pray, eat, and fellowship and have the privilege of hearing words of encouragement from Fr. Andrew.

Outreach to our community is a priority and we stay active in helping those in need. Ongoing ministries include the cards for friends in need every 4-6 weeks and an ongoing food closet ministry.

Below are a few highlights of our ongoing activities and outreach.

*During May, we receive empty baby bottles from Paulding Pregnancy Services in which we collect change/cash/checks. This year there was also a need for diapers and wipes so we collected those from Mother's Day to Father's Day for this local ministry.

*During the summer months (June-August), we collect school supplies for the local schools and help with the backpack program in Paulding County. Some of our young people helped put together over 1,000 backpacks this year and we joined in giving them out for the school children.

*In the Fall, we will collect blankets for the Veterans and homeless. A retired veteran in our parish has contact with a local veteran's home and homeless shelter to help us get these items to those who need them.

Glory to God for all things!



Meet our sisters from DOMSE!

St. Andrew the Apostle Orthodox Church Pensacola, Florida

The Antiochian Women's chapter of St. Andrew has taken St. Photini as our patron saint. We call ourselves the Sisterhood of St. Photini. Pictured right is an Artoclasia for our current members and a Koliva for our departed Sisters. We have this remembrance each year and host the coffee hour that follows. Like the "Woman at the Well" we look for opportunities to see and follow Jesus in service to our Church, community, Diocese, and Archdiocese. We are blessed with strong, creative women, who freely give of their time, talent, and treasure.



Our most ambitious project is our annual Freezer/Bake Sale for the winter holiday season. There are many long days, and there are many shared hours of fellowship and laughter. The proceeds from this large fundraiser and the sale of smoked Boston Butts for Super Bowl weekend pay for the contributions we make to various local charities, as well as our diocese and archdiocese membership dues and charitable requests. Additionally, every three or four years we sponsor a church wide yard sale to raise money.



We have active participation in the Friends in Need card ministry for the Diocese, as well as local cards sent to our own members for anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, get-well and condolences.

We keep a Food Pantry and a Coat Closet stocked at our church. Each week of the school year, we provide ten weekend "Backpack Meals" to students at a nearby low-income public school. At the same school we provide food baskets or gift cards for families at Christmas time, and once or twice a year we provide a teacher/faculty appreciation meal.

We have provided a dinner for one of our SOYO member's soccer team and contribute food items for the dinner at the annual Learn to Read of Northwest Florida fundraiser.

We donate three camp scholarships to our SOYO each year. Using proceeds from our bookstore, we provide religious cards and books for various gift/educational needs. We purchase and stock the Orthodox pamphlet holder in the entryway to the Narthex to serve as outreach to our visitors. We treat our Priest, Kourie, two deacons, and their wives to birthday gift cards. We host the annual Cheesefare Luncheon coffee hour and enjoy friendly competition with our men at their Meatfare Luncheon the preceding week.

We provide Fall and Spring "Survival Kits" to our college, seminary, and military members. These are composed of a few simple treats and fun items just to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers.



As we celebrated our tenth anniversary as a parish in 2017, we purchased an outdoor chiminea and cover for the priest to use in burning and disposing of blessed items at the church. We hosted our parish Lenten retreat with a visiting priest as the speaker, including setup and a luncheon. We made a contribution to our priest's discretionary fund and to our parish "new roof" fund. The Ladies of St. Andrew lead the way to participate in praising, decorating, nurturing, feeding and welcoming new people to our parish. They are an amazing group of women with many talents and open hearts ready to support and serve.



THE MOST REVEREND

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH

358 MOUNTAIN ROAD

ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE MOST REVEREND METROPOLITAN PHILIP -- FOUNDER

✠ A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS ✠

NORTH AMERICAN BOARD



Your Grace Bishop JOHN, Sisters in Christ,

Glory to God!

Bishop JOHN has given his blessing for the Book Club selection.

The book will be "**The Sweetness of Grace**" by Constantina Palmer. The following words are taken from the Epilogue of the book:

The Sweetness of Grace puts into print various stories, experiences, and lessons I took away from my travels in Asia, Europe, and North America. Throughout all of this, I have been seeking those who believe, those whose eyes are fixed on the Lord, those who have listened. I found many such ones, and to their stories I have added my own: stories of trial and victory, of the sweetness of grace, and of a life of blessedness. While "From olden times David, with good reason, restraineth sinners like me from speaking the statutes of God" (Oikos for St. Andrew the First-called), yet here, on this isolated Atlantic island, I collect these stories and offer them to you, my reader, as a testimony to life in Christ.

In St. Jerome's letter to a Christian woman, Markella, he speaks of being wounded by the Savior's love, saying, "We shall say one to another: I have found Him whom my soul loves; I will hold Him and will not let Him go." This collection of stories of conversations, encounters, and lessons from my experiences with monastics, priests, and laypeople is, in a sense, this exchange: us saying one to another, "I have found Him whom my soul loves; I will hold Him and will not let Him go."

The first year serving as Religious Coordinator, we read together Royal Monastic, the life story of Princess Ileana of Romania who became Mother Alexandra. She was called to build the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania.

In the book by David and Mary Ford, Marriage as a Path to Holiness, we find these words:

Even if one is called to marriage, maintaining a close connection with good monastics is of invaluable profit. In the Preface we mentioned Saint Gregory the Theologian's beautiful description of the ideal relationship between those who are monastics and those who are married: But be ye bound together, both virgins and wives, and be one in the Lord, and each other's adornment."

Near the end of Saint Gregory of Nyssa's account of the life of his sister, Saint Macrina the Younger, he relates a beautiful story told to him by his cousin. This cousin was a military commander who had visited Macrina's monastery with his wife and their daughter, who was afflicted with a serious eye disease:

I remember once, when I was with my wife, that we desired to go to the school of virtue — for indeed, this is what the place necessarily must be called where the blessed woman dwelt.

KH. DANNIE MOORE – RELIGIOUS COORDINATOR
PHONE: (770) 489-0010; (770) 262-9476

130 HOLY CROSS PATH HIRAM, GEORGIA 30141
EMAIL – KHDANNIE@GMAIL.COM

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

Book Club Announcement, Kh. Dannie Moore's letter continued from previous page.

[When we desired to leave], your blessed sister would not let my wife depart, all the while holding my daughter in her bosom. Then, according to her custom, the blessed woman kissed the child, placing her mouth by the girl's eye. As she observed the sickness of her eyes, she said to my wife, "If you will do me this favor by enjoying our table, I shall render a service not unworthy of such honor and grace." The mother said, "What service do you have to give us?" The blessed one answered, "I shall give you a drug that shall heal the disease of your child's eye ..."

After the meal finished, we departed very happy. On the road, we spoke to each other about what we had seen and heard in those sacred places. I related what took place in the monks' quarters, and my wife described, in detail, what she saw and heard from the blessed woman. She did not leave out the most minute detail ... Suddenly remembering Macrina's words about a drug for their daughter's eye, they were momentarily alarmed because they had forgotten to get it. But the mother, looking at the child's eyes, said with joy in a loud voice, "Do not be distressed because of the drug, for we have been deprived of nothing of what the Saint determined. Her drug which cured the disease of our child is the healing that comes by means of prayer. No trace of the disease in the eye remains, which could not be cured except by her drug."

And we know of many married people today who are considered "friends" of various monasteries, and who have, to the degree appropriate, a close friendship with certain monastics there.

All of the stories derived from conversations with Orthodox nuns, monks and lay people will inspire us.

Hope we will become stronger in our faith and love will abound.

It is a lengthy book, but easy to read. The cost is \$20.95 from Ancient Faith. A 40% discount is given if ordered through your parish bookstore.

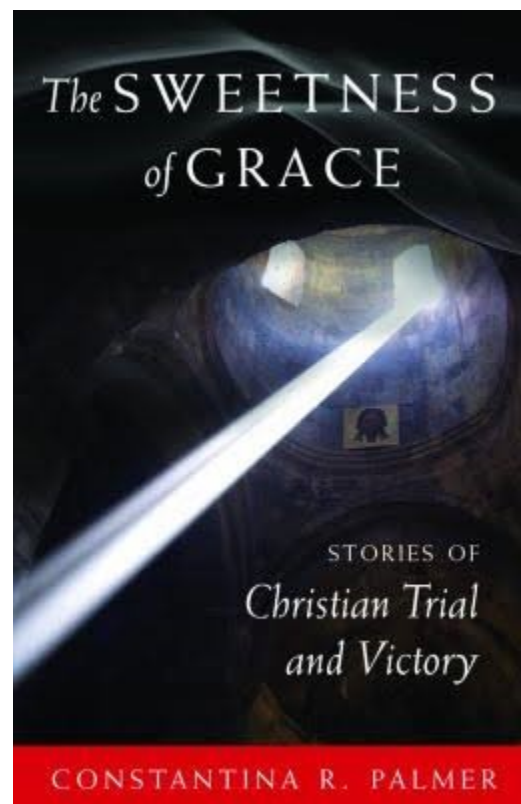
Please distribute to each AW Chapter. Thank you!

In Christ,

Kh. Dannie Moore

NAB Religious Coordinator

About the Author: Constantina R. Palmer is from New Brunswick, a quaint province on Canada's Atlantic coast. She lived in Thessaloniki, Greece for almost six years, during which time she received a Master's degree in theology from Aristotle University, studied Cretan style iconography, as well as Byzantine chant. Not one to simply learn from books she also spent significant time at a number of women's monasteries throughout northern Greece. Currently, she lives with her husband, an Orthodox priest, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, serving the only Orthodox parish on the island of Newfoundland. She is also a social worker.



How do I Submit Articles and Photos for Publication?

Step by Step Guidelines

God bless each of you across our beautiful Archdiocese for every photo, story, and article that is submitted for publication in the Diakonia. Without your submissions the Diakonia simply would not exist! Sharing a glimpse into the life of your parish chapter and highlighting a meaningful tradition is what makes the Diakonia a publication we all want to read.

Despite best efforts, mistakes happen when compiling the submissions and creating each issue. Please understand mistakes and/or omissions are in no way intentional.

To help decrease errors and guesswork which contribute to omissions and mistakes, when submitting anything for publication in the Diakonia, please follow these steps below for all correspondence.

1. Send all submissions to your Diocese Public Relations Officer who then will send it to:

AntiochianWomenNA@gmail.com

2. Please title the email as either:

Submission Diakonia, Parish Name, City, State

Submission Diakonia, Name, Organization Title

Examples for all email correspondence related to the DIAKONIA:

Submission Diakonia, St. Nicholas, Los Angeles, CA

Submission Diakonia, Dianne O'Regan, NAB President

Submission Diakonia, Kh. Jeanette Gallaway, President, Toledo and the Midwest

3. Ensure photo(s) is/are of good quality and that there is an explanation to the photo. The photograph bring wonderful memories to the submitter, but the readers need to know why the photograph is being submitted and what the photograph is showing.
4. Please submit Microsoft Word Document format only. (.doc, .docx)
5. Ensure the corresponding article or biography is included with the photo(s) being submitted.
6. Be prompt with submissions.
7. Remember all submissions will be corrected as needed and may be edited for length and clarity.
8. Have patience. Just like in our parish chapters, all roles on the Diocesan and the North American Board are volunteer and just like in our parishes, we do the best we can with the skills we have and the time we have available to us.
9. **Most importantly, share what is important to you and your chapter!** It is wonderful to read about our sisters' activities and seeing the photo(s) that help tell the story.

God bless you and thank you for sharing, with all of us, who you are and glimpses of your activities in service to our Lord.

A NOTE TO DIOCESAN PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS:

All articles, news from parishes, photos, bios and messages are due the first of the month PRIOR to the month of publication. Please collect and email them to antiochianwomenna@gmail.com according to the schedule below:

The following items are needed to highlight your diocese:

1. Bios and photos from your Diocesan Bishop, Spiritual Advisor and Board Members.
2. Messages from your Diocesan Bishop, Spiritual Advisor and President.
3. Photos and news articles from the chapters. All articles must be about or of interest to the Antiochian Women.
4. Notices of diocesan gatherings, retreats, conferences, etc.

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, and His Grace Bishop JOHN)	Done	August 15, 2017
2	Diocese of New York and the Archdiocesan District (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH & His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS). Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic (His Grace Bishop THOMAS)	Done	November 15 2017
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH)	Done	February 15, 2018
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS)	Done	May 15, 2018
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY (His Grace Bishop ALEXANDER)	October 2018 Fall Issue	October 1st, 2018
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest (His Grace Bishop ANTHONY)	December 2019	November 15, 2018
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (His Grace Bishop BASIL)	March 2019	February 15, 2019
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England (His Grace Bishop JOHN)	July 2019 Summer Issue	June 2019

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

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Wow what a summer! So many beautiful photos from the summer PLCs, acts of charity, weddings, baptisms and family vacations shared via social media. Thank you Cassie Tysinger for your work gathering all these beautiful stories and photos to share via this issue of the Diakonia. The work and love shared by the ladies of DOMSE make this a fun issue to read. Always, my gratitude to our NAB President, Dianne for her gift of proof-reading!

We have just celebrated the Dormition of the Theotokos. The beautiful hymns of this feast are especially touching. Singing "In thy birthgiving oh Theotokos, ..." I am joined spiritually with my sisters across this Archdiocese while memories of retreats, PLC's and conventions flood my memory.

Through the intercessions of our Holy Mother the Theotokos, may we continue to serve in peace and love.

In Christ,

Melinda Bentz, Public Relations