

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

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SUMMER 2026 E-BULLETIN



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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
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FROM THE DESK OF SHERYL VANDERWAGEN

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

In June, I was privileged to attend another Parish Life Conference for the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest. I had time to reflect on the last 21 years that I have attended the PLC. I was elected to serve as Midwest Antiochian Women Secretary in 2005. Eventually, I went on to serve as Midwest President, NAB Secretary, NAB Vice-President and today, I serve as your NAB President. I am humbled by the confidence you placed in me over the years and grateful to have been asked to serve.

I am deeply grateful for the friendships I have formed with wonderful women along the way. Some of them fell asleep in the Lord many years ago, some more recently and many more are still with us. I cherish all of them in my heart, they are my mentors, my guides, and my inspiration as we work to carry on what they started over 50 years ago. Most recently, I said farewell to one of the past presidents of the Midwest Diocese, Elaine Shaheen, who was one of my travel partners for many years. May her memory be eternal! At last week's PLC, I reconnected with many faithful women from across the Midwest and met several new women who I know will make their mark on this organization in the future.

As I reflected on the last 21 years of involvement in the Antiochian Women, I find that the greatest treasures are the relationships I have had with so many women, past and present. Every meeting I attend, I meet someone new who becomes a valued friend. I am happy to be a part of the work of this organization, but my greatest reward is in the relationships I have with so many of you. For this I thank God! I thank God for the new friends that I will meet in the future as our paths cross, because we don't meet people by accident; we meet each other because God planned for us to meet; He has work for us to do!

Together we are the hands and feet of the Antiochian Women. We need each one of you to carry out the work, to form those relationships, and to move this organization into the future!

May God bless you all!



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN – THE NORTH AMERICAN BOARD

❖ ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA ❖



**Submitted by Kh. Luanne Barr
St. Elias – Austin, TX**

A request from a friend for an article. A longing to write. A blank page. Unsure of where to begin, I decided to just begin. With a prayer to guide my words and thoughts and to be open to what comes forward. What is most on my mind today is gratitude. A simple thing, and yet a thing that is often taken lightly or ignored, even reduced to a fleeting feeling or worse, something we just say. What is gratitude? Gratitude is more than a feeling. It is an act of faith, a willingness to trust that God is present and working even when the path ahead is unclear. For me, it is a state of mind – one of contentment and acceptance. It carries with it a peace, even when the circumstances do not fit or are not peaceful. Gratitude for the many joys life brings. Gratitude for the struggles that are placed on our path, giving us the opportunity to deepen our faith and open ourselves to God. It is on my mind these days as I have reached what I will call a precipice in my life. Not an end but a jumping off spot or perhaps a time to turn and reroute. I'm reminded of my GPS when I ignore its directions displayed on the screen, knowing inside how and where I want to go and the brief moment of panic when I decide to turn instead of following the route suggested. And then the small spinning wheel and simple "rerouting" message. In seconds, the display affirms my decision and shows the route again, slightly varied by my actions.

So, what is this new precipice, this turning point for me? It was a decision to leave my work, having worked consistently for 53 years, to "retire", but most of all to make a huge life change and to search for what it means, what it will mean, and what it can mean. Looking back on my life of work, I feel true gratitude for the opportunities, the learning, and the growth.

I began working when I was 13. Alaska's YES (Youth Employment Services) program helped youngsters from low-income families find jobs. Looking back all these years later, I know it wasn't to provide an income that would help the family. I believe instead it was to provide a foundation for understanding the value of working and the importance of being useful and productive. I have no recollection of what I did with the small salary that came with my first job. I clearly remember that I sat in an office on Elmendorf Air Force Base and answered the telephone when it rang. "1898th Aviation Company, Sgt. Fortenberry's office. How may I help you?" I don't remember Sgt. Fortenberry. I don't recall how I got to and from work. I just remember that it filled my summer days at age 13. Other jobs are less clear in my memory. A bank, a hardware store, selling Avon, picking up trash at a large park and preparing baseball fields for games. At some point I got my first "real" job at an insurance company. I found work that challenged and energized me. Over the next decade I grew from accounting clerk to supervisor, then director of IT, and eventually Assistant Vice President. They were good years. I took a one-year break and moved to Tennessee to be part of a young adult program – a "big house" where young Christian men and women lived and worked together to deepen their faith. Even there I worked on the farm mowing hay, planting

blueberries, collecting eggs, and cooking and had a part-time paid job as a housekeeper for a wealthy family who owned horses and lived in what was a mansion to me. I returned to Alaska because my father had survived a heart attack and the pull to return to family was strong. I stayed nearly a year, working again at a bank and being part of an evangelical team that worked to spread the word of Christ and His church. Eventually I returned to California and integrated back into my old insurance company job and over the next years, I married, had children, moved, and moved again, all the time continuing to work. The truth is I love working. There were some jobs I did not love. But I persevered and worked through those. It's what you did. It's who I was. It's who I am.

Without focusing too much on my "last" job, I will say that it was good work in many ways. And yet like many large companies, the demands were high and the work was never-ending. As a Program Manager in Operations for a worldwide and well-known grocery business, it was wearing me out and as each day ended, I felt no energy for anything else. For the first time in my life, I began to think that this emptiness for anything else, this weariness down to my bones, could not be good. I didn't like the way the GPS was directing me and yet I felt too tired to come up with an alternate route. I'm certain part was my age. And part of it was the commitments I have outside of work to family and church. After much thought, conversation, and planning, my husband and I agreed it was time to shift. We would figure out what life would be for me without a set Monday-Friday, morning till evening job. How we would manage as a family without that second income. It was scary. It was also a big relief.

So here I am, nearly 66 years old and on a new journey to find how I will fill my time. I am letting the GPS spin and say "rerouting" and trusting that God will lead the process. I am frightened that I will become bored, feel useless, and become lazy. And then I am reminded of gratitude. I am truly grateful for the life God has provided up to now and am grateful for this new opportunity to forge a new routine. To find my own day-to-day rhythm that brings joy and finds value. To discover a new source of energy and a new way to serve my husband, my children, my church community, and most importantly God. I'm certain many of us face these "precipices" through our lives – these moments where we need to reroute. I will ask for your prayers as I reroute my life and would encourage each of you to be open, even eager, to accept change, allowing God to lead in the discovery of what is ahead.

After all, when God is guiding the journey, every reroute can become a path to something unexpected and beautiful—something to be grateful for, trusting that even when we cannot see the road ahead, God already knows the way.



An Unexpected Journey

Submitted by Kim Whiteside -- St. Vladimir Seminary

Four years ago, my husband John, and I, along with our two youngest children, moved from Texas to Tennessee. We had no idea that two years later we would be loading a U-Haul and moving again, this time to New York, to St. Vladimir's Seminary. I am a native Texan, and he had moved to Texas to marry me twenty-two years prior. We stayed & raised our first two sons to adulthood. We had, however, never really planned to stay there long-term. We longed for more rain, more green & a house with some land. The time finally came. My husband had taken a new job which allowed us to live basically anywhere. We were so excited to finally be able to "find some land," and live out the rest of our days there.



We were welcomed with open arms in Jackson, Tennessee, by the wonderful community of St. Nicholas parish. A growing mission parish, they enthusiastically embraced us and it quickly came to feel like home. We began to discuss the possibility of John entering the St. Stephen's program to become a deacon to serve our parish. However, something else was happening. The job that allowed us to move had almost immediately ended. My husband was faced with finding a job in a local economy that was not particularly vibrant, especially considering his particular work experience. Thus ensued a stressful period of applying, waiting, a frustrating job interview or two, and ended with nothing encouraging. For someone who has worked since he was a young teen, this was incredibly discouraging. We couldn't understand what God was doing, but we sought to understand, and to be patient in the meantime. We asked Him to show us what it was we needed to learn from this. It would come in time.

Over a year after we had moved to Jackson, I was reading Sayidna Saba's epistle imploring men to consider the priesthood. It began to dawn on me why things had not worked out at all like we had hoped they would. This was not, after all, the place where we would live out our days. I knew in that moment that John would not stop at the diaconate, but that God was calling him to the priesthood. We had discussed the idea of him eventually pursuing the priesthood several years earlier, when we had converted to Orthodoxy. At the time we had agreed that it was not time to pursue that path, and had not thought anything further about it. All of the sudden, that path was before us, and we were being asked to traverse it, if we were willing.

We were, indeed, willing, but we had no idea what it entailed. We knew pretty much nothing about the Orthodox seminaries or how the process even worked. John approached our priest, who smiled and admitted that he had foreseen this turn of events, even though we had not. A positive sign, no doubt. Things were slow for a few months, with us mostly just talking about "the possibility," and figuring out next steps. In late January of 2024, we rowed our kayak into the rapids, so to speak. John had officially submitted his application to the Archdiocese, and we began the turbulent process of receiving a blessing to attend seminary and pursue the priesthood.

Around the time that our thoughts had first turned towards the possibility of seminary, St. Phanourios had made himself known to me and proven himself a friend. His friendship and intercession was exceedingly valuable to us during this time. He is indeed, a Finder of Lost Things, but he was so much

more than this, truly working out situations that sometimes felt impossible to detangle. Knowing he was interceding for us and helping us was such a comfort to us during this time. I had also begun reading the book, "Ascetic of Love," about the life of St. Gavriilia. Her radical trust of God and acceptance of absolutely wherever and however He sent her was the encouragement I needed to truly embrace this next season of our life.

Just the other day, I was telling a friend whose husband just graduated, and is waiting for his permanent assignment, how you cannot anticipate the wild ride that life is when you say yes to God, particularly when it involves a path to the priesthood. Beautiful, wonderful things will happen, but oh, so does the suffering, the difficulty, the truly confounding. The evil one pulls out all the stops to discourage you, to make you afraid, to make you despair, and give up. I could tell you a lot of stories, both my own and others', but I will leave those for another day. In the end, we received a blessing, and eleven months after saying "yes, God, we will follow you wherever you want us to go," we were headed to Yonkers, New York, to St. Vladimir's Seminary.

We sold our beautiful home and sold or gave away many of our possessions. We felt like we had downsized a lot and were ready to move into our seminary apartment. When we arrived, a group of adults and kids descended upon us, and had our truck unloaded within 30 minutes or so. When they were done, we were left with a small apartment filled to the brim with our already much-culled possessions. It felt like a game of Tetris at the very top of the screen, when you know you're about to lose the round. There was hardly an open space to move something in order to put something else where you wanted it. If I had it to do over again, I would definitely bring even less stuff, but we got to work unpacking, organizing, and, yes, giving away a lot (thankfully there are plenty of people on campus who usually want what you are offering). Just a few days later, John was off to the yearly seminarian retreat at Antiochian Village and thus began the intense pace of seminary life.



Life and developing friendships carried on, as they always do. I discovered that one of the single female students shared a birthday with our daughter, so we invited her over for cake to celebrate them both. Early on we made friends with a young couple expecting their first child. In early November, on our 24th anniversary, I was blessed to be present at her homebirth for their baby girl. For Thanksgiving, we opened our apartment, and a large contingent of students and their families, as well as some faculty, came together and filled both our apartment and the common room across the hall from it, with food and fellowship. We finally settled into this very niche life of a seminary community.

Perhaps I should take a moment here to give a glimpse into the daily life of a seminarian. Their day begins at 7:30 with daily matins. Classes begin at 9:15 am, followed by lunch in the refectory, followed by choir or chant rehearsal, or student council meeting, or other various society meetings. Then there is the afternoon class block, then daily vespers. Their day doesn't end until 5:40 pm or so. Between all their classes, they often have over 100 pages of reading a week, not to mention papers, tests, and community service duties. For the Antiochian seminarians, Sunday is a very full day. Each of them is assigned to a local parish to be mentored by the priest and to serve the parish however he is needed. In this area, "local" can be anywhere between five minutes away or over an hour away (and longer on the way home). Because of these long days, and only one car, many wives and children opt to stay on campus and attend liturgy at the chapel. This is a blessing for us, but makes for a long, lonely day for our husbands. We look forward to all going to

church together again! Whenever we do join our husbands though, we have all been welcomed and loved by the parishes. They seem to appreciate the opportunity to minister to us before sending us out to minister to others.

In the midst of all of this busyness for the men, the wives have to find their footing. For me, with only teenagers, I have a lot of freedom. I go on walks, meet with friends, (unofficially) audit classes, or just be the homemaker I enjoy being. For others, these can be long days with young children. The nice thing is if you want company, there is almost always someone else nearby who also wants it, and fellowship is little more than a text or a knock away. Sometimes you feel lonely, but don't want company—the close proximity of all of these people you know can feel like too much—at least for an introvert like me. Overall, though, it is a special environment that I don't take for granted, and I know I will miss it when we leave. I've had many opportunities to encourage younger mothers, or single women (and sometimes men), and they've encouraged me too. I get to be a sort of surrogate auntie to so many of the kids here, and I always love having conversations with them or getting a hug or baby snuggle.

Our second year brought a couple of big changes for us, as well as some new additions to our god-family. The first was a move across campus to a bigger apartment. The second was John's ordination to the diaconate, in December. That meant new responsibilities and even earlier departure times on Sundays. What a beautiful experience it has been though. He threw himself into learning all of the deacon's parts, which is a lot more work than I had ever realized. Learning all of the variable parts for the Lenten and Holy Week services was extra work on top of his regular coursework, but he took it on joyfully. It has been so special to see him step into this new role and truly flourish. Just before Christmas we welcomed a new goddaughter, the daughter of dear friends made here at seminary. The day after the seminary's commencement, we were sponsors at the wedding of two seminarians who had become a part of our life here (remember that single young woman whose birthday was the same as our daughter's? Now she's our daughter too.). A hard, exhausting, full, beautiful second year. Now we are gearing up for our third and final year, answering a myriad of questions from incoming students, planning welcome events, deciding on the things we definitely still want to do before we leave, and already paring down our possessions even more because we know we will be moving in a year and maybe this time we it won't be quite as hectic (it probably will be though...).



Over 25 years ago, when we married, we thought our path was to go into ministry. When God closed that door, we just went on with our lives, but every once in a while, we would wonder if it was time. It wasn't time yet, because we still had a lot of work to do on ourselves, with God's loving help and guidance. We often talk about how we were not ready for seminary even one year earlier than when we came. After multiple careers for him, and parenting and personal humblings for me, we were finally where we needed to be to take this step. I hope it has allowed us to be a positive addition to the community here. How great is God's work in our lives and His love for us!



Involvement in *Antiochian Women* Provides Opportunities!



Opportunity - to build deep and long-lasting relationships with women who share the same faith walk, across the generations and with varied life experiences. To learn from each other – to share wisdom and also to share mistakes and life lessons learned.



Opportunity - to seek suggestions and solutions to many of the practical challenges life presents from Sisters in Christ who have walked those steps in their own lives.



Opportunity - to share Christ and HIS Holy church while strengthening our own walk with Christ.



Participation provides our women the blessing to *serve* in His holy church:



Serve by supporting both local communities & Orthodox ministries that serve all over our globe.



Serve by growing your personal spiritual journey & to keep yourself committed and accountable.



“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” Proverbs 27:17

Spiritual Sisters Circle Ministry: A Place for Women to Connect Through Christ

Submitted by Dina Khoury, Founder, Spiritual Sisters Circle Ministry
St. George – Cicero, IL

As women, we often find ourselves serving in many roles. We are mothers, wives, daughters, caregivers, professionals, and servants within our churches and communities. Between work, family responsibilities, church commitments, children's activities, and the countless demands of everyday life, it is easy to reach the end of the day physically exhausted and spiritually drained. Many evenings, after everyone was asleep and the house was finally quiet, I would listen to Orthodox podcasts, prayers, or spiritual reflections before bed to find peace. During those moments, I found myself reflecting on questions, struggles, and life experiences that I wished I had a safe place to discuss with other women or even ask our priests about.

Around the same time, I was serving as Secretary of the Antiochian Women at Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero, Illinois. Writing the meeting minutes allowed me to see the incredible work being done by our Antiochian Women's ministry. We planned beautiful social gatherings, luncheons, and fundraisers that brought women together. While I appreciated all of these activities, I felt something was missing. We had opportunities to socialize and serve together, but I felt we needed a deeper spiritual connection that would allow women to share their struggles, ask questions, and grow together in Christ.

With that idea in mind, in Fall 2024, I spoke with Fr. Saba about starting a ministry focused on women's spiritual growth. I explained the need I saw among women in our parish. He liked the idea and gave his blessing, and that's how the Spiritual Sisters Circle ministry (SSC) started.

While Bible studies have always been a valuable part of church life, I felt there was room for something different. Bible studies primarily focus on studying and understanding Scripture, while the Spiritual Sisters Circle ministry focuses on applying our faith to the realities and challenges women face today. Women nowadays are balancing careers, raising children, caring for their families, and serving their church communities. We live in a fast-paced world filled with responsibilities and pressures. With all of that, we need opportunities to pause, reflect, and make sure Christ remains rooted in our hearts.

Spiritual Sisters Circle meets once a month in the evening, making it easier for women and moms to join. Our sessions have been full of both tears and laughter. Women have shared stories about marriage, motherhood, and personal struggles. Some of our best conversations have been about overcoming negative thoughts, speaking with grace and kindness, dealing with stress, and learning how forgiveness can bring peace and healing. One of our most meaningful series was titled "Let's Unlearn So Christ Can Rebuild in Us." During those sessions, we talked about the difference between what we learned from our culture and what comes from Christ. Women reflected on messages many of us grew up hearing, such as the belief that a woman must always carry every burden alone, remain silent about her struggles, or put everyone else's needs before her own spiritual well-being. Some discussions brought tears as

Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Cicero, IL

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN



*Complimentary
EVENT*

Coffee, Tea,
and Cookies

RSVP by
Mon | May 11

SCAN ME

Faith † Fellowship † Sisterhood

<u>DATE/TIME</u> <i>Mon, May 11, 2026</i> <i>7:00 pm - 9:30 pm</i>	<u>TOPIC</u> <i>"Let's Unlearn—Choosing Christ Over Culture and Tradition"</i>
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ALL WOMEN 18+ WELCOME!

women shared deeply personal experiences. Others brought laughter as we recognized the challenges and misunderstandings we have faced throughout our lives. Together, we learned how to unlearn some of those cultural messages and replace them with Christ's teachings.

The response from women has been very positive. Both Fr. Saba and Fr. Gabriel have shared that many women have spoken to them about how beneficial SSC

sessions have been and have asked for more. The discussions often continue long after the session ends, as women connect over the topics and share their experiences through the lens of our Orthodox faith. Our discussions are guided by material thoughtfully prepared by both fathers. I usually choose topics based on women's needs and prepare worksheets to keep the discussion focused and encourage participation. Then, both fathers prepare the spiritual material and lead us through the topic, helping us see life's challenges through God's eyes. At the end of each session, we come together for a short prayer in the chapel. Surrounded by the beauty of the icons and the fragrance of incense, it is a peaceful and beautiful way to end the evening. We go home feeling encouraged and at peace, ready for the days ahead with Christ's words in our hearts.

The impact of the Spiritual Sisters Circle goes beyond the women who attend each month. Women play a vital role in the life of the Church and in the lives of those around them. When women are spiritually strong, it strengthens the home and, ultimately, the Church. As Christ said, "Peace I

leave with you, my peace I give to you" (John 14:27). The peace we receive from Christ is not meant to remain within us; it naturally extends to our families, friends, and parish communities. Just as a small candle can light an entire room, a life centered on Christ can bring light, hope, and encouragement to many others.

My hope is that the SSC ministry will continue to be a place where women grow closer to Christ while finding encouragement and support from one another. In a world that constantly pulls us in many directions, we all need moments to pause, reflect, and reconnect with Him. Just as those quiet moments of listening to Orthodox podcasts and prayers helped me reconnect with Christ at the end of a busy day, my prayer is that the Spiritual Sisters Circle will continue to offer women that same opportunity for spiritual renewal. When we carry Christ in our hearts, His love, His peace, and His light shine through us to those around us.



Precious Prospora

Submitted by Heidi Blair – St. Luke – Garden Grove, CA

My Prospora Journey began decades ago- long before I ever converted to Orthodoxy. But now that I have the blessing of hindsight, I can see how God guided me throughout my life to lead me to this type of service.

More than twenty years ago, my husband was in seminary studying Greek and Hebrew and believe me when I tell you that we were broke. We had to learn many skills during this time, including more cooking at home. The first time we attempted to bake bread, we were actually shocked at how easy it was! Soon, bread baking became a weekly chore and each one of our community house members learned the skill.

Fast forward seven years— my family and I had recently chrismated into the Orthodox Church. Our priest, Father Timothy, handed me a Prospora pan and asked me if I was interested in baking. Of course I was!

That generous gift, of the Gifted Pan, was what put me on the spiritual journey that comes from baking Prospora regularly. I entered the journey thinking it was just going to be a simple matter of baking ‘fancy’ bread each week; I had no idea how beautiful and significant the journey was to become.

How is this baking different from regular baking? Well, it starts, as it should, with prayer. I stand in front of my oven and dough machine with my icon and pray the Trisagion prayers. These prayers are repeated at intervals throughout the process so that the experience becomes quiet and meditative. For a person who struggles to slow down and just pray, this places me into an extended focused prayer session.

Then there’s the awareness that this isn’t just destined to be a delicious loaf enjoyed at lunch or dinner, but that this will end up truly becoming the body of Christ. This part is incomprehensible to me— a true mystery. My hands combine simple flour, salt, yeast, and water, and then God transforms it into something holy. This is such a beautiful metaphor of what God does for us as Christians. We are simple beings, prone to all manner of sin, and, if we are open to it, God will transform us. God will guide us to be more like Christ, just as He will transform my humble loaf of bread.



The final prayer that is said is the Prospora Prayer:

“Dear Lord, this bread that I have baked represents each one in my family and in my congregation. I am offering myself to You, my very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. I place myself on Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept my gift and make me worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give me when You consecrate this bread and give it back to me as Your Precious Body.”

One of my fellow bread bakers often comments that it is an honor and a blessing to be able to bake for the church, and that is the perfect way to describe it. It’s a quiet service, done alone in the heart of the home, the kitchen. There are usually no witnesses to the prayers and meditation. But there is a peaceful communion with Christ as we serve His church.

Antiochian Women 50th Anniversary Icon

Platytera Mounted Icon

This beautiful icon was painted especially for the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America in celebration of our 50th Anniversary. These high-quality reproductions are mounted on 3/4" wood and finished with a keyhole on the back for easy hanging.

5" round icon \$34

8" round icon \$42

10" round \$49

**Special sizes available upon request -- contact info below*

Visit www.APicons.com for this and other icon-related products. Or, follow this direct link: <https://apicons.com/collections/traditional-mount/products/platytera-virgin-and-christ>



Antiochian Women Prayer Card (see 2 pics below)

2-sided 5"x5" heavy card stock, UV coated

features new icon of the Platytera on the front and the Antiochian Women prayer on the back Package of 25 -- \$20.00

Visit www.APicons.com for this and other icon-related product. Or, follow this direct link: <https://apicons.com/collections/specialty-items/products/antiochian-w>



 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



July observed as month of women saints in the Orthodox calendar

July is being observed as a month of women saints in the Orthodox calendar, showing how much Christian women can achieve.



Traditionally, the Romanian Orthodox Church honours Christian women on the “Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women.” During a patronal feast of the Romanian community in Türkiye, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew suggested that July could also be designated as a “Month of Holy Women.”

“We could call July the Month of Holy Women, whose lives show us how much Christian women can achieve when their hearts are filled with warmth, living faith in Christ, and love for their neighbour,” said Patriarch Bartholomew.

July draws attention with its extensive list of holy women mentioned in the Orthodox calendar. Among them are Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Veronica, Great Martyr Marina, Saint Anne, the mother of the Theotokos, and Saint Paraskevi of Rome, the protectress of the Romanian community in Turkey.

This abundance of female saints provides a unique opportunity for all women to reflect on the lives of those who transcended human frailty and acquired Christian virtues. Holy women are examples of faith, courage, and devotion, serving as spiritual models for today’s women.

A month dedicated to holy women can be seen as an opportunity for the entire ecclesiastical community to highlight appreciation for women.

“The vocation of Christian women today is to witness the faith in Christ crucified and risen, to give and protect life, to promote merciful love towards neighbours, and to bring peace and communion through their presence and work in the Church and society,” emphasized His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania.

*As a title for the Virgin Mary, *Theotokos* was recognized by the [Orthodox Church](#) at [Third Ecumenical Council](#) held at Ephesus in 431. It had already been in use for some time in the devotional and liturgical life of the Church.

Holy Women Celebrated in July

July 4: Venerable Martha

July 6: Martyr Lucia

July 7: Great Martyr Kyriaki

July 8: Martyr Theodosia

July 11: Saint Olga, Equal to the Apostles
and Enlightener of Russia

July 11: Great Martyr Euphemia

July 12: Saint Veronica

July 13: Venerable Sara

July 15: Martyr Julitta

July 16: Martyr Julia

July 17: Great Martyr Marina

July 19: Venerable Macrina,
sister of Saint Basil the Great

July 22: Holy Myrrh-Bearer
Equal of the Apostles Mary Magdalene

July 22: Martyr Marcella

July 23: Martyr Valeria

July 24: Martyr Christina

July 25: Saint Anne, Mother of
the Most Holy Theotokos

July 25: Saints Olympiada and Eupraxia

July 26: Virgin Martyr Paraskevi of Rome

July 29: Martyr Theodota

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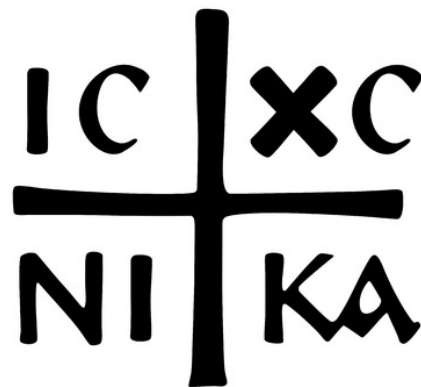
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LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Share "all the beautiful things!" We're looking for poetry, short stories, or a reflection on one of our beloved Women Saints. Share something your daughter, goddaughter, granddaughter, niece, or friend may have written. Do you take photographs? Share a moment that particularly made you aware of God's presence. Are you an Artist, and wouldn't mind sharing your talents with the rest of us? Do you make homemade items? Let AW know about them, so we can share. (Please ONLY email original pictures)
Send to: antiochianwomenla@gmail.com

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Next E-Bulletin:

Fall 2026

Deadline is **September 15th!**

Submit articles to:

antiochianwomenla@gmail.com

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[AntiochianXSisterhood](#)

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.*

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Did you know? In 1976, it was Kh Joanne Allen who wrote the Antiochian Women's Prayer. 22

Many thanks for this beautiful prayer!

(Print out on stock paper and share with others)

