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Diocese

AND MUCH  
MUCH  
MORE,  
INSIDE!

*The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West & The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest*

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# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S WINTER NEWSLETTER

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His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

*“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” Is 40:8*

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,

Your Father in Christ,

**+JOSEPH**

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

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

# A Lesson From a King

A message from our Spiritual Father, Fr. David Hovik



Where would an individual who plotted (and ultimately completed his plan) to have someone murdered, because he wanted his wife, find themselves on a list of righteous individuals? What if a single individual had broken BOTH the Commandment against ADULTERY and the Commandment against MURDER? Welcome to the Life of the Prophet and King David (my patron Saint). What lessons can we learn from his life about both David and the Lord?

Because St. David is so greatly honored by the Church, something remarkable must have occurred after his Fall into Sin. But before we go there, let's ponder his life prior to his BIG FALL.

We know that David was a Shepherd, caring for the flock of his father, Jesse. He was the youngest son of 10 children (8 boys and 2 girls). In his youth, he learned to play the psaltery (a 12 stringed instrument - similar to a harp) and was quite devoted to God. Because of David's deep love for God, the Lord chose him to be King and his slaying of Goliath was a sign of his trust in God.

Saul was afraid to lead his men into battle with Goliath because he didn't trust in God (a sign that he was unfit to be King) but David was fearless, even refusing to wear the armor that Saul provided. Goliath mocked David and David replied (in GREAT FAITH), "*I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty... This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands.*" And God did just that - allowing David to take out Goliath with a single stone from his slingshot and a direct hit to Goliath's Forehead.

The Prophet Samuel then anoints David King, when he is still a Youth, to be Saul's successor. The Spirit of God eventually withdraws from Saul and he cruelly hunts for David to destroy him. David could have taken Saul out but because he was honorable he refused to do so. David had incredible patience. He waited 15 years from the time he was first anointed by Samuel until he became King of Judah, and 5 more years until he became King over all of Israel.

St. David loved God but people that truly love God - FALL. People that are earnestly trying to seek God, like David, SUCCUMB TO TEMPTATION.

This is the history of the Saints & the Life of the Church. The Venerable Theodora, as a young woman, gave in to adultery. The Apostle Peter denied he even knew Jesus. St. Mary of Egypt exposes St. Zosimas' PRIDE. Elder Sophrony abandoned his Orthodox Faith and embraced Eastern Religions.

Yet, Saints Theodora, Peter, Zosimas and Elder Sophrony all have something (of Great Importance) in COMMON with King David: DEEP REPENTANCE! They expressed great sorrow and a firm resolve to CHANGE the DIRECTION of their lives. To move AWAY from the things that were alienating them from God and move TOWARD God, Himself. Psalm 50 is David's great confession of sin and his cry to God for help.

We can see from the lives of all the Saints I noted - a radical re-direction. Theodora becomes a Pious Nun; Peter, becomes one of the two chief Apostles; Zosimas helped get everything straightened out in his Monastery and Elder Sophrony became a spiritual giant in the 20th Century.

With David, the upshot was that God referred to him as *A man after his own heart* in I Samuel 13 and that is repeated in the Book of Acts: *David, a man after my own heart, who shall fulfill my will.*

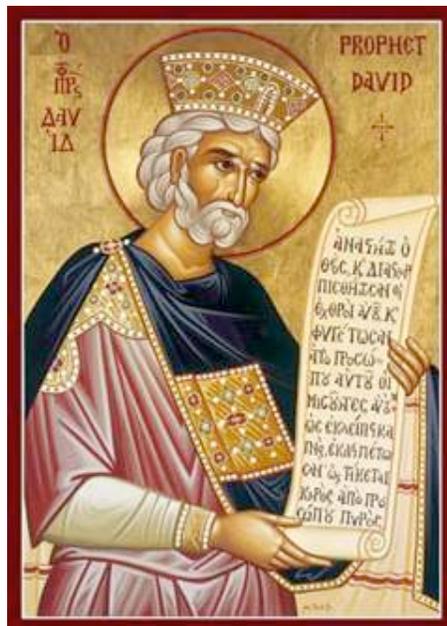
The Life of David is a message of hope for every one of us who are trying to seek God. For every one of us who STUMBLE, who FALL, who do a complete FACE PLANT in SIN!

At those moments of SIN, whatever the degree of severity, the evil one is going to tell you that you are a HYPOCRITE, A PHONEY, and that your SIN is too great or too frequent for God to take your repentance seriously. He will woo you with every reason to continue in your sin or to abandon your pursuit of God. To throw the towel in on your marriage, to refuse to forgive a person who has hurt you, or to refuse to ask forgiveness from a person you have offended, to stop your Rule of Prayer, or going to confession.

Yet, from the Life of David the Prophet and King we see how God refused to give up on him. David thought he had gotten away with BOTH Adultery and Murder. So, God, in his merciful love sends the Prophet Nathan to confront David and expose his sin. Which says a lot about the courage of Nathan because David could have had him beheaded on the spot.

When David is confronted with his sin he becomes BROKEN before God and he pens these words: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy: according to unto the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight...”

David turned and God welcomed Him with open arms! As we prepare for the upcoming Lenten season, God awaits our return to Him with open arms.





THE MOST REVEREND  
METROPOLITAN JOSEPH  
358 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631

# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

☞ A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS ☞

❖ **DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES &  
THE WEST** ❖  
❖ **DIOCESE OF EAGLE RIVER & THE  
NORTHWEST** ❖



Reverend Clergy & Beloved Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst!

Between Christmas & New Years we hear the word “JOY” quite often – but do we ever stop & think about what real JOY is? After a recent health scare, I’ve been giving much thought to the idea of “JOY” and how it impacts our life. Did you know, depending on the translation, that JOY is mentioned in scripture over 150 times?

One of my favorites:

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

While traveling over the holidays, I happened upon a little book titled “Choose Joy.” By making the decision to “Choose Joy” we *choose* to realize that the only true joy comes through love & trust in God – in all aspects of our lives. By making the choice to “Choose Joy” – struggles & challenges in our daily lives are easier to manage.

What are some practical ways we, as Antiochian Women can Choose Joy? We are called to “Serve Christ Through Serving Others.” I’d like to encourage all of you, as the AW in your parish family participate in varied projects & events, to focus on the true joy of the experience. To not just go through the motions of participating, or meeting a goal, but to truly see the face of God in all those you serve.

Throughout the pages of this newsletter you’ll find inspirational messages and information on various ways for the Antiochian Women of your parish to pray, grow in faith & serve others together.

It is my hope that through all your works together, you *Choose Joy*, thereby bringing you closer to HIM.

As always, I love hearing from you – please feel free to reach out!

Wishing you & yours countless joyful blessings!

Love in Christ,

*Charmaine E. Darmour*

Charmaine E. Darmour  
President, Antiochian Women  
Diocese of LA & the West

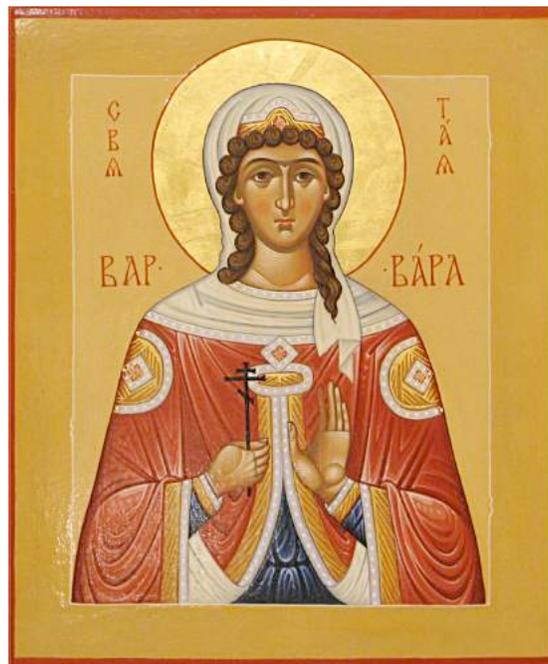
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❖ **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA** ❖

# St Nicholas San Francisco Ladies Celebrate the Feast of St Barbara

by Kh. Eman Baalbaki of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in San Francisco, CA

St. Barbara is an Orthodox Saint who lived during the fourth century. She was a martyr that was beheaded because of her faith in Jesus Christ. Some stories say she is from the Sun Country (Baalbek, Lebanon) while others say she hails from Nicomedia (present day Turkey). While growing up and learning from her teachers about Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity, she placed her faith in Christianity and refused the false idols that her father worshipped. Because of her belief in Jesus Christ, St. Barbara faced many different types of persecution and torture, including mutilation and shameful displays of her body in public. While trying to escape her persecution, Barbara ran into a field of barley while being masked by a miracle of God.



Many Middle Eastern immigrants to the United States have brought with them the popular tradition of preparing the oats and barley in remembrance of St Barbara on her Feast Day. St. Barbara's Day is a very big deal in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Many of the children go house-to-house singing songs about St. Barbara while wearing masks and costumes in remembrance of this beloved saint. While wearing the masks is not as popular of a tradition here in the U.S, preparing the oats & barely is still a widely practiced celebration.



The women of our church prepare the food to serve to the parish, with profits from the sales donated to charity in St. Barbara's honor. We celebrate her life on December 3<sup>rd</sup> of every year by cooking the sweet wheat oats and barley. As our Lord Jesus taught us in John 12:24, "Truly, Truly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." The wheat is a part of our tradition as Christians and it is a resemblance of resurrection. When we eat the barley we remember that we should take our masks from our life, repent, and become the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ again.





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## Membership Report Fall 2018

Christ is in our midst. He is and ever shall be.

As Membership Coordinator, it is my duty to keep an updated list of each parish, the name and contact information for the head of the women's group, and to assist in getting information out to the parishes in our very large Diocese. At this time, I have collected many of the parishes' information, and if you have recently changed leadership in your group, please be sure to write in that information on the sign in sheet circulating throughout our meeting today. This is our only and best way to communicate to all of you upcoming events, deadlines, and other information you need to know. If during the coming year, your leadership changes, please notify me: (818) 919-3870, e-mail: [sambur@juno.com](mailto:sambur@juno.com)

Part of the process of building membership within your parishes is to welcome all women, age 18 and above, into your organization. There is no greater blessing than to have the wisdom of the older ladies, who have been around, being shared with the younger crowd, who are just beginning to understand their role in our organization. This is why it is very important to contact the high school seniors, new women in your parish, and even other women who have not been able to be active members, due to work, family and other commitments. You also want to talk to non-Orthodox women who are attending your church, going thru Catechism classes and preparing to convert to Orthodoxy. All of these women can bring so many talents and experiences that will make your chapters grow in faith, in good works, and in being there to help each other out. Grandmothers want to pass down their favorite recipes for good foods, young moms want to learn how to make those good foods, and others can offer talents of special skills, education and ways to improve the quality of your programs, depending on the different contacts they have with others. It's about everyone working together, old and young, to help each other and build friendships that can last a lifetime. This is our goal for all of the Women in our Diocese.

God bless you this year as you work together. Take care and always be safe out there.

In Christ,  
 Samia Habib – Membership Coordinator

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## Antiochian Women-North American Board ACT OF MERCY 2018-2019

“To “do mercy” means to do good to others in concrete acts of charity. It does not mean, in the first instance, to forgive, or to “let off sinners.” A merciful person is one who is kind, gracious, generous and giving; a helper and servant of the poor and needy.”

–Fr. Thomas Hopko, of Blessed Memory.

The emphasis for our gifts to FOCUS for this year is not only providing nutrition to the children and families in need but expanded to *Educational Support for School Children* who are disadvantaged.

“More than 15 million children in the United States live below the poverty line. Some of the effects of poverty on children are poor academic achievement, poor nutrition, substandard housing and lack of access to basic needs, all of which can result in trauma. We partner with schools and families to ensure students achieve their academic grade level in all subjects by providing **tutoring, textbooks, and school supplies.**

We also address other areas that impact a child’s education such as food insecurity and basic resource needs. We provide children with the **nutritious food and hygiene items** they need to thrive, so that they are healthy and ready to learn when school is in session.

With the help of donors, volunteers, and partnerships with public school districts, FOCUS will continue to serve and improve the lives of homeless and poor children around the United States.”

–FOCUS North America website.

Our Antiochian Women have a beautiful record of fundraising for so many worthy causes. God bless your parish chapter as they continue to work together in tangible ways to show kindness, generosity and God’s love to many in need.

The instructions for sending your financial gifts for the NAB Act of Mercy are on the page following. May God bless and multiply our various efforts to aid the needy in our communities and throughout North America.

Elizabeth Krammes  
 Humanitarian Co-Coordinator  
 indeedandintruth@yahoo.com

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❖ **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH  
 AMERICA** ❖



## **How to Give**

### **How to make out the check**

*Antiochian Women Act of Mercy* on memo line

### **Mail**

FOCUS North America  
PO Box 645039 Pittsburgh, PA  
15264-5039

### **Online**

Visit [www.focusnorthamerica.org/antiochianwomen](http://www.focusnorthamerica.org/antiochianwomen)  
Click the donate button at the top of the page to take you  
to a contribution page on our secure donation portal.  
FOCUS will recognize your gift with a tax receipt.

# An Unexpected Miracle

by Donna Greenhut of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Sacramento, CA

St. Matrona is a popular and much-venerated modern wonder worker in Russia, but remains largely unknown among Antiochian Christians in America. She is commemorated on April 19. I was introduced to St. Matrona 5 years ago, and she has changed my life by her healing intercession. Let me tell you my story.

At age 50, I did the responsible, recommended thing and had a colonoscopy. It turns out that I am just the kind of person they were looking for when the medical establishment drew up their recommendations. What is normally a 45-minute procedure became 2.5 hours as my doctor removed 97 polyps, some so large that he needed me to wake up to “poop” them out. Lab results indicated that within 6 months I surely would have had cancer.

Thus began a 3.5 year period of arguing against my doctors’ advice to have my colon removed. Having no symptoms, I was in no hurry to have major surgery to get rid of a useful, if flawed, organ. Instead, I opted for a “clean out” colonoscopy every 6 months. This wasn’t pleasant, and certainly not the recommended course, but I preferred it to the risks and major side effects of a colectomy.

My gastroenterologist passed me from doctor to doctor in her practice for the long and tedious procedure...removing 50, 70, 90 polyps, many pre-cancerous, every six months. I underwent genetic testing for familial (inherited) polyp syndrome, and when that came back negative, I was testing for every cancer genetic sequence currently identified. All were negative. So I decided to keep my colon and continue, against all advice and protocol, to suffer my biannual procedure.

Two days before my April 2017 procedure, a friend from church gave me an icon of St. Matrona, with a relic, which she had received from family in Russia. She told me that St. Matrona does many miracles of healing. I am not even sure at this time that Natalia knew I had a polyp problem. (This is not something one likes to discuss!) I read about St. Matrona and humbly asked for her prayers.

The following day I met the doctor who was to perform my procedure. She was a tough woman who had been a gastroenterologist for 35 years and really called me out before the procedure. “This is

unacceptable,” she told me. “It is totally against protocol. It is cancer waiting to happen. I will clean out your colon today, but you MUST have it removed.” Severely chastened, I said my goodbyes to the staff at the clinic and said I would probably not be back, since I would be needing no more colonoscopies once I had no more colon.

Forty-five minutes later I woke up in recovery. While I lay there trying to think clearly about why I was finished so soon, this same doctor bustled into the room, thrust her hand at me and loudly proclaimed, “I want to shake your hand. I take back everything I said. You don’t need your colon removed. There were only 2 little nothings.” Rather than insisting on major surgery, she now was of the opinion I could wait 5 years for another colon check. Thanks be to St. Matrona! I was overwhelmed with gratitude and confused feelings of unworthiness.



In mid-December of 2018 (20 months later), I agreed to my gastroenterologist’s pressure to again have my colon checked. What would they find? I felt like I was being disrespectful to St. Matrona by agreeing to it. But my priest assured me that there was nothing wrong with confirming a miracle.

The doctor found 8 -10 insignificant polyps. That is enough that I will still require colonoscopies, but every year or two for now, according to my conservative doctor. Truly God knows exactly what we need for our salvation, for this is enough to keep me prayerful and in humble, grateful remembrance of the healing I've received. Yet no one is overly concerned or talking of major surgery and loss of an organ or issuing warnings of cancer "waiting to happen" anymore.

There is much more that I learned from this experience...a more important message I wish to share with you. Many know that my daughter suffers from several debilitating autoimmune diseases. Many have joined in prayer for her; many saints have been petitioned; many blessings asked and given. Yet she suffers and worsens still. Am I more worthy of healing than my daughter? Heavens, no! Does God love me more than her? Of course not.

My mother's heart breaks at her pain. Sometimes it has seemed more that I can bear. Does God hear our prayers? I know that He does! Would that God had given my healing to Diana. Instead, He gave healing to me, to remind me of His omnipotent power and love.

As parents, we pray for our children for "all things which lead unto salvation." I must trust that Diana's suffering is part of a bigger plan than I can see with my dim vision. I entrust my daughter into the hands of my loving Lord daily. His ways are mysterious. I will continue to ask, to hope, to pray for Diana's healing. I know with supreme confidence that He can heal her at any time, in His perfect time. This gives me some peace. His ways are not my ways. Thy will be done.

*"The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother, for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away; but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Matróna, rejoices with the angels."*

*Troparion of St. Matróna, Tone 8*



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY  
AN AGENCY OF THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS

There are many ways to support & aid this ministry. Learn more by visiting their website at: <https://theocpm.org>

Following are the limitations on what we are allowed to send into the prisons: nothing wood, metal, or containing wood or metal, nothing laminated, nothing with glitter or anything glued on the surface, no hardback books.

That leaves us with softbound books and printed paper icons. Also, we can send in the leatherette Orthodox Study Bibles or softbound KJV or NKJV Bibles.

Any donated materials would need to be mailed to:

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry  
Attn: Shaun Daugherty  
982 Winslow Avenue  
West Saint Paul, MN 55118

Shaun Zossima Daugherty  
Director of Prison  
Correspondence  
Orthodox Christian  
Prison Ministry.

The Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West welcomed our sister in Christ, Joy Corey, an OCPM Board Member, to our PLC Meeting in Portland, Oregon in July 2018. Joy inspired us with her words about this ministry, and the membership voted to donate \$500 to this beautiful ministry!

# The Fall Gathering in Pomona, CA

On the weekend of October 12 - 14, our Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Los Angeles and West met for the Fall Gathering at St. Peter Orthodox Church in Pomona, CA. The weekend began with a beautiful Vespers service on Friday night, followed by fellowship with our sisters and the other Diocese Organizations.

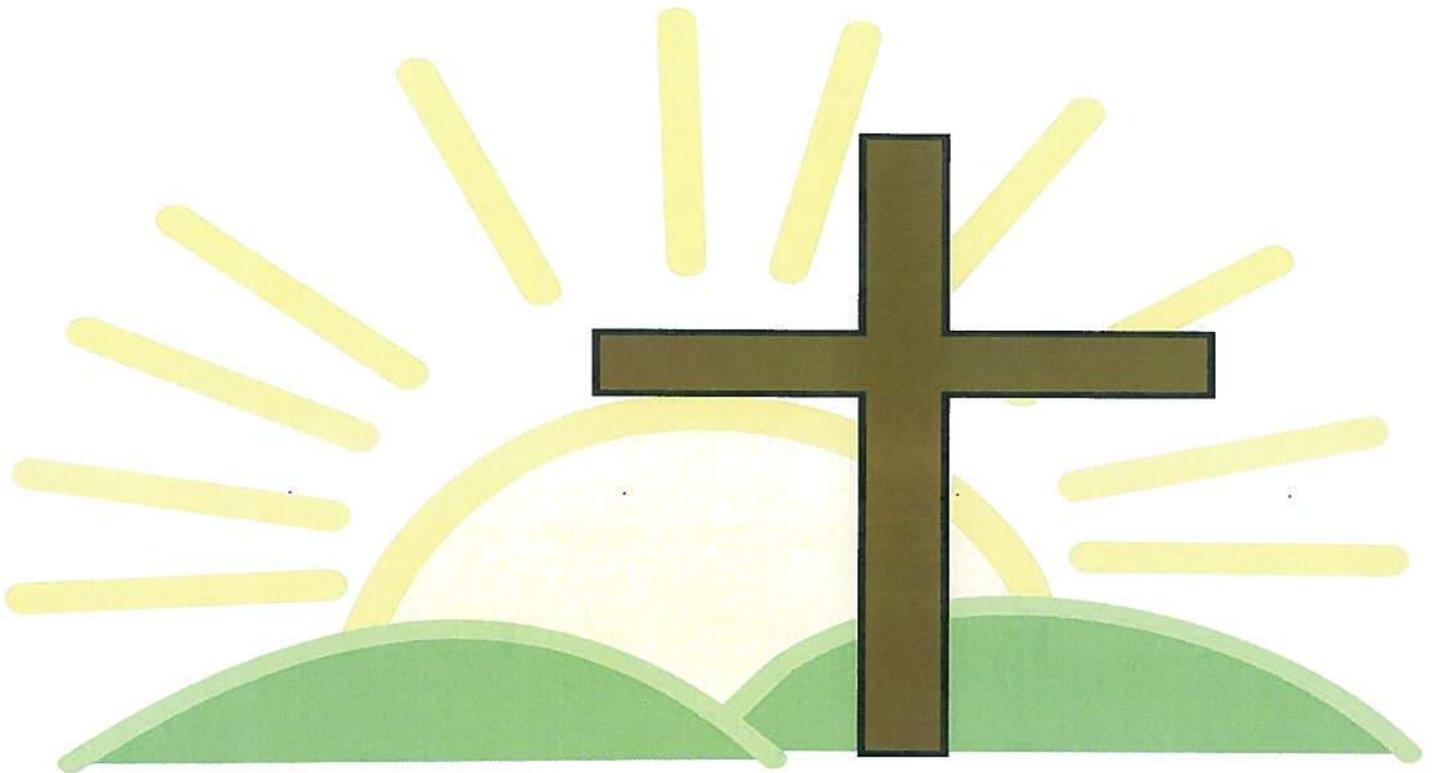


The next morning we joined each other in prayer and in breaking bread, and then began our productive meeting. Our meeting room was filled with our sisters from all over the Diocese, and much work was accomplished. Our Board of Officers gave reports and updated us on our organization. Our conversation focused on the upcoming Mid-Winter Meetings being held at St. Luke's Church in Garden Grove, CA, Orthodox Prison Ministry, and preparing for the upcoming Parish Life Conference in San Diego, CA. As always, our Spiritual Father, Father David Hovik, inspired us with a beautiful message about overcoming addictions and passions, and how we can help our children to do the same. Even though it began to rain, the afternoon was filled with a delicious lunch and a beautiful presentation by Father David, regarding his visit to Mount Athos. This led into a peaceful Vespers service in St. Peter's beautiful church.



Our evening ended with a spirited dinner at a local Mexican restaurant, where all of the organizations enjoyed each other's company. The next morning, we all gathered together to partake in a beautiful Divine Liturgy before we went our separate ways home. As always, this beautiful weekend surrounded by our Diocesan family left us spiritually renewed and ready to go back to our home parishes and serve the Lord.

# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN – DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST, SUNSHINE MINISTRY



***"Let Us Pray Without Ceasing"***  
***Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4:2.***

Dear Sisters in Christ,

We are humbled and honored to be part of this ministry of prayer. Our goal is to establish a women's prayer list for those who are experiencing challenging struggles in life whether medical, emotional or spiritual.

We all value the power of prayer and there are seasons in our lives where we welcome additional prayer. Let us pray together for strength, recovery, comfort and guidance, as a sisterhood in Christ. As part of this ministry, we would like to reach out to those in need with a card such as Get Well, Thinking of You and Memory Eternal to remind us that we are all connected through our extended church family.

Submit prayer requests and addresses for cards to: [awdlawsunshine@gmail.com](mailto:awdlawsunshine@gmail.com)

All names submitted to the prayer list will be added to the Antiochian Women DLAW blog on: <https://antiochianwomenblog.wordpress.com>.

In His service,

Sisters in Christ,  
Connie and Diana



## LIVING

Tatiana Konovalov

Patti Diaz

Julianne Diaz

Kh. Carla Zell

Anna Younathan

Diana Lindahl

Katie Lapp

Melody Bahu

Samira Sand

Marilyn Juroe

Fr. Wayne Wilson

Tammy Salamone

Kh. Joanna Townsend

## NEWLY DEPARTED (within the year)

Bernadine Scholl 1/7/18

Doris Holmes 3/12/18

Reham Turk 4/4/18

Caren Deeb Kouri 6/2/18

Carol Kinan 7/23/18

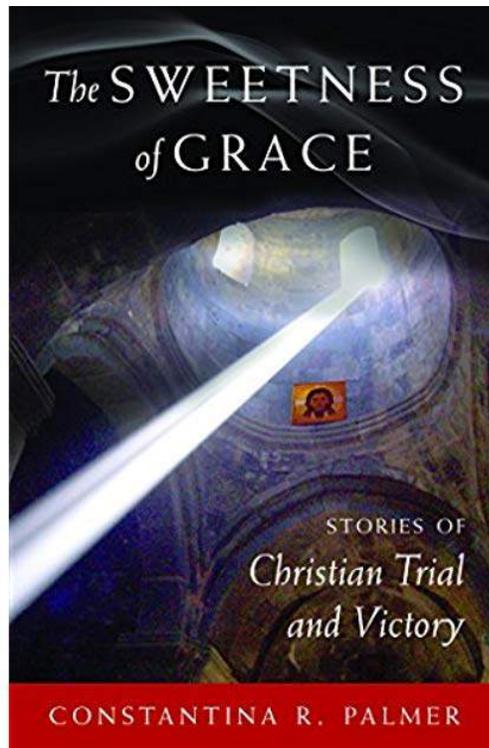
Kh. Mimi Dahdoud, 9/12/18

Paula Hamma 12/3/18

Fudtha Nassar 1/2019

Rev. Fr Ibrahim Chahoud 1/14/19

## ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN BOOK CLUB SELECTION 2018/19



**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 & will not let Him go." This collection of stories of conversations, encounters, & lessons from my experiences with monastics, priests, & laypeople is, in a sense, this exchange: us saying one to another, "I have found Him whom my soul loves; I will hold Him & will not let Him go." “*

**About the Author:** Constantina R. Palmer is from New Brunswick, on Canada's Atlantic coast. She lived in Thessaloniki, Greece for almost six years, where she received a Master's degree in theology from Aristotle University, studied Cretan style iconography, as well as Byzantine chant. She also spent significant time at a number of women's monasteries throughout northern Greece. She & her husband, an Orthodox priest, in the province of Newfoundland & Labrador, serving the only Orthodox parish on the island of Newfoundland & is also a social worker.

**Available from multiple sources including:**

**Ancient Faith & Amazon \$20.95**

**Place a group order with Ancient Faith to receive a discount**

# The Joy of Book Club

by Staci Lundquist of St. Luke Orthodox Church in Garden Grove, CA

For the last several months, women from St Luke's Church have come together as sisters in Christ to read and understand the wonderful book, Becoming A Healing Presence by Albert S. Rossi, PHD. As our group of 10 or so prayed together, ate together, discussed the book and our understanding of it together, I felt we also got to know each other a little better. While we faithfully attend church each Sunday and we briefly gather in the church hall for coffee hour, we do not have the opportunity to spend a lot of time with each person due to everyone's busy schedules. These book club meetings afforded us that chance.



Not only did we learn more about our faith, but about our fellow Orthodox sisters and their understanding of each chapter. New concepts were introduced and feelings were divulged. I strongly urge every Antiochian woman to try and attend any book club meeting offered! You will come away with a deeper understanding of both our faith and your fellow "sisters". Plus, the evenings were always enjoyable! I am looking forward to our next book!



# A Weekend Filled with Blessings

by Jill K. Benza of St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Mesa, Arizona

The weekend of November 9 to 11 was a blessed and busy one at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church in Mesa. Metropolitan JOSEPH visited our parish and, during Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, ordained Seminarian Jesse Robinson to the Diaconate. Dn. Jesse and his wife Chelsea, with their two sons, Julian and Isaac, are part of the St. Ignatius family and attend St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania.

Festivities began Saturday with a Parish Council meeting and a tour of a property that may be available in the near future. The Antiochian Women were honored to meet with Metropolitan JOSEPH in the afternoon. About 40 women gathered to receive his message and to learn about what is happening in the Archdiocese.

A welcoming reception in honor of Sayidna JOSEPH was held following Vespers. A special guest at our parish to welcome the Metropolitan was the Honorable John Giles, Mayor of Mesa, Arizona and his wife Dawn, who not only attended the reception but also attended Vespers.



Sunday was a very joyous occasion with the ordination of Dn. Jesse and the induction of ten people into the Order of St. Ignatius. A luncheon followed Divine Liturgy. Several guests joined us for the festivities on Sunday. One of those guests is a local cardiologist who just happened to be an altar server as a child in Syria at the church where our beloved Metropolitan had been the pastor. Proving again that this is indeed a small world!

A big thank you goes to all the Antiochian Women who worked to make the weekend a success. These same ladies are in "preparation mode" for a huge community bake and craft sale set for December 9, buying gifts for our Angel Tree families and getting ready for Nativity. There never seems to be a dull moment at our parish. The Antiochian Women enjoy the fellowship and spiritual closeness received from working together on behalf of our parish.



THE MOST REVEREND  
METROPOLITAN JOSEPH  
358 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY  
07631

# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE MOST REVEREND METROPOLITAN PHILIP -- FOUNDER  
✕ A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS ✕  
✍ NORTH AMERICAN BOARD ✍



## 2019 ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN PROJECT

### *“Building a New Cathedral”*

*“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.

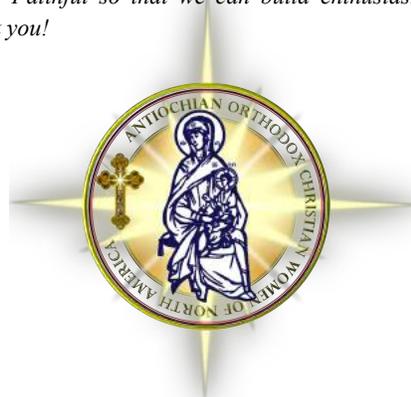
On behalf of the entire North American Board of the Antiochian Women, I thank you in advance for your tireless labor for this worthy cause.

Yours in Christ Jesus our Lord, God, and Saviour,



Kh. Suzanne Murphy  
Vice President of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women  
NAB Project Coordinator

**NOTE:** *This letter and poster is being sent to every parish and mission, to all the Hierarchs of our Archdiocese, and to the NAB officers and diocesan Project Coordinators as a way to kick-off our 2019 PROJECT. Please display the poster and share the contents of this letter with all of Faithful so that we can build enthusiasm for this inspiring project and begin our fundraising efforts immediately. Thank you!*



# 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*

# Upcoming Events in Portland

by Suzi Hadeed of St. George Orthodox Church in Portland, OR

The women of St. George, Portland are excited and enthusiastic about the upcoming year. God willing, we plan to hold Bible studies, go on spiritual and social outings, raise funds for our community as well as for various charities, organize a Fall Harvest All-Saints Day Family night, organize a St. Nicholas Party, prepare a fish luncheon for Palm Sunday for the benefit of the Metropolitan's project in 2019, collect canned food/toys/clothes for Snow Cap Charity, hold bake sales and cooking/baking classes for the younger women of our parish, go on retreats together, participate in Pan-Orthodox presentations by guest speakers, and much more.



Shamasa Debbie did a great job as president last year, and we are sad to see her leave our parish. She and our beloved Deacon Dennis will be moving out of Portland very soon, and we wish them well and all of God's blessings.

**2019 ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT**

**DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST**

**ST. NICHOLAS CAMP, FRAZIER PARK, CA**

**APRIL 12-14, 2019**



**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE**

**DETAILS TO FOLLOW.....**

***For questions, please contact Georgette Malouf at 818-563-2838***

***Or email: [gette0324@yahoo.com](mailto:gette0324@yahoo.com)***

# Photos from Around the Diocese



Book Club at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Ben Lomond, CA.



Antiochian Women gather after the holidays at St. Mark Church in Irvine, CA.



Breast Cancer Awareness Walk put on by the Antiochian Women at St. Mark Church in Irvine, CA.



Sisters together at the Fall Gathering in Pomona, CA!

# Photos from Around the Diocese



Christmas Tea at St. George Church in Phoenix, AZ.



Post-Holiday Party at St. Luke Church in Garden Grove, CA

## Antiochian Women's Retreat



## 4th Annual of the Northwest Deanery

# An Eventful Advent Season with MUCH To Be Thankful For

by Jennifer Medders of St. John Orthodox Church in Eagle River, Alaska



The Sisters of Mary and Martha had a wonderful day of fellowship, fun and laughter during our recent Advent Outreach Project day. Women from our parish, young and old, gathered together the Saturday after Thanksgiving to make ornaments and cookies to sell at our Christmas Bazaar. We planned to use the monies raised to purchase items for a local, homeless teen outreach center that we are supporting this year. One of our sisters shared about her experience working with the homeless; it was a wonderful gathering!



You most likely heard of the big earthquake that hit shortly after that. It happened the day before our Christmas Bazaar. Unfortunately we had to cancel our bazaar, as did others around town. Our parish was not damaged aside from material items, but there are a few schools and businesses that were, and they will be closed for quite some time.



One of our priest's wives had the idea to give the cookies we made to families in a neighborhood close to our community. What beautiful outreach amidst all the chaos of that weekend! The ornaments decorate parts of our cathedral and found homes in other places too. Our Good Works Basket, where we gather items for different organizations throughout the year, is dedicated to the teen outreach center and will be for January as well. MANY donations are already rolling in!

When I reflect on the Advent Season, the earthquake, and how it literally and figuratively shook things up, I am almost speechless. The love of neighbor and community that is on full display is simply amazing! I find myself more focused on Christ and family than ever before, and the stress that can surround gift giving is virtually nonexistent. It's an unexpected silver lining, and I am so grateful.

Alaska is truly one of the most beautiful and peaceful places in the world. Come see us some time!

I CAN DO  
all things  
THROUGH  
CHRIST  
WHO  
strengthens  
♥ ME ♥

**Articles, Interviews,  
and our Prayer List  
can be found on our**



## **Antiochian Women DLAW Blog**

<https://antiochianwomenblog.wordpress.com>

The purpose of this blog is to reach out to the women in our diocese, and to encourage each other to read Orthodox articles written by clergy and laity from Orthodox perspective. The blog will be updated every Sunday morning, and on the last Sunday of each month there will be an article written by one lady from our Antiochian Women's group, which will discuss a personal story about "how God touches us in our life, and if there were time where we strongly felt or experienced His presence, love and providence". There is no doubt that we all have stories to share, and that would be a huge blessing to strengthen each other in our journey of faith, and to support each other. Our beloved spiritual advisor, Father David Hovik is contributing great church Father quotes every Sunday, which will appear on the top of the blog.

Your Sister in Christ,

Ramona Blanski  
Religious Coordinator, Antiochian Women-Diocese of LA & the West

# HAVE YOU “LIKED” US YET????



**Antiochian Women Diocese of Los Angeles  
& the West**

Religious Organization  
435 like this

✓ Liked ▼



**Antiochian Women North America**

Religious Organization · 845 like this

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

✓ Liked ▼



**Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of North America**

Eastern Orthodox Church  
Religious Organization  
7,549 like this

✓ Liked ▼

# KEEP UP WITH US ON FACEBOOK!

## **Antiochian Women's Board Members 2017 - 2019**

### **President**

Charmaine E. Darmour of  
St. Michael Orthodox Church in Van Nuys, CA

### **Vice-President**

Michele Baba of  
St. Luke Orthodox Church in Garden Grove, CA

### **Recording Secretary**

Kh. Barbara Christianson of  
St. Timothy Orthodox Church in Fairfield, CA

### **Treasurer**

Christie Speier Robinson of  
St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Santa Barbara

### **Public Relations**

Lauren Malouf of  
St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles, CA

### **Past-President**

Melinda Bentz of  
Holy Cross Orthodox Church in Palmdale, CA

### **Spiritual Advisor**

Very Rev. Fr. David Hovik of  
St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Arlington, WA

## **Antiochian Women's Coordinators 2017 - 2019**

### **Humanitarian Coordinator**

Beth Krammes of  
St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Riverside, CA

### **Membership Coordinator**

Samia Habib of  
St. Michael Orthodox Church in Van Nuys, CA

### **Retreat Coordinator**

Georgette Malouf of  
St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles, CA

### **Spiritual Coordinator**

Ramona Blanski of  
St. Simeon Orthodox Mission in Santa Clarita, CA

### **Sunshine Coordinators**

Connie Kouri of  
St. Luke Orthodox Church in Garden Grove, CA

Diana Stanford of  
St. Luke Orthodox Church Garden Grove, CA

### **Social Media Coordinator**

Shannon Hartley of  
St. James Orthodox Church of Modesto, CA

# Antiochian Women Prayer

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, without a feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Give us strength to do what is right and help us to go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee.

Amen.



# ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE MOST REVEREND METROPOLITAN PHILIP – FOUNDER

A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES & THE WEST  
DIOCESE OF EAGLE RIVER & THE NORTHWEST

THE MOST REVEREND  
METROPOLITAN JOSEPH  
358 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631



RE: Chapter Dues

Fall 2018

Rev. Fathers and Sisters in Christ,

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

Each year, as we begin a new year for our Antiochian Women ministry, it is also time for our 2018-19 dues to be submitted. Our dues aid our ministry on both an Archdiocese level through the works of our North American Board (NAB) and here in our own Diocese.

Annually the NAB provides scholarships that are granted to women returning to trade school or college in order to support their family. The NAB also provides support to all Antiochian seminarians as well as all of our beloved widowed Khouria, and assorted administrative necessities.

Here in our Diocese of LA & the West, we too provide support to the seminarians & widowed Khouria from within our Diocese. We donate scholarships to the Youth Music Ministry, and annually we give scholarships for ladies to attend the annual spring retreat. We've also adopted a child, "Maria" from Children's Relief Fund. At this year's PLC we voted on a one time gift in support of the Orthodox Prison Ministry. Your chapter dues also serve to support the work by the diocesan board.

None of this would be possible without each parish supporting the work of the Antiochian Women through the paying of annual dues. Annual dues are \$250 with \$100 being sent to the North American Board for their duties and work across our Archdiocese. While missions are not required to pay dues, they are *encouraged* to contribute what they are able. Please send your check in the amount of \$250 by November 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 to Christie Robinson, Treasurer and please be sure to include the attached form. *\*\*Canadian parishes – are kindly reminded that the \$250 is in U.S. funds\*\**

Thank you for your commitment to our ministry. Our work is only possible through your support and prayers.

Christie Speier Robinson

Treasurer

Antiochian Women Diocese of Los Angeles & the West and Eagle River & the Northwest

805-455-4312

[Christie.d.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:Christie.d.robinson@gmail.com)

