

# *DIAKONIA*



Winter 2007

*Christ is born...*



*Glorify Him!*

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America  
A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others*

# The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan PHILIP  
Founder

The Right Reverend  
Bishop JOSEPH  
Overseeing Hierarch

## NAB Board

V. Rev. John Abdalah, Spiritual Advisor

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 Violet Robbat ..... Vice-president  
 Kh. Terry Rogers ..... Recording Secretary  
 Kh. Barbara Baz ..... Treasurer  
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### *Antiochian Women's Prayer*

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

**DIAKONIA** is a Newsletter of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women, an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and is published quarterly in the months of September, December, March and June.

### **PUBLICATION GUIDELINES:**

#### **Deadlines**

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

#### **Preferred Methods of Submission**

- E-mail as an attachment to:  
teta.of.9@sbcglobal.net
- Submit your article on a CD or memory stick to Lucy Hanna, 1853 Kensington Road, Corona, CA 92880.
- FAX typed, double spaced articles to (951) 736-0800.

#### **Submission Details**

- Please include your name and the phone number where you can be contacted for questions.
- Attach a hard copy for reference.
- Keep a copy. Articles will not be returned. Photos will be returned if requested.

#### **Content**

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

In this issue of the **DIAKONIA** we highlight the **Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.**

In each issue we 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.

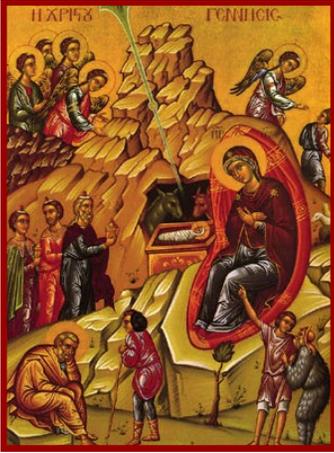
Please see page 11 for the schedule of publication.

### **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 beloved Metropolitan PHILIP it is "**Theology in Action**".



*The following message is His Grace Bishop JOSEPH's message to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West. The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America extend their best wishes to their Hierarchical overseer, His Grace Bishop JOSEPH, for a blessed Nativity Feast and a very happy and healthy New Year.*



The Right Reverend, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, Venerable Monastics, and all the Faithful of the Holy Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:

*“By the pleasure of the Father, the Word became flesh, and the Virgin gave birth to the incarnate God. The star spreads abroad the tidings: the wise men worship, the shepherds stand amazed, and the creation is filled with mighty joy.”*

– St. Andrew of Jerusalem

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Master in a cave, so that we may see God in the flesh, by the illumination and reception of the Holy Spirit. Christ today opened for us the heavens and gave us access to spiritual things which happened in a manger, yet they are heavenly. When our Lord Jesus Christ, Who sits on the right hand of the Father, lies in a manger, and when He made us His children by putting on our flesh, how can all these be other than heavenly things? All these things make this feast that we celebrate bright, splendid and heavenly.

In His birth we are new or rather we are made new. Christ became Himself the firstborn of all the new creation of human beings, so that He may give us the new heavenly covenant. After having made promises innumerable, by assuming our flesh Christ gave us the new covenant, the adoption as children, and His divine glory. Christ did not leave this earth destitute of His presence, but He was born of a Virgin to create intimacy with us. We have been delivered from the shadow, the slavery of the law. We have risen above the law, climbing the ladder of the life of the New Testament. We have been lifted up on high to share the life of the Lawgiver and have ourselves become lawgivers rather than keepers of the law.

If we draw near to God born in the manger we will abide by the new Covenant and become this new Covenant decreed for our glorification. In this Covenant we are edified by the spiritual law which has a shadow of the good things to come.

Let us then make our soul a new Covenant. There is no hindrance if we have the will. For here it is only necessary to have the will and all the rest follows. Christ says, “I desire that they also, may be with me where I am.” A covenant ought to have witnesses and we are the witnesses. We are sent by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the covenant of Christ.

At this holy moment Christ makes us divine by the power of His Incarnate Humanity. Let us scrape off this old age, get rid of our old conduct unworthy of the Spirit, and purify our conscience from dead and false works. Let us see how Bethlehem has introduced us to the new covenant and the paradise that is within the cave. There we will find heavenly joy.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and holy Nativity, I remain,

+ JOSEPH

*Bishop of Los Angeles and the West*

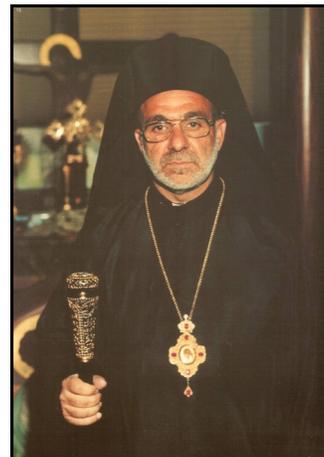
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



To the Beloved Women of the Dioceses of the East:

May God bless you always.

As I am sure you know, the Church holds in high esteem the memory of exceptionally holy Christian women who, enduring their time on this earth, assisted many of their fellow believers both physically and spiritually. You are called to be such witnesses. It should be no surprise to you that the Church encourages you to seek the continued intercessions of these Christian women now that they have passed into the Church Triumphant. You women of the East are called to be servants of God. Both the Old and New Testaments witness beyond doubt to the important role that women have played in the history of salvation. This short article does not permit me to speak in detail about the Theotokos, St. Thekla, St. Barbara, St. Katherine, the Ointment Bearers, the Deaconesses, and many other women who ministered and who continue to minister to the Church and Christ. You are called to be instruments of Christ’s divine purpose in history. I direct you to observe your own parish. You will find women serving God on parish councils, in Christian education, by singing the liturgical responses, and in the direction of youth activities. Our Church teaches that all of mankind is called to serve God. In God’s eyes both women and men are equal in their service because both were redeemed by Him. We read in Galatians 3.28 that “there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”



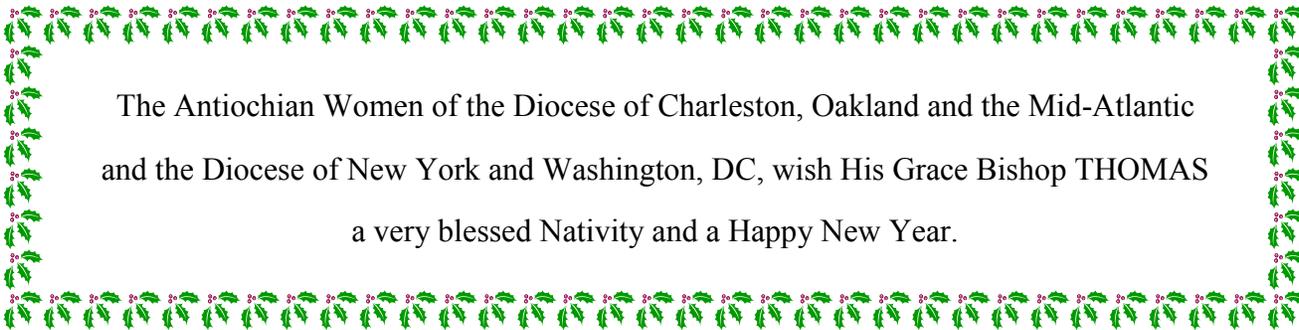
In conclusion, I encourage the devout Christian women of the East to give testimony to our Lord. Indeed, you should ask the intercessions of the women Saints who preceded you. Equally important is that you be people of prayer whom your friends and family feel comfortable calling upon to offer intercessions for their souls. I think this is a fair statement: God is well pleased when the faithful are people of prayer. Once again, I direct you to the sanctity of prayer. I refer you to Revelation 5.8, which says, “The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders bowed down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

Humbly, I ask for your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

+ Bishop THOMAS

Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic



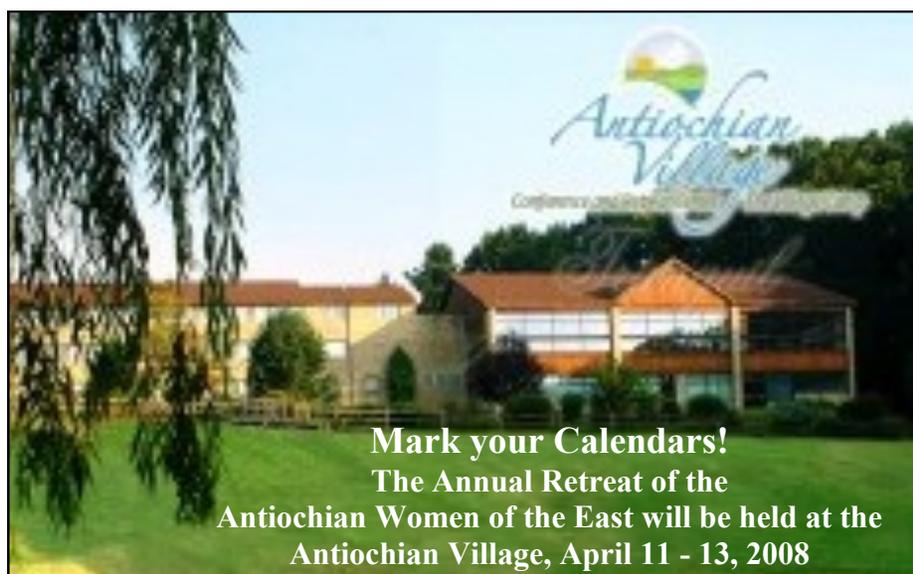
The Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington, DC, wish His Grace Bishop THOMAS a very blessed Nativity and a Happy New Year.

The Antiochian Women of the East call ourselves 'AWE' since we are in Awe of Our Creator and His work in us and through us. We also chose this AWESome name as a simple way to describe our somewhat complicated structure made up of two dioceses, with two hierarchs. Officially we are **The Diocese of New York and Washington DC** under Metropolitan PHILIP, and **The Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic** under His Grace Bishop THOMAS.

This past summer at our Parish Life Conference we came together from CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV to meet in the beautiful horse country north of Baltimore, Maryland hosted by Holy Cross Church--famous for its Khouria, the Orthodox Author and Speaker, Frederica Mathewes-Green. This small host parish brought in speakers from all over the world to expand on the theme of Orthodox Unity through Missions.

The AWE meeting and brunch on Thursday was no exception and featured a number of special people in addition to our beloved Hierarch, Bp. THOMAS; and the NAB recording secretary from Kentucky, Dianne O'Regan. It was also our great joy to hear from Mary Ann Khoury, founder and director of *Outreach Alaska*. We were in AWE to hear what God has done through one lady from Wichita, Kansas who became inspired by the American Orthodox heritage that we all have from Alaska and has sought to serve the impoverished clergy, seminarians, and faithful of the indigenous Orthodox people of Alaska. It was our additional thrill to be able to welcome back one of our own dear ones who accepted the monastic tonsure after hearing a call from God while on a short term mission in Greece. Sister Ignatia (formerly Sara Bitar, of Little Falls, NJ) was infinitely patient in answering all our many questions about daily life and spirituality in a monastery. For entertainment while we ate, we also enjoyed a 'virtual pilgrimage' to central Russia and the tomb of St. Seraphim of Sarov, including slides and a presentation on the life of this beloved saint by someone who had gone on pilgrimage there this year. As a result, a number of local chapters were motivated to study St. Seraphim this year in their home parishes.

Also enthused by the AW efforts to 'Care for those who Care for Us', the host parish planned a number of new events focusing on our clergy. Borrowing an idea from the SW region, we had a special '*Pamper the Khouria*' mini spa complete with facials, pedicures, therapeutic massages, a chocolate fountain, a pick-a-gift game, and a lovely tea service. On Saturday we got to see the clergy really shine at our *Iron Chef Clergy* cook-off, loosely based on the famous cooking show, which brought rave reviews, howls of laughter, and lots of satisfied, smacking lips from the hungry crowd. Now a number of our AWESome local priests sport a lovely black apron with a white tab clergy collar and a lovely plaque describing their culinary prowess and the dishes they made! Even our kids are AWESome here, as many agreed to offer their Creative Arts Festival artwork for sale to benefit the mission of their choice in the *Art Gallery with a Heart*, with a number of their beautiful works also bringing in 100's of dollars for missions at the *Art Action* held during the breaks at the Grand Hafli. All in all an AWESome summer in the East.



# Fifty Years of St. Nicholas: the Legacy Realized

By Richard L. Marrash

The long journey begun in the turmoil of the early twentieth century has reached its final destination. Today the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of those early Syrian immigrants reap the fruits of their forebears' struggle to forge a new life in America. Having the benefits of security, health, and education in the land their parents chose for them, the succeeding generations have moved into numerous professions adding their contributions to American society as businessmen, educators, lawyers, doctors, politicians, and specialists of many kinds. Because of that wonderful gift, freedom of opportunity, they have come to enjoy the success and prosperity made possible for them by those who came before. The parish of Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church of Bridgeport, a community that has grown to 241 families, is living testimony to the faith and devotion, courage and tenacity of that early band of new Americans from Syria.

On this extraordinary occasion, fifty years after the dedication of St. Nicholas of Bridgeport, Connecticut as a new parish in the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, it is particularly fitting that we, the parishioners of Saint Nicholas, honor the memory of the founders of our community—they were our fathers and mothers, our grandfathers and grandmothers. This unforgettable milestone in the life of the St. Nicholas' parish of Bridgeport is an enduring tribute to them. Their dream has been realized.



Metropolitan PHILIP addressing the parishioners who attended the Saturday night reception hosted by the Ladies of St. Nicholas. Standing next to Sayidna is Samar Sakakini, Ladies 'President and sitting on his left is Deacon Sami Bal.

Once again we are privileged to have our beloved Metropolitan Philip, primate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, to offer the prayers and lead the commemorative services. Indeed, our parish is doubly blessed since it was also Metropolitan Philip who officiated at ceremonies celebrating the termination of the mortgage on our church building twenty years ago.

The weekend of 15 and 16 September 2007 comprised an array of events that included receptions for the clergy, evening reception sponsored by the Ladies and the FABULOUS performance by our children, meetings, and services of dedication and remembrance—a truly festive program culminating in an elegant finale, the grand banquet at the Stone Barn in Monroe, Connecticut.

Honored clergy at the banquet included: His Eminence Metropolitan Philip Saliba, and Archdeacon Hans El-Hayek; our pastor, Fr. Romanos Malouf and Khouriyeh Laurie; former St. Nicholas pastor, Fr. Joseph Purpura and Khouriyeh Kathleen; and Deacon Sami Bal and wife Susan. Besides St. Nicholas clergy, several Antiochian clergy from nearby parishes as well as clergy from other local Orthodox churches attended this celebration.

Special guests included: Attorney Raymond J. Ganim and wife Gladys, and Mr. Robert Hawie and wife Ann.



Two generations - The Children of St. Nicholas standing in front of an enlarged picture of the founders of the church during the Saturday night reception.



Sunday Banquet - Al Zamery, Parish council President  
 Sayedna Philip, Father Romanos Malouf, Khourieh Laurie Malouf,  
 Father Deacon Sami Bal, Susan Bal and Lynn Touma



Officers of the Antiochian Women of  
 St. Nicholas Church of Bridgeport, CT  
 with Sayedna: From left to right:  
 Samar Sakakini - President,  
 Sayedna Philip,  
 Susan Kosturko - Treasurer  
 Nahida Abraham - VP  
 Patti Boros - Secretary

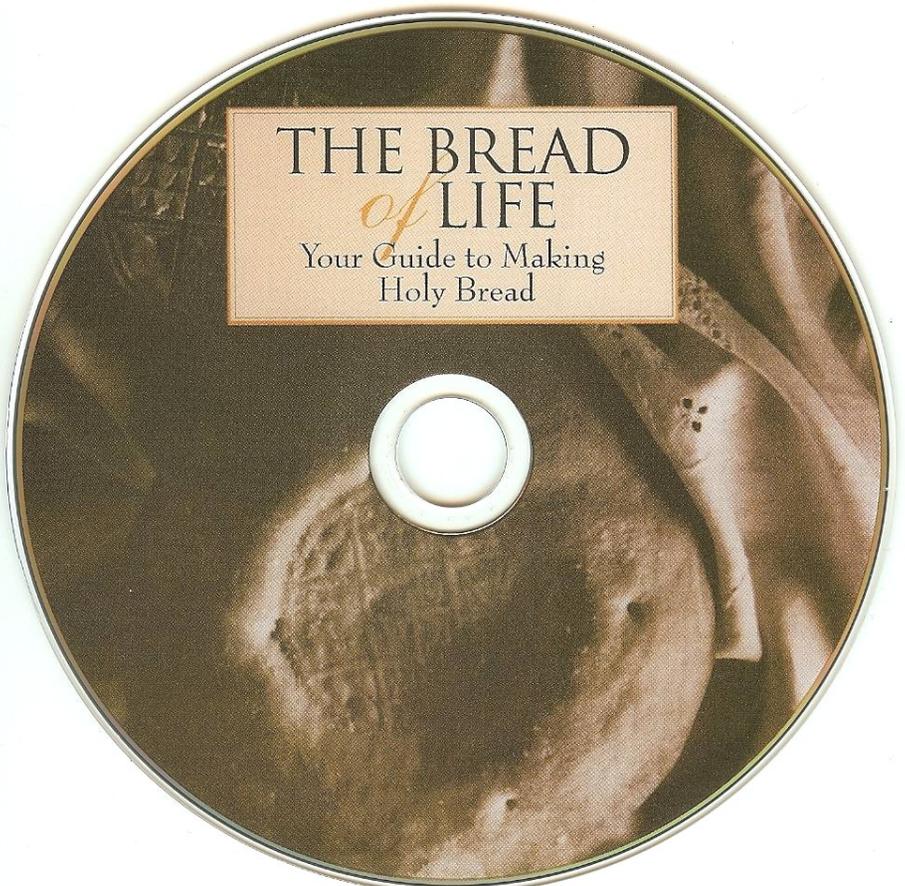


## THE BREAD OF LIFE DVD IS FINALLY HERE

The DVD contains an introduction, a step-by-step lesson on how to make Holy Bread and a lesson on how to make memorial wheat.

The wholesale price for each DVD is \$10.00, which is available to the Antiochian Women - NAB, Dioceses, chapters and church bookstores via Fr. John Abdalah. The retail price of the DVD is \$15.00 through the Archdiocese bookstore and the Antiochian Village bookstore.

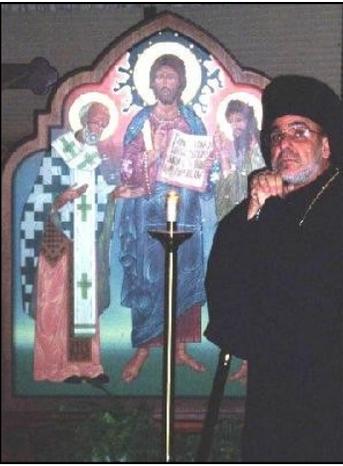
Each chapter in the Archdiocese has received a copy as a gift from the North American Board of Antiochian Women. To order more, please contact Fr. John at: [frjpa@aol.com](mailto:frjpa@aol.com) or the Archdiocese Bookstore.



**Introducing  
The 2007 - 2009  
Board of the Antiochian Women of the  
Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic  
and the Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.**

**THE OFFICERS**

***The Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS - Diocesan Bishop***



His Grace the Right Reverend Bishop Thomas (Joseph) of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic (b. 1953) is a diocesan bishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. (Oakland refers to Oakland, Pennsylvania, a borough of Pittsburgh and the location of a cathedral for the diocese. The primary diocesan see is Charleston, West Virginia.)

Of Arab-American heritage, Thomas Joseph was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1953. He attended John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, graduating in 1970. He went on to college at William Paterson College, graduating in 1974. After college, he worked in the Department of Community Improvements in Paterson, then served as a teacher for the Paterson Board of Education. When the Antiochian Village camp opened in the late 1970s, he was recruited by Fr. John Namie to serve as one of the original camp counselors from 1979 to 1982. In the fall of 1979, Thomas began part-time study at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and was made a subdeacon by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) of New York in July of 1982. He continued his studies until the spring of 1983, when he was assigned to Virgin Mary Church in Yonkers, New York.

In 1984, Metropolitan Philip assigned him to St. George Church in Houston, Texas, where he served as Director of Christian Education and Youth Services. While in Texas, the Archdiocese also assigned him to oversee Christian Education and then later teen activities for the churches in the Southwest Region (now the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America). In July of 1988 Thomas was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Michael (Shaheen) of Toledo.

On August 28, 1994, Bishop Antoun (Khoury) ordained Deacon Thomas to the priesthood, and Fr. Thomas served as assistant pastor at his parish in Houston until August of 1996, when he was appointed pastor of St. Nicholas

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Pinellas Park, Florida (near St. Petersburg).

Between 1996 and his consecration to the episcopacy, Fr. Thomas served in multiple capacities aside from his work as a pastor. He was an appointed member of the Archdiocese Youth Department Board; Spiritual Advisor to the Teen SOYO (Society of Orthodox Youth Organization) Southeastern Region; Chairperson of the Tampa Bay Orthodox Clergy Association; Director of Programs in Pastoral Bioethics for the International Academy of Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine in the United States; Speaker at Braunels, Germany, and at City University of Hong Kong on Bioethics; author of published articles on Christian Bioethics; Speaker at Antiochian Village and third session camp priest for many years; past President and Vice President of the Tampa Bay Council of Orthodox Churches.

In July 2002, Fr. Thomas was granted a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology jointly from the Antiochian House of Studies and the St. John of Damascus School of Theology of the University of Balamand in Lebanon.

On February 15, 2004, Fr. Thomas was elevated to the rank of archimandrite by Bishop Antoun, and on December 5, 2004, he was consecrated to the episcopacy by Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) of Antioch in Damascus, Syria.

Bishop Thomas was enthroned as Bishop of Oakland and the East at St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh (Borough of Oakland), Pennsylvania, on May 6, 2005. In August of 2006, Bishop Thomas was awarded a Doctorate in Education from California Coast University. In 2006, the Church of St. George in Charleston, West Virginia, purchased a chancery for the diocese, and in October of that year was elevated to a cathedral, thus adding another see to Bishop Thomas' diocese and renaming it to the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic.

His Grace's residence is at the diocesan chancery in Charleston.

**Father Donald Shadid - Spiritual Advisor**



Father Don was born & raised in Peoria, IL, being baptized & chrismated at All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Peoria. He was active in church all his life, including the Jr. Choir, youth group, and traveling to Pennsylvania to the Antiochian Village Camp. While working on his Bachelor's Degree in Biological Science at Illinois State University, young Donald started the Orthodox Campus Ministry. In June 1982, while at The Village, he met Janet Abdalah (*sister of Fr. John Abdalah, co-editor for The Word Magazine.*) Don and Janet eventually became Antiochian Village Marriage # 3. Fr. Don attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY and earned his Master of Divinity (MDiv.) He then worked full-time for 2 yrs. at Antiochian Village Camp & Conference Center with the late Fr. John Namie. Fr. Don was ordained to the priesthood in April 1986 and in June was assigned to St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Johnstown, PA. The Shadids have 2 sons, Christopher (18) & Stephen (16).

In addition to his part time job as AWE spiritual advisor and his full time job as priest to a parish that is over 100 year old, Fr. Don as been past advisor for Eastern Region Fellowship of St. John the Divine; Treasurer of the Council for St. Sophia Orthodox Christian Academy (a pan-Orthodox Pre & Elementary School housed at his parish); Assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy Scout troop chartered by St. Mary; Assistant Advisor for the older Venture Scout Crew; a board Member of Westmont Family Counseling Ministries for many years; and in his 'spare' time earned his Doctor of Ministry graduate degree through Antiochian House of Studies and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. When Fr. Don finds time to take a breath he enjoys movies, the Outdoors (Hiking, Camping, etc.), bagpipes, and baking.

**Kh. Joanne Bitar - President**



I am married to Father Elias Bitar and God has blessed us with four (4) wonderful children. All four (4) of them are going to college. Our oldest, Katrina, is going to St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York to get her Masters in Youth Ministry. Our second daughter, Sister Ignatia, is enrolled in the University of Athens, Greece, and will get a Masters in Theology. Martha is working and going to Culinary School. Our son, Antony, is studying Music Performance and would like to sing and perform in New York. As you can see our children are very diversified. We live in Little Falls, New Jersey, where Father has been the priest at St. George for twenty-two (22) years. I have held various offices and

coordinator positions on the diocesan and national levels with the Antiochian Women. I work at the local elementary and middle schools as the Food Service Director and have been there for fourteen (14) years. The school is a perfect job as I get the holidays and summers off. That way I am able to go to conferences and conventions and visit with all my Antiochian Women friends. I also have time to volunteer at the Antiochian Village Camp for 2 weeks every summer. I very much enjoy working for God with such wonderful and God-loving women.

**Kh. Pam Pier - Vice President/Humanitarian**

No Photo available. Pam was born in Mechanicsburg Pennsylvania, not too distant from her current home in York, PA. She was a Penn State graduate with a B.S. in Biophysics. She and her husband Peter have three children: Mary, Michael and Nicholas. The whole family followed Fr. Peter on a journey from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy and, with 'significant input and assistance from God', founded an Orthodox mission in York 15 years ago. Kh. Pam loves to sing and chant not only for their parish, St. John Chrysostom, but also for an area ecumenical choir. As a priest's wife she is very active in organizing church activities and working with the women of the parish. Pam has also worked for many years in manufacturing and is presently employed at an electronics manufacturing firm in York.

**Kh. Yvonne Butts - Treasurer**



Yvonne was born and raised near Cleveland in Twinsburg, Ohio. She attended a private Christian College in Cedarville, OH and received a degree in Bible-Missions. She initially planned on being a missionary to a foreign country, but 12 years ago married and moved with her husband to Pennsylvania so he could attend a Westminster Theological Seminary. Yvonne's husband, now Fr. Joseph, took an Ancient Church class in the protestant seminary. Once he began learning about Orthodoxy he couldn't let it go. He visited St. Philip's Orthodox Church in Souderton, PA. She eventually visited with him, but Yvonne didn't fall in love with it right away like he did. But she decided that she didn't want to go to church by herself for the rest of her life and believed that God would have her follow her husband's guidance and so she began attending church with him regularly. God blessed that decision and gave her grace so that her eyes and heart were opened to Orthodoxy like her husband's had been. Yvonne soon fell in love with the Orthodox Church and they were chrismated together. Fr. Joseph was eventually ordained to the priesthood and assigned to establish Holy Ascension, a mission parish in the Great Valley area outside of Philadelphia.

**Kh. Helen Waggener - Recording Secretary**



I am a recent convert (2006) with my husband, Father Alban (Holy Trinity, Lynchburg, VA) after a long sojourn in the Episcopal and Anglican churches. Father and I met at the University of Missouri and married in 1973. Since putting him through seminary (well, at least the first time), I have been at home.

We homeschooled our four sons (Joshua, Seth, Matthias, and Paul) and they are all out of the nest now. The oldest two are married and we have two grandsons. I started teaching art lessons with homeschoolers fifteen years ago and have remained active in those groups whenever we have moved. I also counsel at our local pregnancy center. At Holy Trinity I lend my weak alto to the choir, and moderate our women’s book club. Every day includes reading (huge Jane Austen fan) and usually knitting. I love children with pleasing manners and good grammar, wearing blue toenail polish, soaking up the sun and growing huge sunflowers.

**Samar Sakakini - Public Relations Director/Membership**



I was born in Jerusalem and raised in Ramallah, Palestine. I immigrated to the U.S. in 1982 to join my husband Khalil in Kingston, NY. In 1984, IBM moved us to Austin, TX where we became active members of St. Elias. I held several positions locally, including President, Vice President and Secretary of the Antiochian,

and as the Membership and Heritage coordinator in the SW region. In 2003 my husband and our two children John and Haneen moved to CT, where we became active members at St. Nicholas in Bridgeport. I was blessed to work with the youth in my parish and served as the Teen Soyo co-adviser for several years. Presently, I serve as the president of St. Nicholas Ladies Auxiliary. Our family enjoys local, regional and national events and participates as much as we can.

I am an educator; and received my masters from Texas State University. For the past 4 years, I have been teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies at Hillcrest Middle School in the town of Trumbull where we live. I am also involved in

many activities after school and enjoy working with the children in my community. Moving to the Northeast was for a reason, recently I was privileged and blessed to meet his Eminence Metropolitan Philip, and was so moved by Sayedna’s Wisdom, Vision and Leadership. I feel committed to assist in any way possible and bring America to Orthodoxy. I am blessed with so many family members, and friends throughout the archdiocese and around the world.

**Ina O’Dell - Immediate Past President**



AW Positions: Local chapter president, Eastern Region: humanitarian coordinator, newsletter editor, Vice President and President (2 terms).

At Pascha of 1995 my husband (now Dn. Mark) and I and our then adolescent sons, Luke and Zach, ventured beyond our Evangelical comfort zone and entered into the challenging glory that is Holy Orthodoxy. Eighteen years of puzzled looks and questions about our homeschooling no doubt helped to prepare us for the puzzled looks and questions about Orthodoxy. Starting from our ancestral home in Colorado more than 20 years ago, God also chose to lead us on another veritable odyssey through the “wilderness” by having us call no place home for more than 3 years. Job promotions led us to ‘traveled the earth lightly’ from Colorado to Washington DC, to London, England, to Connecticut, then again to Washington D, initially experiencing a different protestant denomination with each move. Finally in Connecticut, 1800 miles from our ancestral ‘home’, God led us truly ‘home’ for the first time and into His Holy Orthodox Church.

So in addition to becoming an ‘expert’ on moving and house design & construction, I developed a love of travel-- both just for fun and for mission trips such as to the Amazon and Romania. I also enjoy reading, writing, speaking, photography, (BA- Journalism & Doc. Filmmaking), teaching Sunday School, hiking, camping, art, iconography, gardening, floral design, creating things and now the joy of going to our 49 parishes and missions to meet the wonderful ladies of AWE. Truly I am in ‘awe’ of our Creator and His work in all of you and through all of you.

**THE MID-WINTER MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 1 - 3, 2008  
AT THE ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE. THE MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AS USUAL ON FRIDAY EVENING  
AND CONTINUE THROUGH SATURDAY.  
MORE INFORMATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING FROM OUR PRESIDENT CINDY NIMEY  
AS SHE RECEIVES IT. THOSE WHO NEED TO MAKE FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS HOWEVER, CAN BE  
CERTAIN OF THOSE DATES.**

# THE COORDINATORS

## *Vera Acker - Newsletter*



I was born and raised in Queens, NY, and Orlando FL and currently live in Harleysville, PA. I had come to know the Lord as a teenager, in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. I met my husband, Raymond, while we were students at Nyack College, a Christian liberal arts college. In 1988 we moved to this area for my husband to attend a Protestant seminary. However, my husband had begun a search for more traditional worship, and little did we know that we were headed to Orthodoxy. First we became Episcopalian, and about the same time, a friend of ours became Orthodox. About two years later, after many discussions and visits, we were also Chrismated into the Orthodox Church. After a few years at St. Vladimir's seminary and then Florida, we returned to this area in 1998, and my husband was ordained to the Diaconate as Deacon Herman at our parish, St. Philip's, in Souderton, PA. We have two sons: Simeon and Ephrem.

I am in the church choir and am the church librarian. I am also the church secretary during the week, which extends into the weekends as I answer questions and help people find what they need. In all my years in administrative positions, I have discovered that what I like best is layout and design. So I am also happy to have a place working with the wider community of Orthodoxy and love working with the AWE newsletter. We have changed our format so we can reach more ladies, more quickly, more often, and less expensively by having it as a bulletin insert that we can send out via e-mail.

## *Bonnie Yelovich - Project*

No photo or bio available

## *Fadia Juzdan - Religious*

No photo or bio available.



All articles for the DIAKONIA are due the first of the month PRIOR to the month of publication. The schedule of publication is as follows:

	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Date Due</b>
1	NAB Board	September 2007 ✓	Done ✓
2	Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.	December 2007 ✓	November 1, 2007 ✓
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	March 2008	February 1, 2008
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	June 2008	May 1, 2008
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	September 2008	August 1, 2008
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	December 2008	November 1, 2008
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	March 2009	February 1, 2009
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	June 2009	May 1, 2009

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



*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America  
North American Board*

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