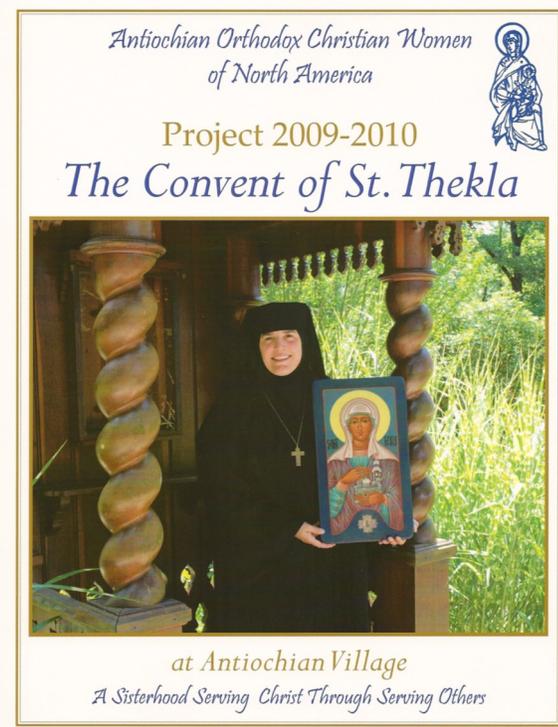


DIAKONIA



Spring 2010



At the February meeting of the North American and Diocesan boards of Antiochian Women held at Antiochian Village, Mother Alexandra, pictured in poster at top left, talked about this year's project, the Convent of St. Thekla. In three photos directly above, at their meeting the women prepare health and baby kits to send to Haiti. In top right photo women of St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Cathedral in Eagle River, Alaska, hold weekly reading group (see article on page 4).

**The Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Women
Of North America**

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP
Founder

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOSEPH
Overseeing Hierarch

North American Board

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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 fall, winter, spring and summer.

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 **Roberta Royhab, DIAKONIA Editor**, at bobbie@theblade.com.
- Submit your article on a CD to Roberta Royhab at 27262 Fort Meigs Road, Perrysburg, OH 43551.
- FAX typed, double spaced articles to (419) 874-9274.

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 LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST

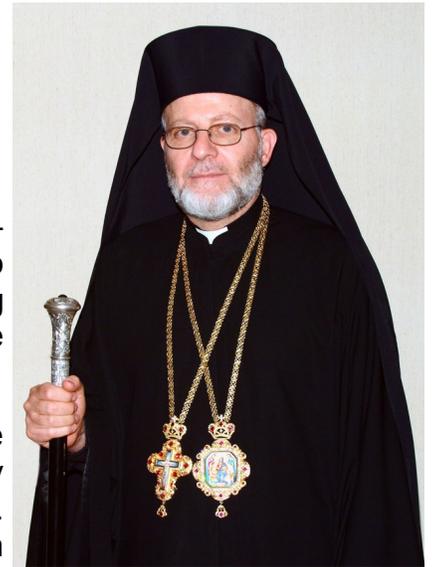
In each of the next five issues, we will highlight one of the Dioceses. We encourage everyone however, to submit news and articles from all Antiochian parishes of North America for publication in every issue so we may keep in touch with each other.

What is DIAKONIA

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

Message from His Grace Bishop JOSEPH

*Bishop of Los Angeles and the West
North American Board Overseeing Hierarchy*



During this holy season of Great Lent, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you in your spiritual struggles and ask you to consider your ministry to your communities and families in helping them keep the fast. Fasting is difficult. We need help to overcome the temptations that beset us when we try to fast.

Fasting is necessary for those who desire to repent of their sins. Do we apologize to people while laughing and joking? No, when we sincerely apologize for our sins to one another, we take on a serious attitude. The same is true when we repent before God for our sins. We take on a serious attitude if we are serious about our repentance. We fast and beg for mercy, knowing that God receives those who truly repent. Fasting helps us in this regard.

In the parish, when we are negligent and forget the fast, we sin against others when we set meat and cheese before those who are struggling. If you do not keep the fast, then you will answer to God for your negligence. But, if you tempt your fellow Christian to break his fast, then you will also answer for this! Do not bring condemnation upon yourselves. When you prepare foods that keep the fast, you help everyone around you. When you break the fast and tempt others, you drag everyone down.

Instead, fulfill your ministry to your communities by providing healthy food that keeps the fast. If you set your minds to help others keep the fast, even if you yourself break the fast many times, God will surely reward you! He will see your good works out of love for others and will help you in your time of need.

Another important ministry for the Antiochian Women is the good example of attending all of the services of Great Lent. In Lent, we fast AND pray. When the church is full, those who come infrequently will understand the importance of the services and will attend more frequently. They will support your work and the ministry of the parish.

When you do not attend, you send out the subtle message that attendance is optional and that the ministry of the parish is not really worth supporting. If you wonder why your parish struggles, look at your own example. The healthy parishes have healthy Antiochian Women groups who lead by example. When you attend and encourage others to attend, you build up the community and lead others to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Our parishes depend on the Antiochian Women to set the "spiritual pace." Without your faithful ministries, our parishes cannot survive the onslaught of temptations of gluttony and laziness. Look into your hearts and examine your commitment to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you serve as a good or bad example? Do you bear spiritual fruits, or do you only yearn for worldly things?

Spiritual fruits are a source of joy in good times and in hard times. We all know there is more to life than eating meat every day and living in personal luxury. True happiness comes with a conscience cleansed by repentance and God's forgiveness. Keep the fast so that you can enjoy spiritual gifts with a purified heart. Help others so that you can fulfill your sacred calling and draw near to God.

I wish all of you a fruitful Lent, and a truly joyous Pascha!

A Call to Repentance

Message from the Very Rev. Fr. David Hovik, Spiritual Advisor, Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

A prostrate before all of you asking forgiveness for any sin against you. I wish I could do this in person but, alas, time and distance does not allow that. We now find ourselves in the heart of the Lenten season with all of its wonderful and healing demands on our time. At the heart of this is the call to repentance and our preparation for holy confession. This holy mystery must not be overlooked or avoided by any of us and we must be careful to prepare for a thorough confession prior to Holy Pascha. My poor words would not do justice to what should be the focus of our life. Therefore, please take a few moments to read these words from The Eros of Repentance by Abbot George, of Gregoriou Monastery on Mount Athos:

“Repentance is a dynamic condition, a continuous progress towards the Lord. Properly speaking, it is the pursuit of the living God.

“Its character is neither primarily ethical nor legalistic. Instead, it is the fruit of a sanctified love which strains toward the beloved Lord, a sign of profound humility and desire for God.

“The holy elders instruct the younger men not by calling them to imitate their virtues, but by showing them how much they feel themselves to be sinners and unworthy. Athonites do not pretend to be good.

“They are not hypocrites. They reveal what they are. They confess in all simplicity whatever temptation they consider sinful. If, as human beings of flesh and blood, they become the cause of grief to a brother, they do not rest until they have bowed before him and sought his forgiveness before day’s end.

“Our whole climate on Mount Athos calls us to repentance, to spiritual struggle, and to violence within ourselves for the sake of God’s Kingdom. How could we rest when we meet daily, when we keep company with brethren who are holy, are prototypes of repentance; when daily at the office so many examples of Christian perfections are set before us. These demand that we struggle not for half-measures but for the perfection which the Lord commands.

“Those who possess the spirit of repentance and humility will normally withdraw from giving advice. Even should they do so, it will be out of love and obedience, and not because they feel themselves to be worthy of it.”

May God grant each of you a blessed season of repentance and a glorious Pascha.

In Christ your most unworthy spiritual advisor,

Priest David

Genuine Hospitality found in Eagle River, Alaska by Laura Frizelle

Our parish was founded in large part by a woman with a tremendous gift for hospitality, Khouria Barb Dunaway. She has mentored and shared this gift over the years. The Antiochian Women of St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Cathedral, which we call “Sisters of Mary and Martha”, strive to carry on and multiply this gift of hospitality even more. Fostering a sense of sisterly care and friendship among all the women of St. John’s is our first mission, and from those relationships in Christ good works flow, such as caring for the Cathedral and its grounds, prayer and acts of mercy. Since many of us live near the church and there is usually a lot going on, our women often buzz with activity like Martha, but once a week we stop, sit and listen like Mary during our weekly women’s reading groups. Women who work during the day meet in the evening. I attend the late morning group which is led by Kh. Barb and made up mostly of women in their 50’s, 60’s and 70’s and stay-at-home moms. The cross pollination and sharing from one generation to another is good for us all and good for the growth and continuity of spirit in our parish community.

Over twenty years ago before entering the Antiochian Archdiocese, Fr. Harold and Kh. Barb read an article in *The WORD* that said one should cut his or her teeth on good fiction in preparation for reading more difficult theological works. They began to read with this intention; novels and short stories by great classic authors such as Chekov, Tolstoy, Dickens and Dostoyevsky as well as contemporary authors like Henry Petrakis, Flannery O’Connor and Pearl S. Buck. In these books they saw people “fleshed out” who were seeking God. Simultaneously their two sons, Fr. Marc and Fr. Michael Dunaway, were reading the church fathers, Fr. Alexander Schmemman, C.S. Lewis, Thomas Merton and others. Together they found that when they read aloud to each other and to fellow members of our then growing community, allowing plenty of discussion and interjection of thoughts, the sharing facilitated a certain communion. Informal reading groups have met ever since for discussion and friendship and will not disband, except for an occasional break, with continuance encouraged by our archpriest.

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Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP
Founder

Antiochian Women
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West



Right Reverend
Bishop JOSEPH

Message from the Diocesan President

February 20, 2010

*Bishop of Los Angeles and
the West*

It is a joy to write this message to you. We have so much to be grateful for this spring. We have all survived the winter in spite of the rain, cold and snow that we have had in many areas of the country. If we look back, we realize that we have so much to be thankful for throughout our entire lives. We have been spared earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and other disasters. We have overcome diseases and various difficulties.

Now that we have begun our Lenten Fast and spiritual pilgrimage to Great and Holy Pascha, let us, with renewed resolve, thank God for all His mercies. It is said that when it is hard to pray, it is time to pray harder. So let us resolve to pray more and to increase the frequency of our church attendance. Prayer, both private and corporate, is the essential component of our life in Christ. In addition to Sunday worship, let us take advantage of the weekly Lenten services the Church offers us.

As individuals and especially as Antiochian Women, let us resolve to do more charitable work and almsgiving, which is another component of our life in Christ. Many parishes of our Archdiocese have been assembling and sending health kits and baby kits to the Haitian Relief effort of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). It was heartwarming to see the Antiochian Women delegates, who gathered at the Antiochian Village from all our Dioceses for the Mid-winter NAB meetings a few weeks ago, get together after the meeting to assemble such kits and prepare them for mailing to IOCC.

The Antiochian Women's Annual Project is another way of giving and helping others. As many of you already know, this year's project is the new Convent of St. Thekla, which is to be built at the Antiochian Village. During the NAB Mid-winter meetings, we had a chance to listen to the Abbess, Mother Alexandra, explain her vision for the new convent. More details on the project and a poster were mailed to all the parishes.

I wish you all a very fruitful Lent so that we may all shout together with joy at Pascha:

"Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!"

And sing over and over again during the Paschal Season the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem!

For the Glory of the Lord has shone on you!

Rejoice now and be glad O Zion!

Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,

In the Resurrection of your Son!

Yours in Christ,

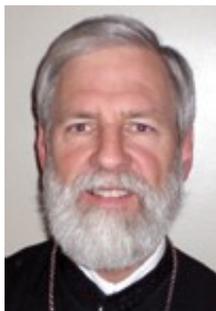
Lucy Hanna, President, Antiochian Women, Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

Introducing the 2009-2011 Board of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

The Rt. Rev. Bishop JOSEPH - Bishop of Los Angeles and the West

Please refer to the Fall 2009 issue of the DIAKONIA for His Grace Bishop JOSEPH's biography. You can find it on line at antiochian.org/AW-DIAKONIA; click on "Fall 2009."

V. Rev. David Hovik - Spiritual Advisor



I was born and grew up in Everett, WA. My father, Gordon, was an Everett fireman and my mother, Geraldine, was the assistant director for the Everett Housing Authority. I am the middle child of three boys (my poor mother). After graduating from Everett High school in 1972, I attended Everett Community College and was planning on going into radio broadcasting (becoming a DJ). That summer I was

set up on a blind date with Kh. Debbie and she shared the gospel with me for the first time that I can ever recall. After about two months I knelt down and prayed and, as far as I was able, committed my life to following Jesus Christ.

After ECC I graduated from Seattle Bible College and then from Fuller Theological Seminary. I pastored Evangelical non-denominational churches for 19 years, served as a prison chaplain and taught high school in a Christian school. In February of 1997 (after a six and a half year journey) our congregation was received into the Orthodox Church by Sayidna JOSEPH. I enrolled in the St. Stephen's Course of Orthodox Theological Studies and was ordained to the diaconate and then to the priesthood. I have been the priest at St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Arlington, WA for over 11 years. I have been married to Kh. Debbie for 34 years; we have 4 children (two girls and two boys) and nine grandchildren. Yes, I can still change a diaper in under 30 seconds.

Our children and grandchildren are all members of our parish, so we are doubly blessed. In February of 2004 Sayidna JOSEPH appointed me as the Spiritual Advisor of Antiochian Women of our Diocese and I have been trying to figure out "why" ever since. Seriously, it really has been a very enjoyable experience for me and I have gotten to know many of the wonderful ladies in our God-protected Diocese. They keep trying to teach me a little Arabic and, with God's help, I'll get it - eventually.

Lucy Hanna - President



I was born in Cairo, Egypt and grew up in Alexandria where my family moved when I was one year old. I attended and graduated from the Sacred Heart School, a British Catholic school, except for my sophomore year of high school when I attended James Allen Girls' School in London, England where my father was a visiting professor

of Organic Chemistry at the University of London for one year.

I married Dr. Lotfy Hanna right after high school and we have three children: a son, Fr. Nabil, pastor of St. George Antiochian Church of Indianapolis, IN and two daughters, Suzy Hadeed and Mary Thompson. Both our daughters live in Portland, OR. All our children are married and between them, they gave us nine grandchildren (hence my e-mail address, teta.of.9). In 1968 we emigrated to the USA and settled in Portland, where we joined St. George Antiochian Church. During the 19 years we lived in Portland, I was active in the Antiochian Women, taught Sunday School, chanted and sang in the choir, chaired the annual festival and served on the parish council. In 1972, as soon as my youngest child started kindergarten, I went to college and studied fine arts. In 1976, I studied Real Estate, was licensed, and worked in that field (as salesperson and then mortgage loan officer) for the next 30 years until I retired in 2006.

In 1986 we moved to California where we settled in Corona and attended St. Mark Church in Irvine. In 1989, I received the blessing of Metropolitan PHILIP to start a mission in the Riverside area. With the help of many of our wonderful clergy in Southern California and the dedication of a handful of families, our mission was established and in 1992 received the name St. Andrew Orthodox Church. It has now grown to over 100 families and construction of our new 14th century style is due for completion in August of this year.

On the local level of the Antiochian Women, I have served as President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. On the diocesan level, I have served as

Continued on page 7

Diocesan Officers, etc. *Continued from page 6*

President, Vice President, Secretary, Religious Coordinator, Retreat Coordinator and Cultural Coordinator. On the NAB level I have served as Religious Coordinator and Public Relations Director and was first to publish this newsletter, DIAKONIA.

Melinda Bentz - Vice President



I was born in St. Louis, MO and lived there until my dad went to the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs during the mid 70s. His ministry with the Nazarene Church led our family to move to Illinois and then to Maryland. Growing up as a PK (Preachers Kid) has given me a deep appreciation for the struggles our clergy and their families face in

balancing the needs of their parish and the daily needs and struggles of a family.

I Graduated from Olivet Nazarene University, 1990 with a BA in Psychology and a BA in Sociology. It was at ONU that I first started questioning out loud my Nazarene faith, in fact, my dad received many calls about his daughter's inquiries during the 4 years of Bible that were required studies. I always wondered, if God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow – when did he change his mind about worship? If Christianity was dormant or worse corrupted from the time of the Apostles to the time of Charles Wesley how is it that the Church remained unbroken? These questions went unanswered until I met my husband Bill, a cradle Orthodox and was introduced to the Holy Orthodox Church – unchanged since the time of the Apostles!

Fr. Stephen Hardy (memory eternal) chrismated me into Orthodoxy over 10 years ago while we were attending Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church. I am indebted to the patience of my mother-in-law Marge as she gave me books to read and answered my questions about Orthodoxy, the “little t and big T” traditions and the fast and feast days, all without judgment about the woman her son was marrying.

Bill and I have three beautiful teenage girls: Brigitte, Ginger, and Brittany. We worship together at Holy Cross in Palmdale, CA.

I have served as the Antiochian Women's Public Relations Director as well as the President and Secretary of my Parish's Antiochian Women's chapter. I currently sing in the choir and serve as the Secretary for the Parish Council. I am unofficially the Parish photographer and “visual” historian.

Judy Pappoff - Treasurer



Judy has been a member of St. Luke Orthodox Church in Garden Grove, CA since 1982. She teaches second and third grade church school, and bakes Holy Bread. She has held offices several times for St. Luke's Antiochian Women.

She and Chris have been married since 1976, and have three daughters, Alissa, Elana and Andrea. They are looking forward to adding a son-in law, Charles, to the family in September when he and Alissa wed.

Judy is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in Huntington Beach since 1986. She enjoys gardening (especially vegetables and orchids), bicycling, sewing, jazzercise and playing ukulele. She and Chris love to spend time in national parks, especially Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon in winter where they rejuvenate by cross country skiing, snow shoeing and hiking.

Kimberlee Lukins – Public Relations Director



I grew up in Pennsylvania, and was raised and married in the Lutheran Church.

I was a member of our Parish's Girl Scout troop, chorus, the midget football team, “Mat Maids” wrestling and softball.

I joined the United States Coast Guard where I met my husband and received training to become a Machinery Technician. I worked on everything from the Diesel Engines that powered Chesapeake Lighthouse to Air Conditioning. The Coast Guard sent me to Tidewater College where I became certified to run Packaging Plants and I completed courses in Technical Writing so that I could write manuals. I have managed restaurants, pumped gas, worked on assembly lines, worked as a purchasing agent, ran outreaches, booked bands for a Christian night club, made wedding cakes and much, much more!

I have held many jobs in many different fields and enjoyed most of them, but my first love is art followed closely by writing. It is because of this that I started doing the “Cock's Crow” newsletter for Saint Peter the Apostle Parish. We send the newsletter not only to the members of our Parish but also to many non-Orthodox family members who have requested to be on the mailing list.

Continued on page 8

Diocesan Officers, etc. *Continued from page 7*

I took an iconography course with Iuri Sidorenko and have begun my journey into writing Icons. I currently wood burn Icons due to space constraints and plan to expand to mosaic, paint and encaustic (technique in which pigments mixed with hot wax are burned in as an inlay) as my children complete school and as space allows.

We have three grown children. Two still live at home while completing college and our oldest son lives in San Marcos, TX. My husband and I enjoy touring the country on his motorcycle every summer, hiking the national parks (especially Yosemite), hunting, fishing and camping.

Joy Corey - Spiritual Coordinator



Joy Corey is a graduate of the St. Stephen's Course of Orthodox Theological Studies. She has been instrumental in founding two Orthodox Churches - one in Lancaster, CA and the other in Post Falls, ID. For more than 30 years she taught Sunday School and has served as Youth Director, Bible Bowl Coach, and Bible Study Teacher as well as

having served on the Parish Council of the four churches she has been a member of. She has conducted retreats on Spiritual Warfare and has been invited as guest speaker at several Women's Teas.

Five years ago, Joy founded the first Orthodox Prison Ministry in Northern Idaho where she teaches about the Orthodox Christian Faith and conducts Bible Studies. The Orthodox Study Bible, as well as her own book, [The Tools of Spiritual Warfare](#) (Light & Life Publishing) have become very popular with the inmates.

For almost twelve years now, Joy has been leading a Spiritual Circle at the Church she helped found in Idaho. This group has studied books such as [The Philokalia - Volumes 1 and 2](#), St. John of Kronstadt's [Spiritual Counsels](#), St. Theophan the Recluse's books on [Spirituality](#) and [The Path of Salvation](#), St. Silouan, John Climacus' [The Ladder of Divine Ascent](#) and many, many others of this caliber.

On the diocesan level, Joy is serving her second term as Religious Coordinator for the Antiochian Women. She has also served as Humanitarian Coordinator in the past. For many years, she also served as Western Region Stewardship Coordinator along with Andy Nassir. During this time, she conducted many Stewardship Workshops.

Joy is currently busy working on a retreat that her parish of St. John's is sponsoring May 7,8 & 9 with Mother

Gabriella, Abbess of the Dormition of the Mother of God Orthodox Monastery in Rives Junction, MI. They hope families from all over will come to join them for what promises to be a fabulous weekend. Mother Gabriella's topic is: "Building an Orthodox Personal Life, Home and Parish."

In addition, Joy is heading their annual Spring Bake Sale, the church's largest fundraiser and is busy overseeing the rental of the parish hall which is becoming a great blessing in promoting St. John's.

Last summer, Joy attended the first Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry Convocation in Denver, CO. She is hoping to get more involved with this wonderful ministry after she attends this year's Convocation in Philadelphia. She hopes to establish "The Lazarus Project," a prison ministry mentoring program, in the Northwest.

Joy is a grandmother of seven. She had two sons, but lost her son Douglas 19 years ago at the age of 23.

She and her husband relocated to Idaho, from California, 18 years ago. Her eldest grandchild, the son of her late son, is now 20 years old and doing well in his second year at the University of Idaho. Her son Tony's children—accomplished athletes, musicians and excellent students—bring her much "joy," no pun intended!

Georgette Nader Malouf - Humanitarian Coordinator



The Orthodox Church and church community have been a part of my life since as long as I can remember. I grew up singing in the choir, teaching Church School and being very active in SOYO and eventually the Ladies. Being active in my local church, St. Nicholas in Los Angeles, lead me to meet, have a wonderful friendship, and eventually marry my husband of 33 years, Ed Malouf. We have three children, Christian, Natalie, and Lauren. I was fortunate enough to stay home with the kids as they growing. When they started college, I began working at an elementary school office as the Special Education Coordinator.

I have held all officer positions and many coordinator positions in the Antiochian Women of the Western Diocese and have been active in the NAB. During Lent we must also concentrate our efforts on Humanitarian deeds. The need is great on a smaller scale in our communities, soup kitchens, food banks, etc., and on a larger scale, sending supplies to earthquake victims in Haiti and school supplies to little girls in Iraq.

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Diocesan officers, etc. *Continued from page 8*

Isabel Elac –Retreat/Scholarship Coordinator



I was born in Chile. I am a cradle Orthodox and have been a member of St. Nicholas Cathedral since the early 50's where I was active in Jr. SOYO and later Sr. SOYO and held various offices including President. Later on I moved on to the Antiochian Women's local group where I held various offices again including President. When the Antiochian Women were organized in 1973, I served on the Regional level

including President. In 1987 I was the first President of NAB to be elected "at large" serving with women from all corners of the Archdiocese. We had a job to do to unite all our women "in the spirit of Christian Leadership" and "create a genuine expression of love and service of fellowship". I implemented some new ideas having discussions of difficult moral issues and holding a workshop/mini Retreat at all NAB meetings. I tried to visit all the Regions during my tenure and met so many wonderful and dedicated women of our Archdiocese. I'm still very active in our Diocese (old Western Region) holding many offices. In our local Parish I have served on the parish council for many years, holding different offices and presently I sing in the Choir, run our Bookstore, and I am a member of the Altar Society and the Antiochian Women Chapter.

Mirna Shomali - Membership Coordinator

I am from Beith Sahour/Beithlehem, Palestine but I was born and raised in Kuwait. I am a daughter of the late Abouna Jiries Shomali, God rest his soul. I am blessed with 3 children, two girls and one boy, Murielle 21, Mahir 20, and Miral 17. We immigrated to the USA in July 1999.



I have served as A.W. President for several years at St. George, Upland, CA, assisted in various activities in the Sunday School and did the Church Bulletin for almost 3 years. Currently I am attending St. James Church in

Anaheim, CA and serving as a Secretary for the Parish Council. I am an active member of the AW, Choir. I have established a Youth Bible Study and Teen SOYO. Also, I am a member of St. Nicholas Camp Committee. Also, I served as a NAP Project Coordinator of the Western Diocese.

Outside the church, I am a Freelance Paralegal and a Notary Public (mobile), working with several attorneys in the immigration, personal injury, civil, bankruptcy, estate planning and family law fields. I was a Charter Oak High School Representative for Covina School District, and a

volunteer there as interpreter, Arabic/English. I love to travel, sing and swim for which I was awarded a championship when I was 17 years old in Kuwait City. I enjoy visiting other parishes and meeting new people.

Hospitality in Alaska, *continued from page 4*

The original women's reading group began to meet around two big stainless steel work tables in the church basement kitchen. Years later after being inspired by pictures of the Hagia Sophia coffee house in Colorado, a few women transformed a tiny room once used as a toddler playroom into an inviting space with comfortable furniture, lit by a variety of lamps. It is decorated with warm colors, icons, a hand sewn quilt and photographs from our parish's history such as a Metropolitan PHILIP's first meeting with our priests and a group ordination of EOC priests into our archdiocese. In the center two bookshelves house a lending library that is loosely organized and refreshed with new selections every so often by our book-swapping women who love to read. The books are selected by women for women, but as Kh. Barb puts it, "They are not syrupy. They have meat and struggle in them." Categories include: Orthodox spiritual books, biographies, fiction, short stories, poetry, counseling, Alaskana, cookbooks, travel and reference books. (A dictionary comes in handy when we come across a word we don't know like *contrapuntal* and *ennui*.) Also since pre-podcast days, we have offered talks and lectures recorded by Orthodox Christian Cassettes through our reading room.

The mix of books that we read together and discuss keeps vocabularies growing, minds sharp and hearts warm. This is a cause near and dear to Kh. Barb and two of her heroines, Pearl S. Buck and Matushka Julianna Schmemman, that women truly be women and create an atmosphere of life in their homes and communities, yet not let their minds go dull. As Orthodox women made in the image and likeness of God, there is no conflict between these goals if love and communion with God and our neighbor is the ultimate goal. One of the ways love and communion is built up is by reading a short biographical introduction to get to know our author. As a rule learning about the author helps us to value them as a person and not just consume the book for our pleasure without appreciating it's source. This in turn helps us to realize how precious, complex and unique each person, each life is. During my interview with Kh. Barb for this article she said simply but well, "I am so glad people have written their stories. It is so important."

In January we read essays and poems by Kathleen Norris and a little Jean Vanier. In February we observed Black History Month and read A Sorrowful Joy by Albert J. Raboteau and heard a synopsis of Wade in the River by Father Paisius Altschul. Next Wednesday will be the first in March, a new month and I am excited to find out what and who we will share next.

News from women in parishes in the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

St. John the Baptist Church, Post Falls, ID This year, St. John the Baptist did something wonderful for Thanksgiving...we did an outreach that day at St. John's to the homeless and fed approximately 109 people by supplying individual turkey meals with all the trimmings. Glory be to God!

Another project the family of St. John is excited about is Family Promise. Jordan Schaefer and Joy Corey work as Coordinators for St. John's Church and four times a year for one week we house homeless families at the church, feed them, shelter them and love them. Two members of the Church spend the nights with the homeless families, getting to know and love them as our Brethren in Christ. Our parish families help to prepare meals daily throughout the week. Glory be to God that we are able to use our new Fellowship Hall to do these glorious works to which God has called us. To Him be all thanksgiving, honor and glory.

I pray we all have a good struggle during our Lenten journey and that we, like Christ, may celebrate not only His Resurrection but our own as we come out from under the heavy weight of the mire of this world into the glorious Light of His Resurrection.—Joy Corey

Women of St. Innocent, Everson, WA The Women of St. Innocent's Church (WOSIC) serve Christ by serving others. Our purpose is to facilitate the needs of the church, as we do in our own households, by making it our home. The needs of the church include serving members of our own parish community, the need in our local community, in our national community and in the world at large where we are able.

2009—2010 ACTIVITIES:

Fall 2009 – The annual Garage Sale generated funds to help feed needy families in our local area.

October 2009 - WOSIC collected coats for the local Interfaith Coat Drive and helped distribute them to people in our local community who are in need.

November 2009 – WOSIC organized and contributed Thanksgiving baskets for two families in our local community. The baskets included Thanksgiving meals, decorations, games and extra food for the families to enjoy over the long weekend.

December 2009 – WOSIC collected four huge boxes of Christmas gifts for two brothers at St. Innocent Orphanage/Project Mexico. We consider the boys an extension of our St. Innocent family.

Spring 2010 – WOSIC will donate a Cornucopia Gift Basket to the Interfaith Coalition auction. The highest bidder will receive a special gift from one of the ladies each month of the year. Interfaith Coalition provides medical, dental and housing services to local families in need.

Lent 2010 – WOSIC will hold several fund raisers which will benefit New Way Ministries (a local charity that helps abused women transition their lives to stable environments) and the NAB Project, Convent of St. Thekla.

Helping Hands Team – WOSIC also provides meals and services throughout the year for anyone in our parish who may need short-term assistance due to illness or new motherhood.

St. Peter the Apostle Church, San Dimas, CA Saint Peter's Antiochian Women have taken on a new fundraising project. Our Parish is attempting to buy an existing church property that needs to be renovated. It has been for sale for awhile and we are praying, God willing, that it remains available for us while we scramble to raise enough money to make the purchase.

This is an exciting time for us and also a struggle as we try to get everyone's opinion considered and mulled over before we proceed. We have a Home Search Committee that does the ground work; they will bring it to the Parish for us to discuss. After everyone is satisfied with the discussion part, we have a formal meeting and discuss it some more so that we can take a vote. Then we act according to the outcome of the vote. All of this makes for very slow progress and at the same time makes us all confident that we are moving in the right direction.

Our Dinner & Talent Show was a huge success last year. The money earned from that event was used to sponsor a pilgrimage for our teenage girls to St Paisius Monastery in Arizona. Currently we are in the planning stages for our 2nd Annual Dinner & Talent show. This year's effort promises to be just as much fun in a bigger venue. This year the money will go into our building fund. Come, share your talent or just enjoy the meal and show! Watch our website, <http://www.stpeterantiochian.org/>, for more information.

We have also begun the task of writing a cookbook. We hope to produce an easy to use cookbook with recipes for everyday as well as Lenten recipes and helpful hints. Our goal is to have the cookbook done in time for the Parish Life Conference in Arizona. We will have a link on our website for those who would like to purchase the cookbook. These funds will also be used to help with the purchase of our new property.

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Reports from women, *Continued from page 10*

We continue to feed the working poor in our community one Saturday each month, and have been able to stock a pantry in our Parish that can be used for those knocking on our door for help.

We were able to join Father Duane Pederson again this past December for his Christmas outreach. We supplied 200 hygiene kits that were assembled by our Youth Group and handed out by members of our Parish. I love Father Duane's outreaches because there are no social divisions.

I used to work at outreaches with another group and those we were 'helping' wouldn't feel comfortable looking us in the eyes, let alone conversing with us. I met a man at Father Duane's Christmas Outreach who told me that this was the first time he felt loved in a very long time. He was weeping and felt comfortable to do so. Another homeless man told me that when times get hard, he finds a bench and reads the Book of Job. Then he knows that times aren't hard at all! Suddenly I realized that I was the one without riches and this stranger was providing an 'outreach' for my poverty!

Holy Cross Church, Palmdale, CA The women of Holy Cross have continued in the many services we do for our church, our Diocese and the Arch-Diocese. Our focus is three fold: service to God, service to community and service to each other. All of our activities focus on one of these areas as demonstrated by what we have accomplished in 2009.

Each month we support Fr. Duane Pederson and the charity work of St. Vincent DePaul, by feeding the homeless and hungry of the Antelope Valley.

This past year the Arch-Diocese National fundraiser was to support "Children with Special Needs", for which we raised over \$100 by selling Christmas ornaments.

One of our own members serves on the Diocesan Antiochian Women board as Vice-President, which helps keep us informed of the focus of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West.

We organized our annual Parish potlucks to celebrate Pascha, Holy Cross' Feast day, His Grace's Episcopal visit as well as organizing the luncheon in honor of Father Nathan's ordination. It was with welcoming arms we, like the whole parish, embraced him and his family. The ladies were especially happy to welcome our newest member Kh. Mandy.

In service to each other we began a new tradition of meeting once a month for breakfast and fellowship. I myself experienced the love of our Holy Cross ladies as they supported me with food, prayers and love through my

battle with breast cancer earlier in the year. One of our favorite traditions has become the Christmas Secret Sister program with the revealing of our sisters at a tea hosted in my home.

The beginning of 2010 opened the door to renew our faith. We are continuing our three-fold service, and are working on new ideas to help promote not only our faith, but to help raise funds for the various outreach programs; one fundraiser was our first annual wine tasting with the proceeds to be donated to select outreach programs.

It is our hope that this year will be filled with continual love and support and working together to share God's love!
—Robyn Nakonechnyj, Chair

St. John Church, Orinda, CA The Ladies of St. John have many plans for this new year. We began with electing a new slate of officers for 2010. In January we hosted a Pasta Luncheon after church with games, cards and backgammon. We wanted families to stay and enjoy the afternoon together, it ended up very successful and we plan to do this a few times each year.

Our Lenten bake sales will start soon where we supply our families with special Lenten foods that they may not make at home. During Lent we have a mini retreat planned with guest speaker, Fr. Melotious Webber, who is one of our favorite speakers! On Palm Sunday we have our annual Bake Sale with many delicious treats; this is our major fundraiser for the year.

We keep a bin in the narthex where people can drop off canned goods and non-parishable foods to benefit our County food bank, we keep it going all year due to the high need for supplies in our communities.

We started a new tradition last year the day before Mother's Day, we have a luncheon at Bing Crosby's Restaurant with a fashion show starring some of our own ladies modeling fashions from local stores here in Walnut Creek. It was a huge success and proved to be a major fund raiser so we are continuing this tradition.

We are off to a good start for this year and look forward to Antiochian Women's Month of March when our members will be reading the Epistles in English and Arabic, ushering and giving the homily a few Sundays.

Our book club will be starting soon also; after reading the assigned book we get together for dinner to discuss our opinions of the book.—Lynn Farraadj



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REMINDER to Diocesan Boards: Please remember the following schedule for submitting your articles and profiles for the *DIAKONIA*. One diocese is highlighted in each issue according to the following schedule. However, articles and news from all dioceses and parishes of the North American Antiochian Archdiocese of North America are welcome in every issue.—Roberta Royhab, Editor

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	(Fall) October 2009	Done
2	Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington D.C.	(Winter) January 2010	Done
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	(Spring) April 2010	Done
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	(Summer) July 2010	June 1, 2010
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	(Fall) October 2010	September 1, 2010
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	(Winter) January 2011	December 1, 2010
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	(Spring) April 2011	March 1, 2011
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	(Summer) July 2011	June 1, 2011

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