

## **Western Region Joint Organizations Meeting**

**November 3, 2001**

**Palm Springs, California**

**President Irene Saigh called the meeting to order at 1:47 PM.**

**His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH gave his address:**

"I hope that you are doing God's business and that you have accomplished a good amount of work for this region, for the communities where you live and work, and for the Future of this God Protected Archdioceses. In light of recent events, I want you to respond and condemn the evil. It is not enough to watch or condemn or say the Afghans are bad or evil. We have to replace that with something more Godly. The light of Christ shines as a vision or shines to light the road ahead of us. Just to repeat the prayers in church is not enough. I watched what you are watching, read the papers and looked on the Internet. I have come to the conclusion that we must have some vision or response. We cannot be recognized because they look for numbers. The president asked Archbishop ANTONY, at the White House, "How many are you in the county?" He said, "7 Million." We are much less than 1 million. They believe in power, money, and numbers. We have the faith and we have the orthodox mind. The people in this continent do not understand it. But, let them know about our presence in our actions. There fore my statement is about that:

The Right Reverend Father Paul Doyle, Very Reverend and Reverend clergy, and all the faithful in Christ:

I would like to take a moment to address the changes in this country since the terrible disaster of September 11<sup>th</sup>. This nation has been awakened from its slumber to discover the evil and envy that has taken hold of this world. Modern secularism, with its alluring materialism and self-centeredness, hypnotized the American mind, drawing it away from the spiritual reality of our lives. Secularized Americans have been possessed by their worldly desires, and have forgotten the God who gave them so many material blessings.

Now, we see on every car, "God bless America." What does this mean? Why is it that all of a sudden God matters? The truth is, Americans are afraid. This new reality that our nation has abruptly become conscious of is a world filled with strife and hatred. This world knows no peace. Yes, some religious extremists say they are for peace, but their peace is the defeat of their enemies. They seek only to subjugate others and oppress those who do not agree with them. They do not seek harmony, but rather submission by force.

How do we deal with such violent men? As Christians, we do so by loving them. The vision of the Gospel is not to force others to comply, but to look inwards and see our own rebellion against God. We submit ourselves to God, and we make God's priorities our priorities. As Christians, we must put the spiritual life first: prayer, fasting, repentance, almsgiving, humility and love of others. Our love of God is not based on our hatred of others.

God's love, then, is the foundation of Christian peace. The world is filled with chaos because people are filled with inner torment. As we submit our inner life to Christ, we become peaceful. And it is this inner peace that we then learn to share with our brethren in the Church, and then share this peace with the world by leading exemplary lives. The world will listen to us if we give it hope and reveal the peace from above in our words and our deeds.

This is the real purpose behind your participation in organizations such as the Fellowship of St. John, Teen SOYO and the Antiochian Women. You are wrong if you think they are simply fundraising efforts or secular social clubs. Instead, they are sharpening stones for our Christian love. We hone our skills of charity and brotherhood through our loving participation in these groups, and we develop our personal character by practicing what we preach with every group activity.

Being loving in the face of envy and hatred is never easy. It takes courage and bravery that the world rarely sees. The world does not produce heroes who die for the love of others, but Christ does. It is our Lord who was the Chief among the martyrs, laying down His life for all creation, even those who hated Him. All the nations gather around the Church and watch. This planet has become a giant arena, filled with spectators watching us and looking for hope. Like our fathers before us, we must face the lions of vanity, sloth, greed and gluttony in our daily lives. Like them, we have no weapon but our love.

My children, there is no easy way out. We cannot put our heads in the sand or move away from those who hate us and live only to do us wrong. We cannot protect ourselves from their blows. But we can defeat them by relying on God's love and mercy. We can show them that we are not hopeless.

Just as the unarmed martyrs defeated the paganism of Rome, so too we can defeat the idolatry of modern secularism and religious extremism not with weapons or escapism, but by not letting the enemy drive us to despair. This spiritual courage is the fruit of our life in Christ. Let us now lay aside all earthly cares, that we may receive the King of all, who brings with Him love, mercy and justice for all.

God bless you all. God bless America ... with the true peace of Christ."

**Teen SOYO President Juliana Turk discussed the teen's involvement in Project Mexico, Deaneries, and Special Olympics. They will be going to convalescent home to help elderly people today.**

**AOCWNA President Georgette Malouf extended her thanks to Palm Springs for hosting this weekend. She reported that the women are working hard to do the Lord's work.**

**President Irene Saigh reported that the Fellowship had a productive meeting where they focused on the positive. She is concerned that the Teens are scared of the Fellowship and has introduced the New Spirit to the Fellowship. She believes that once the teens are in, they are in. This is a young group of officers who want more young people involved. There is an advertisement pamphlet to be passed out about the Fellowship.**

**His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH added:**

"We have in the church, if we look at the clergy, we have lower and higher. We have Deacon, Priest, and Bishop. Then comes Archbishop, Metropolitan, Pope, Patriarch or whatever. A deacon cannot be a priest without the Bishop's blessing. When the Bishop is not present the priest censes the throne. Many names but one function, like organs. The human is one with organs and senses. The Holy body of Christ is the Church. We have many branches, Fellowship, Ladies, Teens, Order and other. We don't have more than one agenda. This was not said by accident, it was said on purpose. Multiple agendas cause more chaos. We have 26 departments with one agenda of the Archdioceses of the Church of Antioch in North America. We complement each other. When we have a good spiritual life and unity we do not see differences. Without God, we fight because of different agendas we have. The Church and Salvation of every human is the only agenda. It is time to become aware of this agenda. We have been praying and fasting for years. Its time for the organizations to work together."

**The Reverend Father Joseph Corrigan gave the following report on behalf of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch President, Danny Andrews:**

Every week approximately five new members are inducted into The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. By 2003 we hope to have 3,000 members. Have you joined yet? For the cost of a daily cup of coffee, you too can join the philanthropic arm of the Antiochian Archdiocese which has raised over thirteen million dollars for Archdiocese Departments, Summer Camp Scholarships and Clergy Benefits to name a few.

As a reminder December is St. Ignatius of Antioch month in our beloved Antiochian Archdioceses. Members of The Order are encouraged to participate in the life of your parish during December (epistle reading, sermon, ushering, coffee

hour) especially on Sunday, December 16, 2001, St. Ignatius Sunday. Please notify me if you need a sample sermon on The Order for use at your parish.

Members of The Order gather throughout the year for dinners in their local area organized by Area Fellowship Chapter Chair's. Funds raised at the summer dinner in Los Angeles contributed to Bishop JOSEPH's gold plated Dikero-Trikeria set and for T-Shirts worn by the youth during the SOYO volleyball game at the beach during the Archdiocese convention.

Does your parish have at least 10% membership in The Order?  
Here is the Top Ten from the Western Region:

St. Peter the Apostle, San Dimas, CA	17.31%
St. John the Evangelist, Orinda, CA	10.88%
St. Anthony the Great, San Diego, CA	10.63%
St. George, Portland, OR	9.87%
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA	8.85%
St. Athanasius, Sacramento, CA	6.98%
St. Michael, Van Nuys, CA	6.47%
St. Raphael Mission, Palm Springs, CA	5.71%
St. Michael, Las Vegas, NV	4.66%
St. Timothy, Lompoc, CA	4.62%

Please visit our website: [www.antiochian.org/western/order](http://www.antiochian.org/western/order)  
I apologize for not being able to attend the delegates meeting.

**His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH added:**

"The order of St. Ignatius: St. Peter has 17%. Other churches are less or more. Why, in some churches, are the percentages are more or less? The Cathedral has mostly immigrants who do not know about the Order. I did not know until I was education about the Order. It is not the size of the Parish; it's the amount of education. I have heard two negative things about the order. Number 1: 'The Order is for wealthy Big Shots.' This is not true. We have some life members and others by the year. The amount does not matter. We need people, not money. Number 2: 'Would you induct people quietly so as not to disturb others so we do not hurt feelings?' This is nonsense. Clergy and Laity are asked to educate us. Dealing with money is a problem, but not to hurt people's feelings. Double your efforts to educated people on how to deal with money. Many lives are touched by the Order. They sent money to Turkey to help in a disaster. Our people criticized us. Jesus does not ask background or religion, the humanitarian goes beyond that."

**The Right Reverend Protosyngellos Father Paul Doyle noted:**

“When the Order was established it was not open to clergy. Then, later on, priests wanted to become apart of the Order.”

**The Reverend Father Joseph Corrigan concluded:**

“Five priests in the region are members. The Order also contributes to clergy retirement.”

**Michael Srour thanked the people who help with the Website. The system is being upgraded. He asked the people’s help with two things: Review the site and submit articles.**

**Law Malouf reported on the 2001 Parish Life Conference:**

At long last, we are pleased to present the Official and Approved Results for the 2001 Western Region Parish and Family Life Conference, co-hosted by St. Barnabus, Costa Mesa and St. Mark, Irvine.

For those of you in attendance, we are sure that you will agree that this was the most successfully attended and participated Regional Conference in many years. Highlights of the accomplishments would include the following:

Total Registered Attendees	1,040
Number of Ticket Books Sold	338
Number of Bible Bowl Teams	29
Number of Orators	13
Number of Art/Crafts Participants	520
Attendees at Sunday Services	Over 1,000
Average Attendance for Keynotes	250-300
<b>Net Conference Profit</b>	<b>\$ 16,520</b>

We thank each of you for your guidance, assistance, and support of this Conference. Additionally, we take this opportunity to, again, thank all of those in the Parishes of St. Barnabus, and St. Mark for their attendance, participation and support.

We thank God for our successes and trust that the achievements of this Conference will be indicative of, and only the start of, renewed and expanded interest and participation in the Conferences by our brothers and sisters in the Western Region.

**Hazel Nassir gave the following report on the 2002 Parish Life Conference:**

St. Anthony the Great Church in San Diego will host the 2002 Parish Life Conference. We are at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina. It is located on San Diego Harbor, across from Lindbergh Field and the San Diego Airport. We have secured a room rate of \$99 per night. Our keynote speaker is Fr. Paul O'Callaghan. We have passed out a tentative schedule to be reviewed. Please see us after for any suggestions.

**His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH added:**

"We want to be in Conference more than in the Convention. There is more teaching, education and spirit in the Conference than in the convention. I expect more people to participate in Parish Life Conferences. Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop ANTOUN, and I discussed the number of people in attendance at the Convention. I asked about the cost of the convention. We discussed the cost. Our idea is to have the convention every three years. We are thirsty for the teaching."

**Lew Malouf announced that he has stepped down as 2002 Conference Coordinator and is turning info over to Ed Malouf.**

**Michael Srour gave a brief report on the 2003 Conference:**

\$89 per night has been secured.

**Irene asked for ideas to make the region work.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Habib  
Western Region Fellowship of St. John the Divine  
Recording Secretary