

**Diocese of Los Angeles and the West (DLAW) SOYO Meeting
2007 Fall Gathering with Bishop Joseph
Saint Athanasius, Sacramento, California
October 20, 2007**

I. Meeting Called to Order at 11:48 by Amanda Sahawneh

II. Opening Prayer: HIS GRACE Bishop Joseph enters and leads the opening prayer at 11:48. He then gives a speech about what the delegates meeting is about and that Teen SOYO is the foundation of the church. He also explains the ordination today. He also touches on how important humility and simplicity are. HIS GRACE reminds us that Saint John Chrysostom is being commemorated next month because it will be 1600 years since his preaching.

III. Roll Call of Churches present: Saint Barnabas (Costa Mesa, CA); Saint George (Phoenix, AZ); Saint Mark (Irvine, CA); Saints Peter and Paul (Ben Lomond, CA); Saint Timothy (Fairfield, CA); Saint Nicholas Cathedral (Los Angeles, CA); Holy Resurrection (Tucson, AZ); Holy Cross (Palmdale, CA); Saint Luke (Garden Grove, CA); Saint Athanasius (Sacramento, CA); Church of the Redeemer (Los Altos Hills, CA); Virgin Mary (Sacramento, CA); Saint Nicholas (Sacramento, CA);

IV. Executive Reports

- a. **Secretary- Elizabeth Mamey.** Elizabeth offered to read the minutes from the Parish Life Conference in Portland, OR. Nicholas Mamey made a motion to pass the minutes and Christina Samore approved them.
- b. **Treasurer- Katie Braun.** Spoke about the SOYO bank account which consists of \$5,157. She also talked about dues and the importance of paying them. Also about the Lord Have Mercy bracelet fundraiser.
- c. **Vice President-Lauren Malouf.** She talked about the committees: website design (internet-media relations), Teen Track Committee who plan events for the Parish Life Conferences, Fundraising Committee to help with fundraising. Nominations for officers for the Diocesan level next year, papers to fill out, large responsibility, must attend Leadership Training at the Village next summer.
- d. **Youth Director-Karim Azar.** Hello. He talked about his previous experience in our diocese. If anyone would like to contact us, you can Facebook each officer. Karim is willing to talk to any Youth Director.
- e. **Spiritual Advisor- Fr. David Kruse.** This is his first time as the official spiritual advisor at a meeting. SOYO is very important and we are all committed to it. He talked about his five children who go to public school and says he knows what we, as teens, go through. SOYO is a safe place to find out who you really are and that these people (other SOYO members) are the friends we will have forever and we can refer to whenever we need to. He also mentions what the Bishop said, that we are the foundation and we are the people who will bring others into orthodoxy.

- f. **President- Amanda Sahawneh.** Four pillars of Teen SOYO: Worship, which is being active in your prayer life and going to church every Sunday. Service starts with people who are closest to you then branch out and take an afternoon and go take someone downtown out to lunch who looks hungry. There is a lot of poverty out there. Fellowship is basically coming together and spending time together. Witness is being the example, showing people Christ and the things you say and do.
- g. **Department of Youth Ministry- Fr. Joseph Purpura.** Welcomed Karim Azar and Fr. David Kruse to DLAW because it is the first meeting for both of them. Congratulated Karim for being the first to complete the youth workers training, and Fr. David because he came so highly recommended. We have the largest diocese of the archdiocese, and the best resources. He is looking forward to this coming year. Fr. Joseph then talked about the ordination of Father Steven today and explained in detail about different aspects of it. We should be able to talk to Bishop Joseph and ask him questions, he likes it and he is not someone to be afraid of. Our Spiritual Adviser is available for us to talk, not just business. The Youth Worker CDs are very full of information and available for each church.

V. Chapter Reports

a. **Saint Nicholas Cathedral: Christina Samore** Coffee hours, Disneyland, bake sales

b. **Holy Resurrection, Tucson:** Lucian Dell'Acqua. talks about his SOYO being really small and this year they are trying to concentrate on activities. They served a meal to the homeless and are currently trying to help church build and grow.

c. **Saint Nicholas, Sacramento:** Angelica. They have a Teen SOYO get together every other Tuesday consisting of bible studies, meals, and they are trying to have social events. Trying to improve on having more people and have parents more involved. Joel is their new adviser. SOYO teaches them how to learn how to pray and worship.

d. **Virgin Mary, Sacramento:** Nicholas Baba. Their SOYO is starting new and small. They participate in a Mediterranean Food Festival, adding more and more over the years. They also participated in a church-wide garage sale.

e. **Church of the Redeemer:** George. They currently have twenty teens. Some activities they have participated in are: volunteering at a soup kitchen and the Second Harvest Food Bank. They had a meeting with 49er star David motivational speaker. They have participated in Youth Month, and have had many retreats.

f. **Saint Athanasius, Sacramento:** Jacob Grant. Their SOYO is very small, but last year had a fundraiser of babysitting for one night at the church.

g. **Holy Cross, Palmdale:** Are just beginning to become a strong Teen SOYO.

h. **Saint Barnabas, Costa Mesa:** Katie Braun. With their teen SOYO they have recently made a board of officers. Five SOYO members have gone on the OYO trips.

i. **Saint George, Phoenix:** Marina. Saint George's SOYO currently has 25 active members. They participate in monthly meetings at a teen's house, Bible study every Wednesday, outreach trips once a month, guest speakers, movie nights, and they hang out at least once every two weeks. Another thing they participate in is the teens teach younger kids at Sunday School.

j. Saint Mark, Irvine: Nick Mamey. They currently have over forty participants in SOYO. They plan to have a Pan-Orthodox teen event with local Orthodox churches. So far they have done many things together including mini-golf, held a Winter Dance, and put on a number of luncheons for their church.

k. Saints Peter and Paul, Ben Lomond: They are an active church who have helped at Juvenile Hall, done different fundraisers, and have sent dried fruits to different countries in need.

l. Fairfield: During the past year the SOYO of _ have seen the Icons from Siani, participated in their first year of Bible Bowl in which they received 3rd place, and they fundraised to go to the Parish Life Conference.

m. Saint Luke, Garden Gove: Vanessa Kinan. Through SOYO the teens have participated in Real Help, raised money for church camp, have had 3-day weekend retreats, and are all a very strong group of good friends.

BINGO BREAK!

VI. Old Business

- a. **Parish Life Conference, Portland, OR:** Lauren Malouf talked about it. Dinner before Bible Bowl, Outreach, Teen Room, dance after Bible Bowl. If you want all this to happen in Los Angeles, we can make it happen.
- b. **Archdiocese Convention & Leadership Training in Montreal:** Liz Mamey explained what a great experience she had. It was her first time going and she learned a lot about how to run a good SOYO. She met many great people and had a good experience.
- c. **Lord Have Mercy Bracelets**

VII. New Business

- a. **Special Olympics:** Amanda asks if anyone has participated as a counselor, Vanessa Kinan went this past summer and talked about it. Six teens from the Western Region traveled to the Antiochian Village and met other teens and really benefited from their experiences. Special Olympics Awareness Day is this Sunday, each parish should read the letter this week or next weekend and pass around a collection basket. There is also a Special Olympics CD, talk to Amanda after the meeting.
- b. **October Youth Month:** Amanda talks about October being youth month and participating in events that each SOYO can do to help support.
- c. **Education Month/Sacred Gift of Life Sunday:** Amanda talks about promoting education of the sanctity of life. The Orthodox Church is pro-life. Make sure the teens and the youth know the church views of abortion and choices and WHY. Each parish will be getting a mailing by December, a package of material regarding Sacred Gift of Life. It is a very important issue in today's society
- d. **Youth Workers Fund:** Raises funds to send youth directors to a program that will educate them, its basically a Masters program. In December you will get a mailing. Teens have raised 130,000 dollars and our goal is ¼ million. Teens want better educated youth workers. It is very affordable, please see Father Joseph Purpura for more information.

- e. **Orthodox Unity Sunday:** Amanda speaks about the first Sunday of Great Lent. Asking all parishes to do a pan-Orthodox event that weekend where you invite the local parishes. Please let Amanda know if your parish does do something.
- f. **Holy Friday Night Vigil:** Liz Mamey talked about it. Great Friday each SOYO or find a SOYO nearby and go over there.
- g. **The ARK:** SCOBA Council came to SOYO and asked us to be on their on-line radio program (the ARK) once a month. We decided the first will be in January. Go to myocn.net for more information.

VIII. OYO: Katie Braun talked about it. OYO are weekend trips around the nation that take SOYO teens for one weekend into inner-cities to help the homeless. Go on OrthodoxYouthOutreach.net. It is part of our ministry as SOYO.

*Amanda made folders for each church that Karim handed out to the parishes present. It contains contact information, SOYO projects, dues policy, and many more things... Credentials should be filled out and given to Liz by the end of the meeting or mailed to her. If there is anything that you would like to put in the folder for next year, please let us know. Also if each parish can send a quick e-mail once a month to one of us updating us on your parish.

IX. Open Forum

X. Closing Remarks: Compline at 9pm in the church after dinner. Once we adjourn the meeting we have some activities, head back to the church at 4:30 for Vespers at 5:00 and dinner following. Compline will be shortly after.

XI. Closing Prayer: Fr. David led the closing prayer.

XII. Adjournment: Motion to close the meeting at 2:43. Nicholas Mamey seconded the motion.