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Founder
358 Mountain Road
Englewood, New Jersey 07631

Right Reverend
Bishop JOSEPH
Bishop of Los Angeles and the West
454 South Lorraine Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90020

Antiochian Women



Spring Newsletter 2010

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

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Message from Bishop JOSEPH

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 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!

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Message from our Spiritual Advisor Father David Hovik

A Call to Repentance

My beloved Sisters in Christ:

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. End.

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

In Christ your most unworthy spiritual adviser,

Priest David

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Message from the Diocesan President February 20, 2010

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 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 Abess, 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 Theothokos,

In the Resurrection of your Son!

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

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Message from the Diocesan Vice President Melinda Bentz

Vice President / Project Coordinator Report

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As we anticipate our joyful proclamation of Christ is Risen! I greet you with Christ is in our midst!

I want to thank the Ladies Organizations that have sent in funds for "The Convent of St. Thekla" and encourage everyone to participate in the support of this worthy endeavor. Please forward your checks to me by April 19th so that I can meet the NAB deadlines.

At the mid-winter meeting at the Village, Lucy and I had the privilege of meeting with Mother Alexandra and hearing the vision for The Convent of St. Thekla. There is much planning to be eco-friendly, conservative in energy needs and most importantly a place which facilitates prayer and spiritual reflection. Mother Alexandra shared a vision of a retreat within the Antiochian Village Retreat Center, a place where the children from the Antiochian Village can experience a monastery during their camping experience. To date, Mother Alexandra has already been contacted by several women interested in joining the Convent of St. Thekla and pursuing the monastic life.

On another note, the Funeral service for our dear Jeanne Beyer was March 15th which was attended by several of the ladies from the Board and from the Diocese. His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH presiding over the service and Fr. Michael Lewis remembered Jeanne's many contributions to the Antiochian Women. May her memory be eternal. Thank you all for your prayers and your continued prayers for her family.

God bless you as we complete the fast and celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

Your Sister in Christ,

Melinda Bentz
Melinda Bentz, Vice-President

"Thou, O Christ our Savior, hast become for me the path of life which leads to the Father. There is but one path, and it is my joy, and at the end of it is the heavenly kingdom." -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from the Public Relations Director Kimberlee Lukins

I hope this finds you all well. This newsletter combined with collecting news for the Spring Diakonia has allowed me to electronically meet many of you which has been a complete joy. We have a remarkable group of women that make up the Antiochian Women in the Diocese of the West. I have been motivated by your stories and our conversations and I hope others will be too. I have always felt that what I do for this person or that organization is not much but now realize that combined with everyone else's 'not much' we can (and do) move mountains. Thanks be to God!

In this newsletter you will find many stories and wonderful ideas for fundraising, time together and helping those close to us as well as those in our communities. You will also hear about a couple of wonderful organizations that do great work for people in need.

You will find that the majority of the articles in this newsletter were also featured in the Spring Diakonia. That is because I know how hard it is to make time to get an article for the newsletter to me, let alone two! There are a few articles that were not in the Diakonia, be sure to look for them!

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Spring Retreat and saying "Christ is Risen"!

Your Sister in Christ

Kimberlee Lukins
Public Relations Director
Antiochian Women, Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

"Grant us, O our Lord to rejoice in Thee, and mayest Thou rejoice in us in the last day. To Thee is praise, from the spirit, soul and body. And unto us be Thy mercies." -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from the Humanitarian Coordinator Georgette Malouf

Sisters in Christ,

I greet you all at this special time of the Orthodox year. As we begin our journey through Great Lent, we will be concentrating on fasting, prayer, and self-evaluation. We must also remember to emphasize our efforts on Humanitarian deeds. During these difficult economic times, the need is great on a smaller scale in soup kitchens, food banks, shelters, homes for battered children, etc. in our communities, and on a larger scale sending supplies to earthquake victims in Haiti and school supplies to little girls in Iraq.

I am forwarding the link for information on sending supplies to Haiti. Fr. Nabil Hanna's parish of Canton, Ohio has successfully done this project through IOCC. Fr. Nabil is Lucy Hanna's son. Please refer to the IOCC website: www.iocc.org for details regarding aid to Haiti.

If you have any question, please contact me.

Let us please remember: "Assuredly I say to you, in as much as you did it one of the least of these My brethren you did it to Me." Matthew 25:40.

Yours in Christ,

Georgette Malouf
Western Diocese Humanitarian Coordinator

"Return my soul to the sweet garden of paradise, and may it abide in light that, surrounded by the delights of paradise, I too may say with all the saints: Glory to the Immortal Father; honor to Him Who presents heavenly gifts to this worthless one, that he may bring a tithe of glory to the King of all!" -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from the St. Innocent Church Everson Washington

The Women of St. Innocent's Church (WOSIC) serves 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 needy 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 4 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 treat 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 benefit New Way Ministries, (a local charity that helps abused women transition their lives to stable environments) and St. Thekla's Monastery.

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.

"May my heart be as a fertile field for Thee, and may Thy grace sprinkle the dew of eternal life upon it. May Thy grace reap a good harvest on the field of my heart: humility, reverence, sanctity, and all that is ever pleasing to Thee." -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from Saint John Church Orinda California

The Ladies of St. John
Orinda, California

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 fund raiser for the year.

We keep a bin in the narthex where people can drop off canned goods and non-perishable 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 ladies month in March where 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Farraadj

"For Thy servant Thy grace has become a refuge, strength, a defense, ennoblement, praise, and food for the whole of his life." -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from Holy Cross Church Palmdale California

Holy Cross Antiochian Women's Group
2009 Year End Report and looking to the future.....
Robyn Nakonechnyj
Holy Cross Antiochian Palmdale, CA - Women's Chair

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 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" which we raised over \$100 by selling Christmas ornaments. One of our own members serves on the Diocese 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 3-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 such idea being our 1st 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!

"Thy love draws me to Thee, O Savior, O praise of my life. Thy grace makes it sweet for me to follow Thee with my mind." -- St Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from Saint Nicholas Cathedral Los Angeles California

A QUICK NOTE FROM ST. NICHOLAS - LOS ANGELES:

We began our journey through Great Lent supporting our NAB Project - CONVENT OF ST. TEKLA - at the Antiochian Village. Two weeks before Meat Fare we successfully sponsored a Hamburger Bar with all the fixings having all the proceeds go to the building fund. We also designated all coffee hours in March for the project. We successfully sponsored a Valentine's Party for the parish. As Antiochian Women's Month (March) approaches we have our ladies giving sermonettes, collection, ushering communion, and dismissal. During Lent we sponsor and prepare dinners after Presanctified Liturgy. On Palm Sunday we continue to prepare a Bake Sale for those in attendance at our two services.

In April we look forward to attending and supporting our Diocese Retreat at Camp St. Nicholas in Frazier park. In May we will plan our annual Mother's Day Luncheon; in June our ladies and the entire parish work hard on "LA Med Fest" on the church grounds; and we will be attending our Diocese Parish Life Conference in Tucson.

We continue to have monthly meetings in our members' homes with short business meetings and speakers or fellowship afterwards.

We look forward to seeing all the ladies of the Diocese soon.

Georgette Malouf
Diocesan Antiochian Women Representative
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles

"Remember me, ye heirs of God, ye brethren of Christ; supplicate the Savior earnestly for me, that I may be freed through Christ from him that fights against me day by day." — Saint Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from Saint Stephen Church Campbell California

Myrrhbearers
Antiochian Women of St. Stephen Orthodox Church
Campbell, CA 95008

Dear Sisters in Christ,

This past year, nearly 100% of our church membership worked to host the Parish Life Conference in May. Even so, we could not have accomplished the conference on our own. A HUGE thank you goes to our sister churches: Redeemer in Los Altos, Sts. Peter and Paul in Ben Lomond, St. James in Modesto, and St. Gabriel Mission in Angels Camp for all their loving and sacrificial help to us. Thank you to all of you who kept us in your prayers during that time!

Following the conference, our women's group, Myrrhbearers, went on to organize several church events during the rest of the year, including a dessert and service auction benefiting the NAB project for 2010 and collecting Christmas presents for children in Muldova.

Now Great Lent has arrived and very soon we will be blessed with a visit from His Grace, Bishop Joseph. This year, as we launch into preparations for Holy Week and our Paschal BBQ celebration, our Myrrhbearers group continues to pray, work, and study together. Once again, our leadership in Myrrhbearers has changed, due to the arrival of several beautiful Orthodox babies! The incoming leaders are eager to build upon the solid foundation of service and hospitality that St. Stephen women have created over the years.

May the mercies of our Lord be upon you and your families as we journey through Lent.

In Christ,

Cherisse Bartusiak
President, St. Stephen Antiochian Women

"Blessed is Christ Who promised life and resurrection to Adam's children in the day of His coming. We too shall arise and exalt Him along with the saints who have been pleasing to Him." -- St. Ephraim the Syrian

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Message from Saint Peter Church San Dimas California

The Saint Peters Women's Group has taken on a new fundraising project. Our Parish is attempting to buy an existing Church property that needs renovating. 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 and then they bring it to the Parish for us to discuss. After everyone is satisfied with the discussing 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 at <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 also 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.

We continue to feed the working poor in our community on the 5th Saturday of the 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 were able to supply 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 that 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!

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Message from Saint John the Baptist Church Post Falls Idaho

This year, St. John the Baptist in Post Falls, ID did something wonderful for Thanksgiving ... we did an outreach that day at St. John's to the homeless and fed approx. 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 different 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.

In Christ, our King and our God,
Joy Corey



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

Seven-domed Orthodox church rising in Riverside

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By DAVID OLSON

The Press-Enterprise

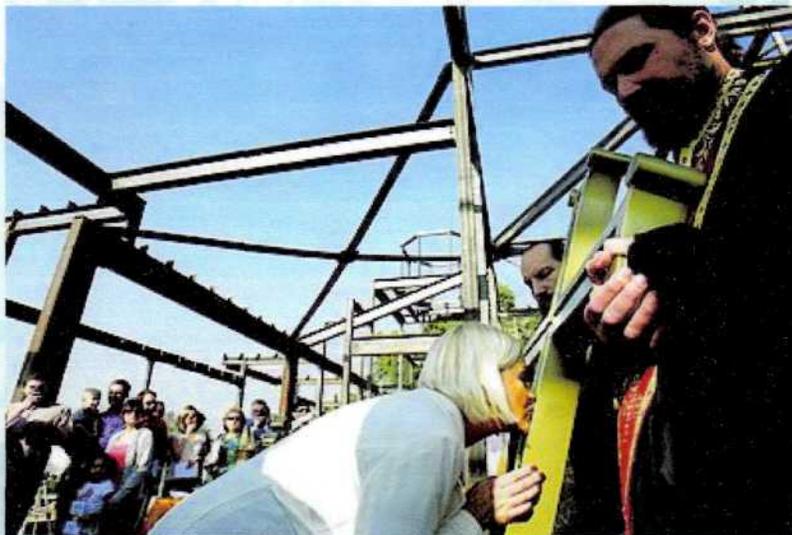


Photo Gallery: Domes installed at Riverside church

A 14th century-style church is rising over Riverside.

Three of the seven domes of the new church of St. Andrew Orthodox Christian Church near UC Riverside were placed onto the steel skeleton of the building Friday. The other four domes are expected to arrive in the next few weeks.

Several dozen parishioners gathered at twilight Friday as the church's pastor, the Rev. Josiah Trenham, and two other Orthodox priests each sprinkled holy water onto an 8-foot aluminum cross and the gold-colored steel central dome, which was spread over two flatbed trucks.



Julia Casillas, of Perris, is among the St. Andrew congregants who kissed the cross before it was placed atop the dome. The dome then went skyward to a chorus of cheers. The church could open by August. "This image of the cross is blessed and sanctified by the grace of the holy spirit," the black-robed Trenham said over the sound of a gigantic crane's engine.

Moments later, each congregant approached the four-sided cross to kiss it. The crane then lifted the cross into the air, placed it atop the dome and, amid the cheers of the crowd, hoisted the dome skyward. The church is roughly modeled after a 14th century church in Thessaloniki, Greece. Its \$4 million cost reflects the attention to detail and authenticity, Trenham said. The altar and its front partition are being made in Syria of mahogany and marble.

The 12-foot-high oak front doors are being carved in Turkey. The marble floor pieces will likely be

crafted in Lebanon. Some of the pictures will be painted by an Orthodox monk from Colorado. St. Andrew has been housed since 2002 in a 5,000-square-foot white-washed building on Canyon Crest Drive while the congregation raised money for its new 9,400-square-foot church, which will have a terracotta-tile roof, off-white stucco walls and a stone base, Trenham said. The old building will become a fellowship hall when the new church opens, which may be as early as August.

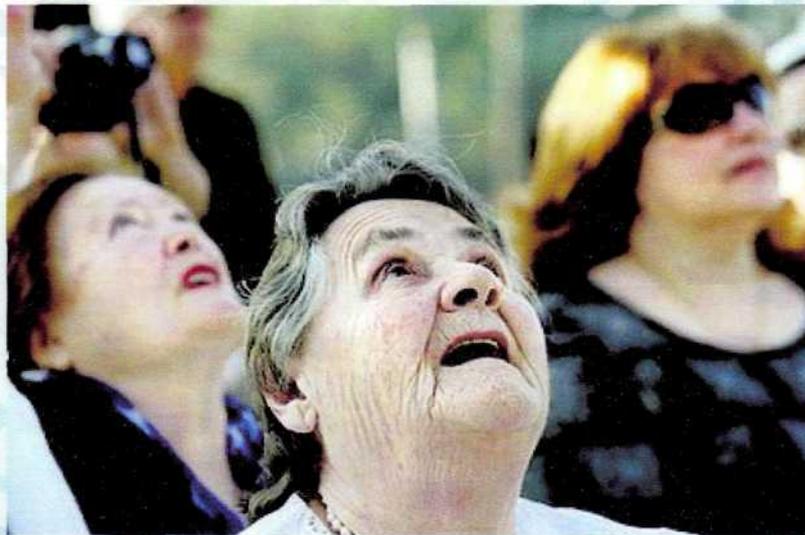
The new church fulfills a dream that Inland Orthodox Christians have had since about a dozen people began attending services in a California Baptist University meeting room in 1992. The congregation later moved to a strip mall and then a warehouse before the current building opened.

About 300 people attend services each Sunday. Many are immigrants from countries with large Eastern Orthodox populations, including Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Romania, Russia and Serbia.

The elaborate design of the new church reflects those immigrants' desire for a traditional building, said Saba A. Saba, who grew up in Palestine -- now Israel -- and attended a 4th-century Orthodox church in his hometown of Lydda.

"They wanted to duplicate what they're used to in the country where they are from," said Saba, 79, a parishioner from Temecula who headed the church building committee. "They don't know anything else."

There are several other Eastern Orthodox churches in the Inland area but some, including the Temecula Greek Orthodox church that Saba formerly attended, have portions of their services in Greek, Romanian or other languages that many parishioners do not understand. St. Andrew's services are almost entirely in English, with a few Arabic and Greek words.



The Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity -- which includes the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches, as well as the Antiochian Orthodox church that St. Andrew belongs to -- observes ancient rites and views itself as the direct descendant of the early Christian church. The theology of Eastern Orthodox churches is identical.

The multiple domes and the barreled and arched ceilings make the building one of the most complex non-residential structures that project manager David Mouck has been involved with in his 34 years in the construction business.

100-plus columns

There are more than 100 columns to support the building, said Mouck, a partner in the Temecula-based Gill Company.

The top of the central dome's cross is 63 feet above the ground. Inside the dome, a painting of Jesus will look down on parishioners, as is traditional in Orthodox churches.

Icons -- which include paintings, frescoes, wood panels and other images of Jesus and the saints -- are an integral element of Orthodox Christianity, Trenham said. Icons of Christ illustrate the miracle of how God came to Earth as a man, and bear witness to how God is always among people, Trenham said. The current church has some icons, but most of the space on the side walls is white.

Eventually, the new church will be covered in icons, as most Orthodox churches are, Trenham said. The icons are part of what attracted Kent Joris, of the high-desert town of Phelan, to Orthodox Christianity. Like about half the congregation, Joris, 47, his wife and three children are converts, in his case from a Baptist denomination. He likes the ancient Orthodox rites and their roots in the early Christian church.

In the current building, Joris tries to look straight ahead during worship services, toward the altar and the icons on the altar wall, and not at the mostly white side walls.

"In a sense, you need to block out your peripheral vision," he said.

Joris is anxious for the day when the entirety of the new church is covered in icons, which he said will intensify the connection he feels with early Christians.

"You will have a sense of worshipping not just among the people around you, but among generations of people," Joris said.

Reach David Olson at 951-368-9462 or dolson@PE.com



Families Are Not Trading Cards

By Kh. Bonnie Gillis

Church in crisis! We're losing our church home. We have 60 days to find a new place. Let me explain. For almost seven years Holy Nativity mission in Langley, British Columbia has been meeting in a renovated sheep barn. With God's blessing we have prospered and grown from a founding membership of thirty people to over sixty. Several young families have been attracted to the community, so last year we began a Sunday school—not only to educate the children, but also to give Moms and Dads a little time of quiet to pray during matins. The children rejoin their parents for the Divine Liturgy. But three weeks ago, our peaceful community got a shock: The company that insures the farm and the barn where Holy Nativity meets will no longer allow the barn to be used as a church.

The building fund sits at \$150K. Properties within twenty miles that could be used as churches are running one to two million. Renting is a possibility, but suitable commercial space will cost us about what we currently pay our priest. Cheaper accommodations can be found if we want to set up and tear down every Sunday. We can always do vespers and midweek services in homes. We are not desperate, but we are in a crisis. At the parish council meeting last week, the crisis came to a head.

We found an old Anglican church building for sale. It is over ninety years old, needs a new roof and a coat of paint but is structurally sound. And most importantly, it is within our reach—assuming we can raise an additional fifty or sixty thousand dollars in one-time gifts and can get a \$150K mortgage. There is only one serious problem: the church is fifty miles east of Langley in Rosedale.

It was interesting to see the difference between how the men and the one woman at the parish council meeting discussed, or didn't discuss this new possibility. The men were fixing a problem. Loan rates, fund raising ideas, construction possibilities, commuting times: it was all doable. A little push, a little more effort, a little sacrifice. But all Susan, mother of two and pregnant with three, could say was, "How are we going to get the kids to church on time?" The men weren't listening.

"Sure, we will lose some families," one of the men said.

"But that's okay," said another, "we will pick up some in the new area."

At this point Susan started quietly crying.

"It's not as if there were no other Orthodox Church in the area," the president said, "the families that can't make the commute can go to St. Herman's, and we'll probably pick up some of their families who commute in from the east. The numbers will even out."

The treasurer proposed that we start with a low-ball bid of \$325K, the head chanter seconded it. One of the men noticed that Susan was crying and asked her to tell them what was upsetting her so much.

Susan was embarrassed now. Pregnant and tired, her emotions had gotten the better of her and she was a little angry with herself for crying. "I understand that we have to do something" she said, "and maybe this old church in Rosedale is God's will for us, but families are not trading cards. Those of us who are converts have lost some of our own family to become Orthodox, now the Church is our family. I don't know what I would do if my godparents and my children's godparents had to go to a different church. It hurts too much to think about it."

The men slowed down. "Well," said the president, "I hadn't looked at it that way."

"Maybe," said the treasurer, "we should set up a viewing for the whole church before we make an offer. We need to get everyone's opinion."

"That's a good idea," said the reader.

Susan was still embarrassed and a little angry.

As it turned out, the old Anglican church in Rosedale didn't work out. Someone else had already made an offer and it was accepted. Other rental possibilities are now seriously being considered again. Perhaps we will have to live in a tent—setting up and tearing down every week—like the Israelites of old as they wandered through the wilderness. Whatever the case may be, whatever God's will for us is, one thing is certain. The parish council (and the priest) has learned a valuable lesson: the church is a family. Whatever Holy Nativity mission does, it will need to do together as a family. Families are not trading cards.



Daniel's glove Author Unknown

I stopped and looked; feeling both compelled to speak to him, yet wanting to drive on. The empty parking space on the corner seemed to be a sign from God: an invitation to park. I pulled in, got out and approached the town's newest visitor.

'Looking for the pastor?' I asked.

'Not really,' he replied, 'just resting..'

'Have you eaten today?'

'Oh, I ate something early this morning..'

'Would you like to have lunch with me?'

'Do you have some work I could do for you?'

'No work,' I replied 'I commute here to work from the city, but I would like to take you to lunch.'

'Sure,' he replied with a smile.

As he began to gather his things, I asked some surface questions. Where you headed?'

'St. Louis.'

'Where you from?'

'Oh, all over; mostly Florida.'

'How long you been walking?'

'Fourteen years,' came the reply.

I knew I had met someone unusual. We sat across from each other in the same restaurant I had left earlier. His face was weathered slightly beyond his 38 years. His eyes were dark yet clear, and he spoke with an eloquence and articulation that was startling. He removed his jacket to reveal a bright red T-shirt that said, 'Jesus is The Never Ending Story.'

Then Daniel's story began to unfold. He had seen rough times early in life. He'd made some wrong choices and reaped the consequences. Fourteen years earlier, while backpacking across the country, he had stopped on the beach in Daytona. He tried to hire on with some men who were putting up a large tent and some equipment. A concert, he thought.

He was hired, but the tent would not house a concert but revival services, and in those services he saw life more clearly. He gave his life over to God

'Nothing's been the same since,' he said, 'I felt the Lord telling me to keep walking, and so I

did, some 14 years now..'

'Ever think of stopping?' I asked.

'Oh, once in a while, when it seems to get the best of me But God has given me this calling. I give out Bibles, that's what's in my sack. I work to buy food and Bibles, and I give them out when His Spirit leads.'

I sat amazed. My homeless friend was not homeless. He was on a mission and lived this way by choice. The question burned inside for a moment and then I asked: 'What's it like?'

'What?'

'To walk into a town carrying all your things on your back and to show your sign?'

'Oh, it was humiliating at first. People would stare and make comments. Once someone tossed a piece of half-eaten bread and made a gesture that certainly didn't make me feel welcome. But then it became humbling to realize that God was using me to touch lives and change people's concepts of other folks like me.'

My concept was changing, too. We finished our dessert and gathered his things. Just outside the door, he paused He turned to me and said, 'Come Ye blessed of my Father and inherit the kingdom I've prepared for you. For when I was hungry you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me drink, a stranger and you took me in.'

I felt as if we were on holy ground. 'Could you use another Bible?' I asked.

He said he preferred a certain translation. It traveled well and was not too heavy. It was also his personal favorite.. 'I've read through it 14 times,' he said.

'I'm not sure we've got one of those, but let's stop by our church and see' I was able to find my new friend a Bible that would do well, and he seemed very grateful.

'Where are you headed from here?' I asked.

'Well, I found this little map on the back of this amusement park coupon.'

'Are you hoping to hire on there for awhile?'

'No, I just figure I should go there. I figure someone under that star right there needs a Bible, so that's where I'm going next.'

He smiled, and the warmth of his spirit radiated the sincerity of his mission. I drove him back to the town-square where we'd met two hours earlier, and as we drove, it started raining. We parked and unloaded his things.

'Would you sign my autograph book?' he asked. 'I like to keep messages from folks I meet.'

I wrote in his little book that his commitment to his calling had touched my life. I encour-

aged him to stay strong. And I left him with a verse of scripture from Jeremiah, 'I know the plans I have for you, declared the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you; Plans to give you a future and a hope.'

'Thanks, man,' he said. 'I know we just met and we're really just strangers, but I love you.'

'I know,' I said, 'I love you, too.' 'The Lord is good!'

'Yes, He is. How long has it been since someone hugged you?' I asked.

A long time,' he replied

And so on the busy street corner in the drizzling rain, my new friend and I embraced, and I felt deep inside that I had been changed.. He put his things on his back, smiled his winning smile and said, 'See you in the New Jerusalem.'

'I'll be there!' was my reply.

He began his journey again. He headed away with his sign dangling from his bedroll and pack of Bibles. He stopped, turned and said, 'When you see something that makes you think of me, will you pray for me?'

'You bet,' I shouted back, 'God bless.'

'God bless.' And that was the last I saw of him.

Late that evening as I left my office, the wind blew strong. The cold front had settled hard upon the town. I bundled up and hurried to my car. As I sat back and reached for the emergency brake, I saw them.... a pair of well-worn brown work gloves neatly laid over the length of the handle. I picked them up and thought of my friend and wondered if his hands would stay warm that night without them.

Then I remembered his words: 'If you see something that makes you think of me, will you pray for me?'

Today his gloves lie on my desk in my office. They help me to see the world and its people in a new way, and they help me remember those two hours with my unique friend and to pray for his ministry. 'See you in the New Jerusalem,' he said. Yes, Daniel, I know I will...



ZOE MEANS LIFE

By Paula Kappos

Zoe means life in Greek.

In 1997, a group of Orthodox women in Ohio began meeting to see how we could make a life-saving difference in today's society. A survey was sent to women in the area aged 18 and over. Responses indicated three major areas of concern: the need for an Orthodox Christian adoption agency, help for women in crisis pregnancies, and assistance for battered women and children.

The group began meeting with professionals in these areas to see what we could do — perhaps start an Orthodox adoption agency. A licensing specialist from Ohio told us that the creation of an adoption agency would not be difficult, but was a waste of time because there would be no babies for us to put up for adoption. Why? "Because abortion rates are so high. Babies who might have been adopted usually die before birth."

After talking with directors of various crisis pregnancy centers, we contacted Care Net, a national organization advising those who want to establish crisis pregnancy centers. They were especially happy to meet us because experience had taught them that Orthodox Christians have a higher abortion rate than the U.S. norm. "Orthodox Christians," we were told, "have two strikes against them — a concentrated ethnic group and a tightly knit religious group. For reasons of pride and shame, these factors invariably are linked to high abortion rates." Trying to recall unwed mothers in our own parishes, we could remember only one in the past 25 years.

We returned to our parish priests to ask about their experiences with crisis pregnancies and abortions. To our dismay, they all confirmed what we had been told. Many Orthodox women abort their children, but their priests become aware of the event only through confession. We discovered there are even those in the Church who regard abortion as "a valid choice" or "not a serious sin."

Thus our group, ZOE FOR LIFE, came into being.

Zoe for Life links women with professional agencies for counseling and medical care. We also provide emotional and spiritual support, a sheltering home if needed, and — if the mother opts for adoption — an adoption plan with Orthodox Christian families. (While we limit adoption assistance to the Orthodox community, we help any woman with a crisis pregnancy.) Many bishops have lent us their support. Our board includes representatives from the Antiochian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and Greek jurisdictions.

From the outset we knew finding children for adoption would not be easy. Then a local couple went to an Orthodox orphanage in Guatemala as part of an Orthodox Christian Mission Center team. The nuns there asked if Zoe for Life could help find homes for the children in their care. Our answer was a resounding yes. Now we also have ties with orphanages in Russia and Ukraine.

Abortionists have done a great job of portraying pro-lifers as lunatics, cult-like hysterics, bent on bombing abortion clinics and killing doctors. Zoe for Life emphasizes its pro-woman position, which also translates into pro-child.

The fact is that abortion clinics are not the problem but rather a symptom of social sickness. Slogans like "It's a baby, not a choice" answer a question few are asking. The chilling truth is that even the abortionists agree that it's a baby.

The sexual revolution promised sex without consequences. Pro-abortionists chant, "My right, my body, my choice." But the reality is that abortion translates into isolation and loneliness. Women who abort their babies have betrayed the one person who so desperately counted on their protection — their child. Most will grapple with this

realization for the rest of their lives.

Abortion never solves a mother's problem, because the baby is not the problem. Thus we help women focus on the real problems: relationship issues with the baby's father; pressure from family and friends; embarrassment at being pregnant; and all the other the issues that brought her to this place. We let her know that she is not alone.

Orthodox Christians must do more than say we're against abortion. That's too simplistic. By our silent conviction that "our girls don't do those things," we force our young people to have abortions. Pride in our ethnic identity and Orthodox heritage is brutalizing our children and murdering our grandchildren.

Any society that pits a woman against her unborn has perverted the very essence of motherhood. We must transmit the message of non-judgmental, Christian love and support for our children in crisis pregnancies. It is imperative that we speak to our children candidly, in our homes and churches, to help them understand that living a pure lifestyle is a real option.

Such discussion is crucial. Would you offer a teenager the car keys, and not expect them to take the car out for a spin? Or offer them alcohol and expect them to say no? What about birth control? Contraceptives are easily accessible, and casual sex portrayed in contemporary music and so many movies and TV dramas, gives them the impression that "everyone is doing it." In such a social context, do we seriously expect our teenagers not to experiment with sex?

The Orthodox perspective on marriage and pre-marital sex is essential for balance. For this reason, Zoe for Life is working to create an "Orthodox Life Choices" program to help our young people think ahead to where they want to go in life, and reflect on how decisions they make today will shape their tomorrows. Our inaugural presentation of the first phase of this program will be presented in April. However, they need to know that if they fall short of their goals, the Church — and Zoe for Life — is there to help.

Are we having an impact? Though we've only just begun compiling statistics, in the past three months we received 62 requests calls for help, came into contact with eight potential adoptive families, found two host families, and played a part in averting at least three abortions. Consider Camille, born two years ago to a young unwed mother. Consider Alexandra, brought to this country in time for Christmas last year from Guatemala, by a loving adoptive couple in Virginia. Ask little Anthony and his mother Gina, who gained emotional support and shelter from a host home for the last four months of her pregnancy. Anthony was born on October 22, 2001. Ask the priests who've called seeking support for parishioners in crisis, women who had already made appointments for abortion.

We are ordinary Orthodox Christians. Together, with God's help, we can change our world. If we don't speak for the unborn, who will? If each of us could help just one young person avoid the lifelong torment and guilt of an abortion, if we could save even one life, if we can help create even one family, wouldn't that be a blessing for all of us?

There are at least two victims in every abortion: the baby and the mother who felt she had no other option. Women who have had abortions so often say, "If only I had had someone to stand by me." The missing "someone" is you and me.

Paula Kappos, founder of Zoe for Life, lives in Moreland Hills, Ohio, and is a member of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Cleveland Heights. She is married and the mother of two. You may reach Zoe for Life at 3352 Mayfield Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118; 440-893-9990; Hot Line phone 887-436-LIFE; or at their website: www.zoeforlifeonline.org