

Release #1

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ORTHODOX WOMEN TO DISCOVER AND SHARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

(Ligonier, PA) A pan-Orthodox conference, “Women, Where Are You in the Life of the Church? – Called to God’s Purpose in Ministry” will be held September 10-12, 2004 at Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center just east of Pittsburgh in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Open to all Orthodox women, the conference will focus on discerning spiritual gifts and callings and their applications in lay ministry service to both the Church and the community.

Women of all Orthodox jurisdictions and of all ages will discover and renew themselves while they uncover opportunities with purpose through worship, speakers, workshops, discussions, fellowship, mentoring, prayer stretches, reflection, and a Ministry Resources Fair.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos, will address “Called to God’s Purpose: Faith, Transformation, and Service.” Dr. Theodoropoulos presently teaches Patristic theology at St. Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology in Libertyville, Illinois. *(See Sidebar Bio: Release 2)* She will be joined by speakers Dr. Anthony Bashir, and Demetra Jaquet, Master of Divinity. Dr. Bashir, co-chairman of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Lay Ministries, will lead the opening interactive session “Discover Your Spiritual Gifts.” Demetra Jaquet will speak on “Courage to Minister,” a presentation on some common dynamics in women’s spiritual and personal growth for matching their call to ministry with God’s purpose.

Saturday afternoon presentations about new and existing opportunities for lay ministry will offer a choice among several tracks. “Broaden Your View of Ministry Settings” breakout topics include: Ecumenical and Community Ministries, Parish Life Ministries, and Liturgical Arts and Liturgical Life. Among the offerings are sessions

focusing on woman-to-woman parish ministries, community crisis ministries, pastoral counseling, pastoral care, parish nursing, monasticism, chanter, choir director, reader, endorsed chaplaincy, and the history of the deaconess and its current relevance. Saturday evening, topic-focused discussion groups called “Tips and Tales from Women in Ministry” will feature story-telling, reflections, and ministry tips by Orthodox women already active in ministries.

“Let me give my enthusiastic encouragement to your efforts, and the efforts of all those who will organize and attend this conference,” stated His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. “A conference which deals with the call of women to lay ministry in the Church is both timely and vital. It is critical for us to remember that although the Orthodox Church does not ordain women to the orders of the clergy, She nonetheless recognizes and encourages the dynamic role that women have had, and should continue to have in the life of the Church,” he concluded.

The conference is co-sponsored by Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center and the Women’s Orthodox Ministries and Education Network (WOMEN), a national network for women interested in spiritual growth, theology, and lay ministry. Co-Chairs are Fr. Michael Massouh, Executive Director of Antiochian Village, and Demetra Jaquet, Chair of the WOMEN network. For information or to register, visit www.OrthodoxWomensNetwork.org; call Antiochian Village at 724-238-3677; or Email: womenusa@aol.com or avcenter@antiochian.org.

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