



Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

March 2015

Lenten Message 2015

His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela



My dear Sisters in the Lord,

As we begin the period of Great Lent one wonders how we shall prepare and how we are to journey through Great Lent to Pascha. Our Church teaches us that prayer and fasting are the primary means that we need to use during this period. But what is the goal for prayer and fasting and how is it related to our ministry as Philoptochos members?

Our Church speaks of fasting as a way of self denial and the total giving of ourselves to God. We have an example of total giving in the Person of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. The giving of our Lord was not just an act of charity but a total unconditional giving of Himself, as the scripture says: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7), and *He gave Himself as ransom for all* (1 Timothy 2:6). This was an ultimate and total giving of His life to the world, a complete

surrender to the will of His Father, a love that is unconditional and complete (whole-perfect).

Prayer is the way to commune with God. Prayer is the time when we get in our "closet" (our private chamber in our hearts) away from the business of everyday life and concerns, and open our hearts to the Lord and allow Him to speak to us. He Himself showed us that same example when many times He got away from everybody and went by Himself to the desert or the mountain to pray.

So my dear sisters in the Lord, as you fast and pray this Great Lent, remember that fasting enables us to give freely, without expecting recognition or having ulterior motives, not as isolated acts of kindness but rather a natural outpouring of love, the all encompassing love of the Lord. That kind of love we cannot practice on our own, we need to receive it so that we can give it. That kind of love is offered to us by the Lord in His very own Body and Blood, (in Holy Communion) where we can be with Him as He said: *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me* (John 15:4).

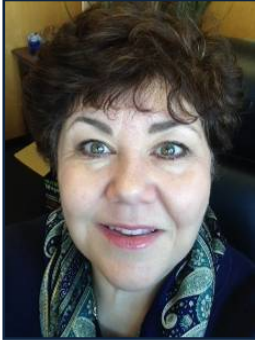
Let us therefore strengthen our bond with the Lord and with each other that we can bear fruit in Christ's name and that in the awesome day of His judgment we may find ourselves worthy of His kingdom.

Kali Sarakosti,
May you have a blessed Great Lent,

Bishop Sevastianos

+Bishop Sevastianos of Zela

*President's First Major Address Presents
Three Challenges to Chapters*
Maria Logus, National President



In her first major address since she assumed office, President Logus expressed appreciation to her predecessors for their exemplary work and inspiration, and to His Grace Bishop Sevastianos for his guidance. She offered her profound

gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios for his trust and support and the opportunity to serve.

President Logus discussed the mission of Philoptochos and what it means. She clearly distinguished charity, which is *giving*, from philanthropy, which is *doing*. "We in Philoptochos know a lot about giving; it is clearly one of our strengths. We are justifiably proud of the fact that Philoptochos has a respected and widely admired ability to raise funds for worthy and challenging causes," President Logus stated. She continued by calling on all Philoptochos Stewards to support the 15th Children's Medical Fund Luncheon and the historic rebuilding of the St. Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center as major projects of the Society. President Logus then identified 3 goals that will guide the work of the Chapters during the next 18 months and enable Philoptochos to add tangible acts of philanthropy to its exemplary history of charitable giving:

1. A Return to Basics. She calls on Chapters to partner with other organizations in their communities in joint projects, thereby involving the entire community in tangible, hands-on philanthropy. She challenged Chapters across the country to band together to provide 250,000 meals for those in need by the next national convention in July 2016. This works out to

31 meals each month per Chapter. "Feeding the homeless and the hungry will not only provide nourishment to those we serve; the physical act of giving will feed our souls and our spirits as well," she said.

2. Expanded and Enhanced Communications. The national organization will harness all modes of communication to bring awareness and a greater understanding of the work of Philoptochos to the community at large. A goal of producing monthly educational webinars has been established. She asks all members to communicate with her and with the National Board to provide proposals for lending a helping hand to someone in need.
3. Growth and Development of the Membership. The National Philoptochos will establish a Leadership Institute to provide instructional seminars, discussion groups and field trips with the goal of more fully informing new members on the work of Philoptochos and engaging them as our future leaders. In addition, a pilot program is being established that will partner chapters of Orthodox Christian Fellowship on college campuses with local Philoptochos Chapters. Studies show that the Millennials are eager to volunteer, and the future of the Society will rest with their future participation in our organization.

In conclusion, she stated, "I see us as a team, as a group that works together for the greater good....We have an opportunity to give witness to the simple goodness in people by doing something small – lending a hand to someone in need. I am confident that together, with faith in the Lord, with prayers from deep within our hearts and souls, and with the love and blessings of God, we can lessen the pain, loss and suffering of others."

The full text of her speech can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/q9d4p9x>



*Saint Nicholas National Shrine At The World Trade Center
Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative*

'This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.' Psalm 102:18

The Saint Nicholas National Shrine Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative, which includes the rebuilding of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, has begun with great promise. Through all of your efforts, Philoptochos once again leads as an army of women whose role is critical to the support of the rebuilding initiative, providing a tangible witness to our Greek Orthodox faith.

Through the Society's participation in this initiative, we offer the country and the world a place for prayer and reflection, a place to pray for loved ones, to memorialize the victims of September 11 and to reflect on the magnitude of that fateful day. The Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church will be the only place of worship at Ground Zero and the Shrine will stand as a testament to our strength, our courage and our faith for all generations.

An informational letter, Saint Nicholas Icon Cards and the Genesis of a Resurrection Pamphlets for distribution to Chapter members, were provided to all Chapter Presidents. If you have not received these materials, along with instructions on how to offer your support directly through your Chapter, please speak with your Chapter President. In addition, the materials, and a moving video presentation of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine Initiative, can be found on the National Philoptochos website at www.philoptochos.org.

We are confident that Philoptochos will take its appropriate position in a prominent site and manner among those who will proudly proclaim their participation in this rare opportunity to promote our Greek Orthodox heritage and faith. The commitment and contribution of each Philoptochos steward will help to provide a place of peace and comfort to the world of faithful believers.

Our thanks go out to the many Philoptochos Stewards who have already donated and to those we know will become part of this noble goal.

Maria Logus
National Philoptochos President

Jennifer Constantin ~ Arlene Siavelis Kehl ~ Anne Michals
National Philoptochos Chairmen ~ Saint Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center Philoptochos Initiative

Irene Arsoniadis, President
Metropolis of Chicago

Marian Catechis, President
Metropolis of Denver

Frances Levas, President
Metropolis of Boston

Dee Nicolaou, President
Metropolis of Atlanta

Rosemary Nikas, President
Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Jeannie Ranglas, President
Metropolis of San Francisco

Margaret Yates, President
Metropolis of Detroit

*Radio Interview with our
National Philoptochos President*

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society was honored to accept an invitation from the Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) to interview National Philoptochos President, Maria Logus, on their flagship radio program, "Come Receive the Light." Hosted by OCN's Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Christopher T. Metropulos, the nationally syndicated program focuses on positive and relevant Orthodox content through a variety of topics and perspectives.

Please take a moment to listen to your National President's vision and goals for the Philoptochos Society, balancing her full-time career with the demands of her new role and personal reflections from years past.

Click here for the radio interview with National Philoptochos President, Maria Logus, on the Orthodox Christian Network:
http://radio.myocn.net/podcast/CRTL/On_Air/Maria_Logus_on_OCN.mp3

*National Philoptochos Board Report
2015 Winter Meeting
Coral Gables, Florida*

The National Board of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society convened for its winter meeting on Friday, January 23 and Saturday, February 24, 2015, at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. The gathering was of significance as it was the first full meeting presided over by newly appointed National President Maria Logus.

The meeting commenced with the prayer of St. Ephraim and a spiritual reflection offered by National Philoptochos Spiritual Advisor, His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela. His Grace led the Board members in a thoughtful and enthusiastic discussion on the Gospel passages from the four Sundays prior to Great Lent.

President Logus welcomed the members to Florida and thanked His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos President Dee Nicolaou and the entire Atlanta Metropolis for their gracious hospitality. President Logus then presented her report and shared her vision for the next two years. She identified three areas to guide the work of the National Philoptochos during the 2014-2016 term, as outlined previously on these pages in a recap of her address.

The Board members discussed many topics and heard reports from the Direct Archdiocesan District and Metropolis Presidents.

- His Grace Bishop Sevastianos gave a detailed report on his recent visit to the institutions in Cyprus that Philoptochos has financially supported with the Aid to Greece and Cyprus Initiative.
- National Treasurer Martha Stefanidakis reported that in 2014, the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society disbursed a total of \$1,475,349 in philanthropic donations.
- Social Services Chair, Lily Katos, reported that in 2014, the Society awarded \$116,682 in financial grants to individuals in need throughout the country, as well as providing other non-financial services.
- Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos President Frances Levas asked all members to save the date for the 15th Children's Medical Fund Luncheon to be held on Saturday, October 31, 2015, in Boston, Massachusetts. All were asked to plan, if they could, to stay for church services on Sunday, November 1, for a celebration of Philoptochos Patron Saints, Cosmas and Damianos.
- The Saint Nicholas National Shrine Initiative Tri-Chairs, Jennifer Constantin, Arlene Siavelis Kehl and Anne Michals gave an informative and greatly detailed presentation and update on the initiative. The presentation also included two videos

created especially for this project as well as a Q & A session led by Board member Anita Kartalopoulos.

Highlights from Saturday, January 24 included:

- The welcoming of several Miami area priests, Chapter Presidents and members who spent the morning visiting, meeting and exchanging thoughts with the National Board members. Special thanks go to Father Spiro Bobotas of Miami's St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral for joining the meetings.
- Guests and members were treated to a commentary and slide show by National Past President and Advisor Aphrodite Skeadas and Board member Anita Kartalopoulos on the recent historic meeting of His Holiness Pope Francis and His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.

Special thanks to Miami National Board members Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, Betty Lantz and Joanne Mitchell for their wonderful and generous hospitality. Many thanks to Dorothea Lantz, who opened her home for a lovely Florida evening. The members of the Board were especially delighted by the granddaughters of Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, future Philoptochos members, who served the Vasilopita.

His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela concluded the meetings with a closing prayer.



New Email Address for Communications



The PR/Communications Committee would love to hear from you! Please send us Philoptochos related news or announcements or submit articles (up to 300 words) and photographs (in JPG form) to our new group email address, communications@philoptochos.org. If you have ideas you would like to share with the Committee, send them our way!

Membership Corner

*Philoptochos Is
Philanthropy ~ Fellowship ~ Faith In Action*

Invite all women of the Church to experience the beauty that can be found in a life of service to others.

When we invite all women of the Church *to experience the beauty that can be found in a life of service to others*, we are welcoming them as *members* to Philoptochos. *Members* are the building blocks of an organization and without them the mission cannot be accomplished or fulfilled and the ministry is in peril of becoming irrelevant.

The main enrollment period is January 1 through April 30, but it is vital that Philoptochos promotes Membership growth in every season. National Philoptochos President, Maria Logus, has challenged every chapter to grow its Membership by 5% over the next two years.

This should not be hard. After all, our Mission is worthy and our efforts to carry the teachings of Christ in our hearts and fulfill His mission, to love one another and to care for the least of our brethren, is faithful and true. These reasons should be enough to compel all women to join Philoptochos.

The vitality and relevance of Philoptochos has enabled our noble organization to stand the test of time as a valuable Ministry of the Church.



While we act as *Ambassadors of Philoptochos* in our parishes, keeping strong and alive the work begun many years ago by our mothers and grandmothers, we must continue to attract women to our Ministry by inviting them and encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas about new philanthropic endeavors.

The philanthropic ministry of Philoptochos should always be vibrant and alive with creativity. Philoptochos must be limitless in its boundaries to promote hands-on charitable acts, as well as offering women the chance to do *small deeds of kindness* within our own parishes and communities at large. We gratefully accept any amount of time, talent and treasure that they are able to offer.

Women in our parishes want to serve others and live their faith. They are talented and will freely offer charity to those in need. It is the *'time'* factor that must be considered in the recruitment of women. Give them the opportunity to create change by putting their faith in action through acts of philanthropy. These charitable acts do not necessarily include attending meetings.

Philoptochos is capable of boundless good works, but needs an ever growing *army of women* willing to participate. In the next issue of Philanthropy Witness your Membership Committee will offer suggestions on how to organize and highlight your work in a way that will attract women to consider *joining the team*. Alexis Limberakis and Maria Tamvakologos serve as Co-chairs of the National Philoptochos Membership Committee.

*Shop on Smile.Amazon.com
and help Philoptochos Social Services!*



Philoptochos has partnered with Amazon through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile). Shopping through this site is exactly like shopping on regular Amazon, with the same products, prices and services as well as the same look and navigation of the website.

Here's how you can shop online and contribute to Philoptochos Social Services.

- Access Amazon through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile). You will be prompted to select a charitable organization to which Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of every purchase made.
- Select **National Philoptochos** (or tax ID **13-6147442**) as the charity you wish to support. Specify exactly "**National Philoptochos**" in order to have a contribution sent to Philoptochos Social Services.
- Shop on the site all year long to support Philoptochos Social Services. In 2014, National Philoptochos Social Services donated almost \$117,000 to help individuals throughout every Metropolis in the United States. By shopping through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile), Philoptochos Social Services can receive additional funding to continue this vital ministry.

Get Ready for 2015 Chapter Elections!



All Chapter Presidents and Board members at this time should begin planning their Chapter elections. In May 2015, each Philoptochos Chapter should hold elections for Board members. Upon ratification from the National Office, Officers can then be elected.

Here are some tips for making this a smooth process:

- Each Chapter President and Board should review and refresh themselves on the election rules and procedures as they have changed with a Resolution that was passed at the 2014 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. This information can be found on the Philoptochos website. Click on www.philoptochos.org and look under "Resources" tab and click on "Membership and Elections" drop down.
- Each president should have appointed a Screening Committee to determine who is eligible to serve as a Board member **four months prior** to the election meeting.
- Prior to the election meeting, the Election Committee is appointed to determine who may vote in the election.
- Set the date for your May 2015 Chapter meeting and make sure that the entire Chapter membership is aware that this is a

special meeting. Meeting notices need to be sent out **30 days** prior to the election date.

- The election meeting is held and the Chapter Board is elected. Please remember that you **must have an odd number** of Board members for voting purposes. If your Chapter has a Past President Advisor, she is to be included as a Board member.
- **Within 14 days** of the election of the Chapter Board, the names of the newly-elected Board members are sent to the National Office for ratification through the online Excel form found on the website.
- The Parish Priest and Election's Chairman must **sign and submit the Election's Cover Form** on or near the same day as the newly elected Board list in order for the ratification to go quickly. This PDF form needs to be scanned and emailed or faxed to the National Office.
- **Upon written receipt of ratification** from the National Office, the Parish Priest administers the oath of office.
- The newly sworn Board convenes to elect Chapter Officers. Please remember three consecutive terms are not admissible without a waiver.
- The ratification process from the National Office will go very quickly if Chapters follow the election procedures. In particular, **Chapters need to submit the results through the online Excel form ONLY.**

Make your election meeting a special event by having a potluck dinner, having pizza delivered or an ice-cream social! Use it as an evening to celebrate the newly-elected Board and to thank the previous Officers and Board for their service.

Orthodox Christian Mission Center

Support a Mission Priest

Betty Lantz and Celeste Moschos
OCMC/SAMP Committee Co-Chairs



As the official international missions agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ and shares the Orthodox Christian faith throughout the world. To provide this witness, OCMC trains and sends long-term missionaries and short-term mission teams, provides financial support to Orthodox mission priests, underwrites missions related projects, and assists Orthodox seminaries. Currently, 376 priests in 16 countries are sponsored through OCMC's Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) program. OCMC ministries are also active in over 30 countries around the world.

In July 2014, at the Clergy-Laity Congress in Philadelphia, the National Philoptochos gave Father Martin Ritsi, Executive Director, of OCMC/SAMP \$35,000 for OCMC and \$36,000 for SAMP. This year, through your support, OCMC will invest more than three million dollars in welcoming more people into the Body of Christ.

Please open your hearts in March and support OCMC/SAMP by sending your donation to the National Philoptochos. Through your efforts we will continue to spread Orthodoxy worldwide to fulfill Christ's commission to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Hellenic College Holy Cross Lenten Event

Marian Catechis and Philippa Condakes
HCHC Committee Co-Chairs



Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (HCHC) is the center for education for the Greek Orthodox Church of America. This year, the School celebrates 15 years of distinguished service by Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou, President of HCHC. The Lenten appeal is an opportunity for our Philoptochos chapters and communities to thank the School and show our appreciation for their immeasurable contributions to our Holy Archdiocese and parishes.

All Philoptochos Chapters are asked in the month of March to hold an event that will benefit the operational expenses of the School. In the past, the funds raised have gone to pay for computer labs, handicap accessible bathrooms, and classroom and dormitory furniture. The funds collected this March will be combined with previous funds to update the campus security. HCHC is always looking to improve their facilities in order to provide a rich academic environment. This funding goes a long way to help the students, faculty and staff to maintain the School's mission to "the formation and the education of the person within the life of an Orthodox Christian community."

In 2014, Philoptochos donated \$75,000 from the Lenten Event drive to Hellenic College Holy Cross. We thank you, our chapters, for always being generous in supporting Hellenic College Holy Cross through this Lenten Appeal.

Environment Responsibility Committee - Green Tips

Theone Dickos and Diane Saphos, Co-Chairs

"It should not be fear of impending disaster with regard to global change that obliges us to change our ways with regard to the natural environment. Rather, it should be a recognition of the cosmic harmony and original beauty that exists in the world. We must learn to make our communities more sensitive and to render our behavior toward nature more respectful. We must acquire a compassionate heart – what St. Isaac of Syria, a seventh century mystic once called a heart that burns with love for the whole of creation: for humans, for birds and beasts, for all God's creatures."

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

March 2015

The Environment Responsibility Committee continues its dedication to offering a bimonthly communication of "Green Tips" to share with your family, Philoptochos Chapter and Church Community. When observing and considering the environment, the earth deserves our attention and care.

BE RESPONSIBLE AND BE GREEN DURING THE WINTER SEASON IN COLD AND WARM CLIMATES

An enormous potential of energy is wasted to keep our families and homes comfortable. Money and energy can be saved by:

1. **Fill the Gaps.** The typical American home has enough gaps to equal the size of a 3 by 3 foot hole. To keep cold air out and warm air in, seal up air leaks. Attach door sweeps to the bottom of doors that lead outside, and install weather stripping on drafty windows and doors for an airtight seal. For temperate climates, seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.
2. **Let the sunshine in.** Draw open those curtains, and let the warmth of the sun naturally heat your home during the day. Close the curtains and blinds or shades at night to reduce the chill from cold windows. If you live in a climate where it cools off at night, turn off your cooling system and open your windows while sleeping. When you wake in the morning, shut the windows and blinds to capture the cool air.
3. **Adjust for comfort.** The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that by adjusting your thermostat throughout the day, you will save about 10% annually on your utilities bill. Set the temperature as low as comfortable while you are at home, and dial it back 10 to 15 degrees while you are out or sleeping. Better yet, invest in a programmable thermostat to automate the adjustments if you have not already done so.
4. **Conserve electricity by turning off the air conditioner and opening up the windows-** a reminder for those who live in warm winter climates. When away, make sure the AC is set to turn on at a higher temperature, or turn it off completely. If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4°F with no reduction in comfort.
5. **Storms often cause power outages.** Prevent waste by purchasing rechargeable batteries for your flashlights rather than disposable ones.

Being green must become a way of life. Simple and inexpensive actions can help you save energy and money during the winter months, and at the same time help sustain our precious environment.