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Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

April 2016



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Pascha, 2016

Dear Ladies of Philoptochos,

During this great and holy period of Lent, I offer you my heartfelt best wishes for a transforming and spiritually purifying journey to *Pascha*.

This time of preparation is a spiritual gift and a revered opportunity for us to entrust ourselves more completely to Christ, His way of life, and the hope of eternal communion with Him. With prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we train for a richer, more authentic life living in accordance with the Gospel remembering the yearning faith conviction expressed by Paul, *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection...* (Romans 6:5).

I give thanks to God for you, the dedicated and industrious ladies of Philoptochos. As you deliver Christ's love with earnestness and genuineness in your acts of philanthropy, you incarnate the Gospel message and foster among those you help a renewed closeness to Christ. I wish you a blessed *Pascha* praying that you will continue to illumine the world around you with your fervent witness of faith, proclaiming the glory of the Risen One, and sharing in the life, love, and peace that may be yours for all eternity.

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

With my warmest Paschal wishes and
love in the Risen Christ,

+DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

PASCHA, 2016

My dear Philotochos Ladies,

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

The message of Pascha is a message of giving, joy and redemption. Christ offers Himself to the world, as the ultimate sacrifice. His offering brings joy and redemption to whoever believes in Him.

This joy of giving is offered to every Christian and especially to you, my beloved Philotochos Ladies. You feel that joy every time you touch someone, every time you put a smile on someone's face, every time you hug someone, and every time you give, expecting nothing in return. This is the joy of the Lord who gave Himself for us.

What we give to others is what we received from God, LOVE. Jesus tells us: As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John: 15:9).

This is the love and joy of the presence of the Lord in us and among us. This is also the joy that filled the hearts of the myrrh-bearing women when they heard from the Angel that the Lord has risen, and charged them to be the evangelizers who would bring the good news to the Apostles and the world.

Very early in the morning, the myrrh-bearing women were hastening to Your tomb lamenting. But the Angel appeared to them and uttered, "The time for lamentation has ended; weep no more. Go announce the Resurrection to the Apostles." (Evlogetaria of Pascha).

Every one of you; my dear ladies has assumed the role of the myrrh-bearing women, bringing joy and love to the world through your service to others, spreading joy and love to a world that needs it now, more than any other time.

May the joy and love of our Resurrected Lord fill your hearts, your homes, families and the world.

In Our Risen Lord,

Bishop Sevastianos

† Bishop Sevastianos





GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, Inc.

Pascha, 2016

To the Members of the National Philoptochos Board, the Metropolis Philoptochos Boards,
Chapter Presidents and Stewards:

Χριστός Ανέστη!

Christ is Risen!

As Christians, we look to the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the ultimate expression of love and the supreme demonstration of God's mercy, faithfulness, and redemption. Through His ministry and sacrifice, Jesus demonstrated God's unconditional love for us. He taught us the importance of helping others and loving our neighbors, and still, more than 20 centuries later, His selfless devotion and mercy provides a remarkable and inspiring example for all of us.

As stewards of our beloved Philoptochos Society, every day provides us with an opportunity to re-design and re-dedicate our lives to honor and emulate that example. Our Philoptochos chapter in Bridgeport, Connecticut, recently tried, and I suggest, succeeded, in doing just that. A video of their recent efforts to feed hungry children, shows Philoptochos members and countless young people, all adorned with broad and joyful smiles, hairnets, and rolled-back shirtsleeves, enthusiastically preparing and packing meals. In the background, a song titled "Love is the Protest" is playing. Written and recorded by Jars of Clay, a Nashville based Christian rock band, the lyrics urge us to employ love as our protest, as our sword in our quest to address wrongs, to provide for the sick, to restore respect and dignity to the needy and to bring peace, unity, and comfort to a weary world.

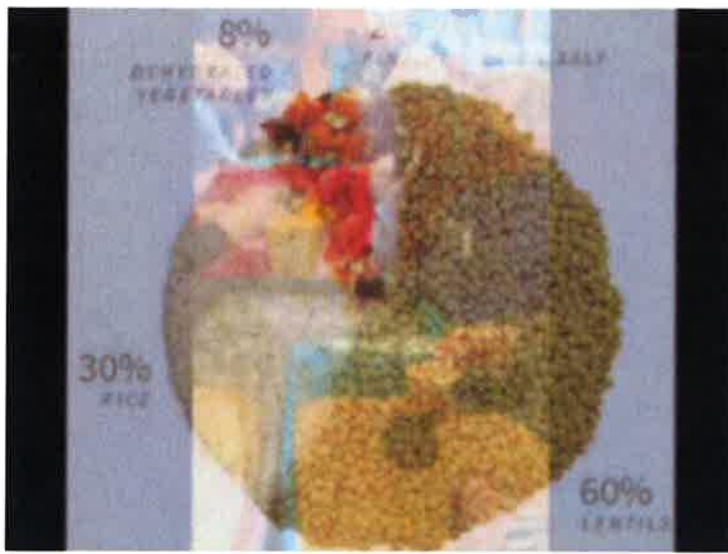
There are similar stories of selfless giving in so many of our Philoptochos chapters across the country.

As we celebrate Pascha, let us try to follow the supreme example of love and give breath to our understanding that love for one another is our strongest and most potent tool and our most incorruptible protest to the evil around us. With God's love as our motivation, guide and goal, surely we can make a difference in the lives of so many seeking nothing more than love and kindness. Let the Resurrection of Christ be a reminder to us of that love, always.

With love in the Resurrected Christ,

Maria Logus





VIDEO: Philoptochos Feeding the Hungry

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

Bridgeport, CT

March 19, 2016

(Click on the image above to open the YouTube video.)



Register for the 2016 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention

Irene Arsoniadis and Theone Dickos, Convention Co-Chairs

The 2016 National Philoptochos Convention Co-Chairs greet you with love in Christ, and wish all a Blessed Lenten Season.

The momentum is continuing to build for our July Convention, and we are developing an inspiring program! We look forward to making new friends and reestablishing bonds with women across the country.

Among the many exciting events on tap are **Interactive Discussion Groups** on *Membership, How to Assess Social Service Needs, Finance, and Philoptochos in Our Changing World*. These discussions will allow delegates to participate and express their views.

We also have a number of speakers and programs that are new this year. These include: **Miss America**, National Goodwill Ambassador for the Children's Medical Network Hospitals; **Philoptochos Leadership Institute**, Inspiring future leaders to serve with a servant's heart; a **Hands-On Workshop** for Philoptochos and Clergy-Laity Delegates for the Feeding the Hungry Initiative and most triumphantly, **Celebrating 85 Years of Love, Caring and Hope of our Beloved Philoptochos**.

Please look for and share the Convention **Registration Brochure** mailed to each chapter three weeks ago. Registration information is also posted on the National Philoptochos website. There, you will find the option to **register online** at this web address: <http://bit.ly/1N8zyKs>. *Be sure to register as soon as possible.*

For your convenience, Rules for Chapter Delegates and General Information follow this update, as well as links to the Registration Application, Online Registration and the 2016 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention web page.

A highlight of every Convention is the **National Awards Program**. Applications are due by May 15 and can be found on the Convention web page. It is also a time for all chapters to make sure that they have participated in the **National Ministry Commitments Program**. Certificates will be awarded to all chapters that have fulfilled these Commitments. By participating fully in the National Commitments Program, chapters join with others across the nation to maximize philanthropic outreach.

Information regarding submitting a request for a **Resolution for a Bylaws or Procedural change** at the Convention has been sent to Chapter Presidents. For those that intend to submit a request, please review it carefully with your Direct Archdiocesan District or Metropolis, Metropolis President and Board. All Bylaws/Resolutions "*Requests for Change*" must first be reviewed at the Metropolis level. Detailed guidelines are posted on the Philoptochos website.

Strike a beautiful chord with us in Music City. Brush off your cowboy boots and come join us in Nashville, Tennessee from July 3- 8. Cannot wait to see you all there!



2016 National Philoptochos Convention meeting in the Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy on March 29, 2016

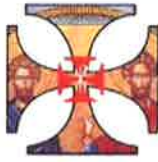
NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION CHAPTER DELEGATE REGULATIONS

A delegate is a Philoptochos member chosen by a Chapter in good standing with the National and Metropolis Boards (i.e. elections have been ratified, and per capita for 2015 and 2016 has been submitted) to represent that Chapter at the National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. The delegate is entitled to be heard and to vote in accordance with prescribed rules governing the Convention and is required to attend all general sessions of the Convention and the assigned workshops.

A Chapter in good standing is entitled to have a total of three (3) delegates at the National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. The Chapter President is automatically a delegate (or, in her absence, another officer as prescribed by the Bylaws, Article V, Section 12, Para. 2).

Up to two (2) additional delegates, from **among the full members**, shall be elected from the floor at a General meeting of the membership.

NOTICE - Please elect a(n) alternate delegate(s). In the event a delegate cannot attend, please notify the National Office, if an alternate, in fact, will be attending in place of your delegate.



2016

PHILOPTOCHOS CONVENTION

GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER, NASHVILLE, TN

JULY 3-8, 2016



GENERAL INFORMATION

OFFICIAL DATES

The 2016 Clergy-Laity Congress and the National Philoptochos Convention will convene on Sunday, July 3rd through July 8th, 2016, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, TN.

LOCATION

The Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, a premier Opryland hotel in Nashville, TN, offers guests all the excitement and energy of Music City under one spectacular roof.

Nestled in a bend of the meandering Cumberland River, this Nashville resort features an extraordinary selection of dining, shopping and recreational activities underneath signature glass atriums.

GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER
2800 OPRYLAND DRIVE NASHVILLE, TN 37214
1.615.889.1000

RESERVATIONS

Reservations may be made by calling the Gaylord Opryland Resort at 1.877.491.7397. **Please advise reservations that you are with "Greek Orthodox" to obtain the special rate of \$189.00.**

ONLINE RESERVATIONS:

<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/2016biennial>

To be guaranteed our discounted rate please make your reservations prior to JUNE 8, 2016

PHILOPTOCHOS CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Please note the following registration fees for the 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress.

\$625 - Registration Fee for National Philoptochos Board and duly elected delegates.

\$650 - Non-Delegates/Guests
(Will only receive ticket packet).

The Registration Fee is inclusive of all Convention meal functions, Workshops, Forums, Registration and collateral materials. The registration hours for Philoptochos are listed below but are subject to change:

Saturday, July 2nd 12:00PM - 6:00PM
Sunday, July 3rd 1:00PM - 7:00PM
Monday, July 4th 9:00AM - 5:00PM

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

- ❖ The Congress Exhibit Hall will be open Sunday, July 3rd through Thursday, July 7th at 5:00PM.
- ❖ Tickets for purchase for family, friends and guests to specific CLC events will be made available at the Congress.
- ❖ The Divine Liturgy will be held at the **GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE** on Sunday, July 3.
- ❖ All other events will be held in the Delta Section of the Hotel.

For Further Information Please Contact:

NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS OFFICE, 126 East 37th Street, New York, NY 10016

TEL: 212.977.7770 • FAX: 212.977.7784

philosny@aol.com • www.philoptochos.org

Click below for

[REGISTRATION APPLICATION](#)

[ONLINE REGISTRATION](#)

and for further information,

[2016 NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION WEB PAGE](#)



Before She was Miss America, She was Feeding the Hungry

Miss America 2016 Betty Cantrell was the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos Society's honored guest at the Daffodil Luncheon on March 5, 2016, at the Historic Silver Grille in downtown Cleveland, OH. The Daffodil Luncheon is held in a different location in the Metropolis each year and is the single fundraiser for the Metropolis Social Service fund.

The four Cleveland, Ohio area Philoptochos chapters hosted this year's fundraiser: Annunciation, Cleveland; Sts. Constantine & Helen, Cleveland Heights; St. Demetrios, Rocky River; and St. Paul, North Royalton. In addition to the Metropolis Social Service fund, two local organizations, the Cleveland Clinic Breast Cancer Vaccine Project and Zoe for Life, were beneficiaries of the Luncheon proceeds.

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas inspired his Philoptochos chapters with spiritual reflections about the true meaning of Philanthropy. Melissa Reid, a reporter for Fox 8 News, served as Emcee for the afternoon, and the guests were entertained by the Fairview High School String Quartet. National Philoptochos First Vice President, Arlene Siavelis Kehl, also attended the luncheon.

The host chapters chose Miss America 2016 as their guest speaker because she perfectly exemplifies the ideals of Philoptochos. Betty Cantrell hails from Warner Robins, Georgia, and is named for her Greek grandmother, *Bacillyk*. She is a member of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Macon, Georgia, where she sings in the choir, chants, performs with the Greek dance troop, and helps at the annual festival. Since her youth, like many daughters of Philoptochos members, she has worked by her mother's side, helping with fundraisers and projects. Recently, she served as Facilitator and Distributor for a Philoptochos project, which delivered canned goods to food banks and women's shelters in her community. She also assisted her Philoptochos in raising funds for the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Initiative, and the Orthodox Christian Mission Fund. As Miss America, her national platform is **Healthy Children, Strong America**. She has developed and produced a multi-faceted program of healthy lifestyles and eating habits for children throughout Georgia. In addition, she serves as the National Goodwill Ambassador for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. In concluding her remarks, she said that it was a pleasure to speak at an event where she could talk about her commitment to her Orthodox faith.

She is active in her church; she feeds the hungry; and she promotes children's health. Her interests and programs perfectly align with the ministries of the National Philoptochos Society. She is the living embodiment of the spirit of *Philanthropia*. Miss America 2016 Betty Cantrell is a role model for all Greek-American young women across the country. The Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos Society was truly honored and inspired by her presence at their annual Daffodil Luncheon.



**Atlanta Annunciation Cathedral Chapter Raises \$55,000
for National Philoptochos
St. Nicholas Rebuilding Initiative**

On February 28, 2016, the Annunciation Cathedral and Philoptochos (Ypapanti) chapter in Atlanta, Georgia, jointly hosted the "On Sacred Ground" Luncheon and Auction as a fundraiser for the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center.

A small, but very strong committee, chaired by Valine Georgeson and Stacie Nefos, worked with Father Paul Kaplanis, Cathedral Dean. The committee enthusiastically supported the rebuilding and focused on making this luncheon successful, unique and memorable.

New York actor Anthoula Katsimatides honored the committee when she accepted the invitation to be the luncheon guest speaker. Anthoula lost her beloved brother John in the September 11th attacks at the World Trade Center. She also serves as a board member on the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

February 28th arrived and the luncheon was attended by over 360 parishioners. The meal was delicious and generously underwritten, and the tables were beautifully decorated, with thoughtful gifts for each guest.

Parishioners were joined by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, a gracious guest who thanked everyone for their participation. His Eminence had been Anthoula's priest in Astoria and was delighted to see her after all these years.

Guests watched architect Santiago Calatrava's short video about St. Nicholas Church which many had never seen. It made visible the radiant beauty that will shine from the church. Anthoula's speech was beautiful. With love, tears and laughter, she shared her story with the audience. The packed ballroom was completely silent as she spoke. Her words will not be soon forgotten and she captured the hearts of all.

The luncheon continued with a fantastic live auction. The energetic auctioneers inspired great bids on the fabulous array of items. There were lots of happy smiles in the crowd! The day ended with inspired parishioners eager to visit the St. Nicholas site, knowing that their participation had helped play a small part in the rebuilding.

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of individual and organizational donors, luncheon attendees and a successful auction, the Atlanta Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos chapter will send \$55,000 to the National Philoptochos Society for the St. Nicholas rebuilding. In addition, the Annunciation Cathedral will send \$55,000 and a private donor will send \$50,000 to the Archdiocese, for St. Nicholas. It was truly a great and fulfilling day!

For information and resources, visit www.philoptochos.org/news/saintnicholas. To be part of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative, please donate directly to your local Philoptochos Chapter or your Metropolis Philoptochos.



100 Acts of Kindness for a 100 Year Anniversary

Chapter News Submitted by Maria Macris

The Greek Orthodox Church of All Saints in Joliet, IL, was founded in 1916, and on September 18, 2016, we will celebrate 100 years of parish life and the legacy and prosperity of our Greek Orthodox community in the Joliet area.

To honor the contribution of the Greek Orthodox community to the Joliet area, our Religious Education students will perform 100 Acts of Kindness throughout the 2015-2016 Church School year and summer.

These include acts that support the quality of life of our membership, friends and family, and the community at large. Our aim is to offer our children fun and meaningful opportunities to understand what it is to be our "brother's keeper" and to "pay it forward."

We have completed collection drives for organizations that serve our nation's military and for nursing homes and cancer patients. With our Philoptochos Society, we have collected school supplies for needy children in the community and set up a Giving Tree for needy families during the Christmas season.

In February, we completed a Philoptochos "Feed the Hungry" project and packed 100 lunch bags for the local homeless clients of MorningStar Mission. Our children made "Lollipop Flowers" (see photo) to be included in the bags.

To date, we are nearly half way to our goal of 100 Acts of Kindness by September 18, 2016. This is a huge undertaking, but it is also a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to serve our community and help those in need. The benefits of working together are vast and leave lasting memories. Our parishioners have enthusiastically supported this effort, and with their continued kindness, generosity, and love, we will complete all 100 Acts of Kindness in time for our 100 year anniversary celebration.

Put **MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY** on Your Calendar for **ACTS OF KINDNESS**

At its May 2015 meeting, the National Board adopted a cross-generational initiative to honor His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios on the occasion of his Nameday on October 26. In conjunction with National **MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY**, which occurs each year in October, chapters across the US were encouraged to sponsor projects involving the children in their parishes in acts of kindness in order to teach our youth about giving back to their communities and to directly involve them in philanthropy.

Chapters can continue the tradition by planning ahead and putting these dates on the calendar for **MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY**: *October 22, 2016 and October 28, 2017.*

Be inspired by the Greek Orthodox Church of All Saints in Joliet, IL and encourage acts of kindness at any time of year, and/or on **MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY**.

For more information go to: [Make a Difference with Philoptochos](#)



Strengthening Philoptochos Membership in our Communities

Alexis Limberakis and Maria Tamvakologos, Co-Chairs

Ideally, there is a Philoptochos chapter in every Greek Orthodox parish that structures its programs to suit the needs of its community. As Philoptochos sisters, we must encourage new members to work with us on the charity, sisterly spirit and fundraising commenced by the foundation members in our communities. It is also important that we seize the opportunity to share with non-members the rewards that fellowship and sisterhood offer to enrich our lives.

Ask yourselves why potential members would want to be involved in the community initiative guided by Philoptochos. How will your chapter—

- Address issues of genuine concern to the greater community?
- Involve community members (in and out of Philoptochos) in defining and creating a solution to the problems or goals of the community?
- Have a history of success for Philoptochos that potential members will want to be part of? (Everyone wants to be part of a winner's circle.)
- Hold a membership drive?
- Make special efforts to welcome new members and new ideas?
- Promote to others the many positive attributes of being involved in Philoptochos?

Philoptochos chapters should keep in mind the following three "R's" for members to be involved and continue to contribute:

1. **Recognition:** Members want to be recognized for their contributions.
2. **Respect:** Members want their values, ideas and time to be respected and considered.
3. **Role:** Members want a clearly meaningful role in the coalition that makes them feel valuable.

Our chapters need to bring in new members and create an atmosphere that fosters continued participation by all.

Question for National Board Members: *Have you participated in the mission of bringing in at least one new member to Philoptochos?*

Photo of February 2016 Philoptochos Membership Tea, Ascension Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland, California



Michigan Chapter Supports Children and Their Families

Chapter News Submitted by Madelyn Torakis

On Sunday January 31, several women from the Assumption Ladies Philoptochos of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, spent the evening at the Ronald McDonald House in Detroit. They had the opportunity to bring dinner to families staying there. The Ronald McDonald House provides a place for families to live while their child receives treatment at The Children's Hospital of Michigan. This enables families to stay together and close to their child in an environment that feels like home.

APRIL NATIONAL MINISTRY COMMITMENTS



International Orthodox Christian Charities

Helping others help themselves

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need throughout the world, without discrimination. Through the years, IOCC has distributed nearly \$500 million in emergency assistance to families and communities in more than 50 countries and across four continents.

Philoptochos has a long and important association with IOCC and has contributed generously to its work. The mission and focus of IOCC, of helping those in great need, is deeply aligned with the work that Philoptochos members also seek to do.

Some important statistics about Philoptochos support to IOCC during the past five years.

- 2015.....**\$50,000** for aid to Greece
- 2014.....**\$45,000** in support of the relief efforts of the Podoconiosis program in Ethiopia. Podoconiosis is a disease of the lower extremities caused by exposure to irritant soils, that leads to disfigurement and disability.
- 2013.....**\$25,000** in support of the relief efforts of the Podoconiosis program in Ethiopia and **\$25,000** towards the Jaharis Matching Grant program to Aid Greece
- 2012.....**\$30,000** general donation and **\$25,000** in support of the second phase of the Podoconiosis program in Ethiopia
- 2011.....**\$20,000** for famine relief in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia and a **\$20,000** general donation.

Over the last ten years, National Philoptochos has contributed \$472,275 to IOCC. In April of each year, all Philoptochos chapters are asked to support this most worthy national commitment as generously as possible.



Sisterhood Fund for Saint Basil Academy

In 1960, during the Philoptochos National Conference in Buffalo, New York, the Sisterhood of Saint Basil Academy (SBA) program was founded to provide dedicated support for the children of the Academy, and it has continued with an unbroken record of assistance to date.

This particular fund provides for the physical needs of the children, which includes clothing, furnishings and essentials for their dormitories. In addition, just like any home, there is regular maintenance that must take place.

Over the years, the Sisterhood Fund has replaced roofs, renovated bathrooms and remodeled dormitories, purchased carpet and bought vans to transport the children.

In 2015, National Philoptochos disbursed \$6,390 from the SBA Sisterhood Fund. Ten-year disbursements from 2006-2015 total \$404,246.

In this Lenten season, it is important to remember that Philoptochos is devoted to helping those in need. Our Saint Basil family thanks and blesses us as their caretakers. Every chapter is asked to remember the children of the Academy and support the Sisterhood Fund with love and generosity.

