

2022 NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION



**New York Marriott Marquis
New York, New York**

**MINUTES
Tuesday, July 5, 2022**

The 2022 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention was called to order by National Philoptochos Convention Chair, Anita Kartalopoulos, Esq. at 9:20 am on Tuesday, July 5, 2022, at the New York Marriott New York, New York.

Opening Ceremonies

Archbishop Elpidophoros, accompanied by the Patriarchal Delegation composed of Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, Metropolitan Prodromos of Rethymnon, and Grand Ecclesiarch Fr. Aetios attended the opening of the Philoptochos Convention.

he NYPD color guard presented the colors.

The Greek National Anthem was performed by Christina Fileas and National Anthem of the United States of America was performed by Maria Moshopoulos.

The invocation was presented by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America.

Convention Chair, Mrs. Kartalopoulos welcomed the Hierarchs and Philoptochos Sisters to the National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. Mrs. Kartalopoulos thanked His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros for his guidance and leadership for the planning and execution of this year's Convention in cooperation with the Clergy Laity Congress Committees. She also thanked National Philoptochos President Arlene Siavelis Kehl, the Convention Co-Chairs Jeannie Ranglas, Jennifer Constantin, and Eleni Constantinides. We will have productive and inspirational meetings packed into the next three days. Mrs. Kartalopoulos gave a synopsis of the program.

His Grace, Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Spiritual Advisor for the National Philoptochos, greeted the Convention attendees.

National President's Report

National President Arlene Siavelis Kehl offered her report. Highlights included some of the changes that have been happening on the National level over the last two years. Additions and changes have been made to our Public Relations and Communications, Financial programs have been updated and changed to increase our accountability and transparency, Telecommunications and Technology in the office, Renovations of the Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy, and Expanding our Social Services. We have worked with Hellenic College Holy Cross to increase awareness among the students as well as increasing our scholarship support of the students. President Kehl thanked everyone for attending our first in person convention in four years and looks forward to a productive convention.

Patriarchal Message Video Greetings by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew were shown.

His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

His Eminence greeted the attendees for the National Philoptochos Convention. He expressed that the Philoptochos are the nurturing mothers and sisters of the Church. He used the examples of Mary and Martha to show the action and contemplation of the Philoptochos. There needs to be a balance between the two. Philoptochos is the Martha, the champions of Hellenic College Holy Cross, Saint Basil, Social Services, the Children's Medical Fund and Patriarchate among others. We must use the energy of Martha and the contemplation of Mary. This is a key to our Legacy, Renewal and Unity. We must take the time for renewal and this renewal will reinforce our Unity.

His Eminence then honored President Kehl and Convention Chair Anita Kartalopoulos as Archdiocesan Centennial Honorees and presented an Icon to each.

Refreshment Break

Credentials Committee Report

Alexis Limberakis, Chair presented the Credentials Committee report, as follows:

Registered Delegates: 317

Delegates in Attendance: 285

Observers registered: 16

The report of the Credentials Committee was adopted.

Presentation: Face of Compassion: Presvytera Kerry Pappas, Coordinator for Seminarian and Clergy Couple Care, Center for Family Care, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist

The Gift of Compassion – From God to us, and through us to others. If you have not received compassion in your life, you will not be able to give it. Presvytera Kerry provided several examples of compassion in the scriptures, and provided us with the working definitions, sympathy, mercy, compassion, and empathy. She also provided case studies of compassionate responses, and how to approach situations of giving with humility. Compassion is one manifestation of God's love.

At the close of Presvytera Kerry's presentation, National President Arlene Siavelis Kehl presented an honorarium to Presvytera Kerry for the Center for Family Care. Presvytera announced that the funds will be used to fund travel scholarships for the Clergy/Couple Retreat.

Convention Chair and 2nd National Vice President, Anita Kartalopoulos advised that all presentations will be on the National Philoptochos Website, and suggested chapters use the presentations for meeting programming on the Chapter Level.

Credentials Update:

Delegates in attendance: 286

Break for lunch at 12:17

Meeting was reconvened at 1:48 by Anita Kartalopoulos

National President, Arlene Siavelis Kehl introduced **Dean Triantafilou the Executive and CEO of International Orthodox Christian Charities.**

IOCC is in there 30th Year of Humanitarian Relief and partners with Philoptochos on a regular basis. Over that time frame the Philoptochos has provided \$2.5 million in humanitarian aid to IOCC. Over the same period IOCC has given out over \$771 million in aid to over 60 countries. Most recently \$1.4 million was directed by IOCC to the Greece Fires in 2021. \$275k was directly from Philoptochos Aid.

IOCC has been in Bosnia for 30 years, Georgia for 25 years and the Holy lands for 5 years. The Chairs of the National Humanitarian Relief Committee for National Philoptochos is Martha Stefanidakis and Georgia Skeadas.

Mr. Triantafilou closed his presentation with a quote from his mentor John G. Ranglas, Sr. “When you open your hands and put them on the table, anyone can break them, however, if you put your hands into a fist no-one can break you.

Trisagion for Carol Stamas, Argyria Logus and our Philoptochos Sisters was offered by His Grace Bishop Athenagoras

Spiritual Reflection by His Grace, Bishop Athenagoras, who is the Spiritual Advisor to National Philoptochos, and the Director of the Department of Religious Education

Bishop Athenagoras began his reflection with the Jesus Prayer. Prayer is not something we do; it is something we become.

He reviewed the 5 stages of prayer and asked that we apply them in our daily lives for 5 minutes every day.

- Lips
- Noetic Prayer
- Heart
- Divine Love
- Divine Liturgy

His Grace Bishop Athenagoras serves as the Director of the Department for Religious Education which includes the following 3 ministries: Sunday School, Orthodox Marketplace, and St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival and Scholarships.

Cookie Donation from Chip City for the afternoon session

Credentials Committee Report

Delegates in Attendance: 288

Introduction of Professional Parliamentarian: Loraine K. Richardson McCray

Adoption of Standing Rules – A motion was made by Jennifer Constantin to accept the standing rules as presented, which was 2nd by Barbara Pasalis. The motion was passed unanimously.

Appointment of Minutes Committee for 2022 Convention

Arlene Siavelis Kehl, President

Secretaries

Thea Portelos

Elaine Sackleh

Lisa Xanthos

Cindy Kezos

Adoption of the Convention Program A motion was made by Eleni Constantinides to adopt the convention program as presented, it was 2nd by Philippa Condakes, and passed unanimously.

Bylaws/Resolutions

The following Resolutions are proposed by the Direct Archdiocesan District

1. **A Resolution Removing UNICEF as a National Commitment**

Whereas, The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society initially arose in the 1800s, seeking to ease the transition of immigrants into American society, and;

Whereas, an integral part of the Society's ministry was, and has been the welfare of children, initially those orphaned and separated by war and the Diaspora, and;

Whereas, The Society has sought in its ninety years of existence to address the evolving needs of children both on a national and international level, and;

Whereas, there is a recognition of a need to focus more acutely on the mental and physical health of our own Orthodox youth, who continue trying to navigate the challenges of the ongoing Covid Pandemic

Therefore, it is

Resolved, that in full recognition of the challenges our nation's orthodox children are facing as a result of the Pandemic, that UNICEF be removed from the National Commitment roll.

2. **A Resolution Adding St. Michael's as a National Commitment**

Whereas, the modern day Philoptochos Society, the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, evolved from its founding ministry providing comfort and support to immigrants arriving on American shores and assisting in their introduction into society, and;

Whereas, as part of this continuing Ministry, The Society has successfully ministered to seniors for 64 years through St. Michael's Home in Yonkers, New York, established by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in 1958, and;

Whereas, St. Michael's is now expanding its services to the Orthodox elderly through the acquisition and operation of a new location in Uniondale, New York, and; Whereas, St. Michael's Home is the only senior home associated with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America;

Therefore, be it

Resolved, That St. Michael's Home be designated as a National Commitment, as the only senior care and support institution associated with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America with all proceeds to be disbursed with a minimum of 75% to SM, and balance of proceeds to other senior care facilities.

Beverage break

3. **A Resolution to Reallocate 10% of Vasilopita Event proceeds for the needs of our Youth**

Whereas, the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society was originally founded in 1931 by then Archbishop Athenagoras, and charged with assisting the needy, and;

Whereas, The Society's founding mission first specifically acknowledged the needs of children, namely Greek Orthodox children displaced by war and the great Diaspora, and;

Whereas, The Society recognized the need for housing said orphans by purchasing the former Rupert Estate in New York City, which was to become St. Basil's Academy, and;

Whereas there has arisen a need to address the challenges both physical and mental facing all Orthodox children beyond the Academy as a result of the world-wide Pandemic, and;

Whereas, the largest fundraiser currently remains the Annual Vasilopita event held nationwide for the sole benefit of St. Basil's Academy, it is

Resolved, that proceeds from future St. Basil's Vasilopita luncheons be allocated 90% to St. Basil's Academy, and 10% to other Orthodox based social services programs for youth.

The following Resolution is proposed by the Metropolis of Atlanta

4. **A RESOLUTION TO MAKE THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY (OCPM) A GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY ANNUAL NATIONAL COMMITMENT.**

Whereas, The OCPM is the National prison ministry of the Orthodox church; and

Whereas, The OCPM is an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States; and

Whereas, The OCPM advocates for the Orthodox faith to be recognized as a religious denomination at correctional facilities across the United States, so that Orthodox priests may enter a prison to administer the Sacraments and services to those incarcerated who wish to live an Orthodox way of life; and

Whereas, The Greek Orthodox National Philoptochos Society's' Mission Statement, proclaims that we "help the imprisoned" putting into action Christ's commandment to "visit Him in prison" (Matthew 25:36); and

Whereas, The Philoptochos Prayer includes in part that we pray that our Lord make us instruments of His peace and of His hope, that we bring His healing and comfort where there is

pain, that we bring the fellowship of His Holy Church where there is loneliness and isolation, that we inspire hope and faith in our Lord where there is despair and discouragement; and

Whereas, The Philoptochos members are “doers” as St. James’s in his Epistle 1:22 exhorts all Christians to be “Doers of the word, and not hearers only”; now,

Therefore, be it Resolved, That the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) become an annual National Commitment of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

The following Resolution is from the Metropolis of Detroit.

5. A Proposed Resolution Regarding Change to Associate Membership Definition

Whereas, Archbishop Athenagoras issued his first encyclical to the Philoptochos Chapters, listing a series of By-Laws and Guidelines under which the organization would function under the Constitution of the Archdiocese in October 1932; and

Whereas, Interfaith marriages were less common during that period; and

Whereas, according to the Registry Statistics of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, more than 60% of the total marriages that include at least one Orthodox individual were inter-Christian marriages between the years 1991 and 2015; and

Whereas, Archbishop Demetrios stated in his keynote address (43 rd Clergy-Laity Congress) that “the marriage between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians” is “perceived as [an opportunity] for the Archdiocese”; and

Whereas, one of the missions of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. is “To preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian family, and through them, to promote the Greek Orthodox faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs”; and

Whereas, One of the Missions of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. is “to promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and Parish Council; and

Whereas, Associate Members of Philoptochos are very often critical to the success of the numerous Philoptochos activities and charitable works; and

Whereas, Allowing Associate Members of Philoptochos to have voting rights in the Philoptochos Chapters will better meet the objectives referenced above and make our Philoptochos Chapters more inclusive; Therefore, be it

Resolved: That Article V. Section 2.2 (a) of the Bylaws of the National Philoptochos Society shall be amended as follows:

2. Associate Membership

(a) an Associate Member shall enjoy all privileges of full membership, except the right to hold office.

All five resolutions were presented and discussed. None of the resolutions were passed. However, it should be noted that resolution #4 for the OCPM be taken under reconsideration in the future as there was a slim margin of votes involved.

Closing Prayer was given by Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianos

Anita Kartalopoulos, Convention Chair recessed the meeting at 5:29 p.m.

Thea Portelos July 5, 2022
Secretary

Elaine Sackleh July 5, 2022
Secretary