



## The Department of Youth and Parish Ministries

Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center

March 22 – 23, 2016

### Raising up a Generation of Disciples and Leaders for the Church

The overall mission of the Department of Youth and Parish Ministries is to enable and equip Orthodox Christian Youth in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America to “Live the Orthodox Faith in Christ, through Worship, Witness, Service and Fellowship.” We work to foster and encourage the involvement of our youth in the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith, and we believe that the Goal of Orthodox Christian Youth Ministry is the integration of each young person fully into the life of the Church.

The Department of Youth and Parish Ministries’ primary task is to oversee the Youth Movement and Parish Ministries of the Antiochian Archdiocese. The Youth Department administers numerous SOYO projects and other Youth and Parish Ministry initiatives with the intended goal of equipping and enabling the youth of this archdiocese to “Live the Orthodox Faith in Christ.” In addition, this department prepares our Orthodox adults, clergy, parents, advisors and youth directors, with the resources and direction to guide our youth.

The department begins this process by training the Diocesan and NAC SOYO Officers and Advisors to prepare our youth leaders to carry out the responsibilities of their office in accordance with and involvement in their Orthodox faith. After initial training, SOYO Officers and Advisors minister to the needs of each SOYO diocese by engaging the youth of every parish through various means of communication including social media, personal contact, training and the sharing of resources. The youth are engaged by various ministries and programs of the Department of Youth and of SOYO to prepare them to serve Christ, to experience the depth of the Orthodox Faith and to live out the Gospel message. An essential component of this ministry is to provide ongoing education to equip the Adults and Teen Leaders who work with the youth. This department trains youth leaders, guides adult advisors, organizes events, provides consultation for youth leaders and pastors across the archdiocese, maintains youth-related data and a cache of ministry resources, oversees programs such as the Bible Bowl and the Oratorical Festival, and introduces relevant new youth leadership initiatives. The Department carries out this mission through a variety of tasks and programs as partially listed below.

### SOYO

Directly oversee the North American Council of SOYO and all activities. We are continuously striving to raise the level of SOYO and to better serve the needs of our youth on the Archdiocese, Diocesan and Parish Levels through our various SOYO ministries, programs and efforts.

1. Develop and run the SOYO Leadership Conference each Year for all Diocesan and NAC SOYO Officers, Spiritual Advisors and Youth Directors.
  - 2015 being an Archdiocese Convention Year, our Leadership Training took place from Monday evening through Wednesday. All Diocesan and NAC SOYO Officers were

- present. My assessment and the reaction of the teens was that the 2015 SOYO Leadership Conference was the best one to date that has been held at a Convention. Convention years for this training are a challenge in that there are many obstacles to hosting training during a convention. Everything came together very well for this training and the presence of our father, the newly elected Metropolitan JOSEPH, and the presence of the Patriarch added much to Leadership training.
- 2016 being a non-Convention year will allow for a full Leadership training schedule of six days at the Antiochian Village. We will do in-depth training and afford the diocesan officers and advisors substantial time to plan out their year. We continue to improve each SOYO Leadership training based on what we learned from previous years. We also expect in 2016, that the review started in December and continuing until leadership training, will enhance our SOYO materials and programs going forward.
2. Oversee the NAC SOYO Officers.
    - In 2015, I worked closely with each of the NAC SOYO Officers. We held Monthly Conference calls and I helped each officer as needed throughout the year. I worked with the NAC SOYO President in planning meetings and implementing programs.
    - In 2016, this direct oversight and support of the NAC SOYO Officers will continue.
  3. Oversee the Diocesan SOYO Spiritual Advisors and Youth Directors, who in turn manage the affairs of the Diocese activities for SOYO.
  4. Support the Diocesan SOYO Officers as needs arise.
  5. Oversee and help manage all of the ongoing development and health of SOYO on the Diocesan and NAC level.
  6. Manage all of the financial accounts of NAC SOYO and directly assist the SOYO Treasurer in managing the SOYO general checking account.
  7. Help maintain and oversee several of the Diocesan SOYO accounts, especially helping those Dioceses that have had past financial trouble.
  8. Manage all of the training for NAC SOYO and Diocesan SOYO Officers, specifically in the SOYO Leadership Conference held annually. Kh. Kathleen Purpura, Fr. Philip C. Rogers, and others continue to design, research and develop new avenues to elevate the Leadership Program.
  9. Develop, manage and print the bi-annual SOYO Leadership Manual.
    - This is an ongoing project that allows us to maintain and improve our various SOYO Programs over the years. We last printed this manual in 2014 and are currently deciding whether to print a manual in 2016 or wait until our update of resources is complete as well as wait until the funds are available.
    - The Youth Directors and SOYO Spiritual Advisors are in the process of reviewing all of our SOYO programs and resources utilized online and in the SOYO Manual. One of the pieces under review is the resource for parishes to start a SOYO. Our committee working on this material reports the following direction on this resource for parishes:
      - The SOYO Essentials Editing Team has begun their work to edit and update the “How to Start a Parish SOYO and Other SOYO Essentials” resource. The team is comprised of Fr. Mousa Haddad, Kh. Delia Haddad, Amanda Sahawneh, Joleen Najjar and Rebecca Schuler.
      - The team reviewed the existing materials, and created a high level outline with the changes that will be made to the documents. The goal of the updated documents will be to provide easy-to-understand guidelines

and step-by-step instructions to establish a new SOYO chapter. In addition, the documents will provide resources to current SOYO chapters, aimed at increasing membership and energizing existing groups. The documents will also include updated references to current SOYO projects and activities (Day of Service, PLC participation, retreats, etc.), as well as references to communication methods presently used by teens (web pages, texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). The communication style of the manual will also be updated, to reduce lengthy paragraphs, and use bullet points and diagrams.

- Updated manuals will be reflected on the SOYO website. The team's goal is to present draft materials at the Leadership Training.
10. Manage the fundraising promotion for SOYO Special Olympics.
    - Produced bulletin inserts for the parishes for the Sunday before and the Sunday of SOYO Special Olympics Awareness Day and distributed these inserts in various formats, in color and in black and white, to meet the various parish bulletin formats. These, along with a letter from myself, the teens and the Metropolitan, were all sent electronically and in print to all of the pastors of the archdiocese and also posted online.
    - We will continue this work in 2016.
  11. Manage the selection and design of the Icon card/bookmark each year.
    - In 2015, we produced the Icon card of St Porphyrios, printed 45,000 bookmarks and distributed these to all of our parishes to utilize in raising funds for SOYO Special Olympics. Our fundraising and costs outside of the actual camp program remain at around 5% of the funds we raise.
    - In 2016, we plan to have an Icon of St Paisius written for use in producing the icon bookmarks for October 2016.
  12. Oversee the collection of funds, recording and managing all financial fundraising and accounts for the SOYO Special Olympics Ministry.
    - We exceeded our fundraising goal for 2015-2016 by several hundred dollars and this will grow further as we include donations that will arrive at the 2016 SOYO Special Olympics Camp. These donations are counted in to the funds raised in the previous October effort, as the fundraising year runs from October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016. To date we have raised \$65,736.62 towards our \$65,000 goal. Last year we also exceeded our goal.
    - In 2016, we will continue our efforts to raise the needed funds for the following year's SOYO Special Olympics and to raise awareness of this special ministry.
  13. I maintain the operating account for Special Olympics from which Fr. Yazge pays the bills.
  14. I work with Fr. Anthony Yazge in selecting the SOYO Coaches and volunteers for SOYO Special Olympics and give final approval to the list of SOYO Coaches and volunteers.
  15. Manage the application process and facilitate the awarding of Scholarships for our Archdiocese Students in the St. Stephen's Youth Ministry Concentration.
  16. Developed and managed the funds for the SOYO Metropolitan PHILIP Youth Worker Scholarship Fund, which is now overseen by the Archdiocese.
  17. Oversee and facilitate a number of aspects of the events of the SOYO Diocesan PLC and Delegates Meetings.
  18. Manage and oversee changes to the NAC SOYO and Diocesan Policies and Constitutions.

## Bible Bowl

1. Develop the topic each year.
2. Design and print the Bible Bowl Flyers and distribute them.
  - This was done in 2015 and also distributed and posted online for the 2016 Bible Bowl.
  - This will be done again for 2017 once we agree upon the Scriptures to be used.
3. With the help of Kh. Kathleen Purpura, write all of the Bible Bowl Questions – a set for each diocese and for the North American Bible Bowl.
  - Each year Father Joseph Purpura writes the Bible Bowl Questions with the assistance of Kh. Kathleen Purpura. In 2015, Fr. Christopher Morris wrote the initial questions on St. Raphael and Kh. Kathleen edited them to fit with the rules and did a review of the grammar to make it consistent across the entire set of questions.
  - Kh. Kathleen is currently writing the 2016 Bible Bowl Questions on the Gospel of St. John.
4. Print, bind and distribute the Bible Bowl Questions to every diocese.
  - In 2015, each Diocese and NAC received 4 complete sets of questions specifically written for their diocese and the Archdiocese Festival. These sets of questions included the Question, Answer, Scripture reference and notes to the judges and the coordinators.
  - This will be done each year.
5. Maintain a Bible Bowl website for study as well as prepare and send materials on to the archdiocese website.
  - We maintained a study site on [orthodoxyouth.org](http://orthodoxyouth.org) with practice questions.
  - The study site for the Gospel of St John is active at [www.orthodoxyouth.org/John](http://www.orthodoxyouth.org/John) with an extensive list of practice questions and study guides.
6. Promote Bible Bowl on Facebook and Twitter.
  - We posted questions on Facebook and Twitter for several months leading up to the Bible Bowl in the past years to help prepare the teens and adults.
  - We will once again post questions and answers on Facebook and Twitter to help prepare the teens and adults for the Bible Bowl.
7. Beginning in 2017, the department will manage development of the Bible Bowl rules and oversee the Bible Bowl directors in each diocese, as the Fellowship of St. John let go of this responsibility.
  - In the past, we worked with the Fellowship in the development of the rules, though the department always maintained and distributed the rules.
  - We will look for ways to better the Bible Bowl and modify the rules to enhance this experience across the archdiocese.
  - It should be noted that the overall intent of the Bible Bowl is to increase our young people's reading of the Bible now and in the future. Those who participate in the Bible Bowl, at least for the time of preparation for the Bible Bowl, read the Bible when they might otherwise not have done so. The expectation is that this will create a lifelong desire and actual reading of the Scriptures.

Bible Bowl Statistics - On the Diocesan Level, 64 teams were in the Teen Division and 30 teams participated on the Adult level. On the Archdiocese level, all seven SOYO 'regions' were represented. We hope to increase parish participation on the Diocesan level in 2016 and 2017 with the help of the Diocesan Bishops and the Metropolitan's encouragement to the parishes.

## Oratorical

1. Develop the Oratorical Festival Theme each year.

2. Design and distribute the publicity for the Oratorical each year to all of the parishes.
3. Maintain and make available the rules and judging forms each year.
4. For 2017 and forward, will manage the Archdiocese and Diocesan Oratorical Festivals and the coordinators in each diocese and on the archdiocese level.
  - In the past, this department assisted the Fellowship in this matter.
  - Beginning in 2017 this department will take over full responsibility for the Oratorical rules and directly oversee the NAC and Diocesan Coordinators of these festivals.

Oratorical Statistics - On the Diocesan level, 21 Junior Teen participants and 27 Senior Teen participants delivered orations. All 7 SOYO 'regions' participated in the Oratorical Festival. This number could be higher on the Diocesan level with help from the Pastors and Bishops.

### Parish Life Conferences

1. Oversee and approve all youth activities for the Parish Life Conferences through the diocesan Youth Directors and Spiritual Advisors, as well as approve the youth activities at the Archdiocese Convention.
2. Attend all conferences when possible, per request of the Metropolitan. This is a good opportunity to make contact with the youth, diocesan officers and directors, as well as local teens, their parents, and clergy in each diocese.
3. Develop the Conference and Convention Theme each year, and oversee the logo design.

Teen SOYO Parish Life Conference Statistics - 509 Teen SOYO Parish Delegates attended the SOYO Meetings at the PLC. 661 teens were registered for the PLC, not including teens age 18 and 19 who registered as adults. 167 teens were registered for the archdiocese convention. We believe that more parishes could send their teen SOYO Officers to these meetings. It would be helpful to have Pastors and Bishops encourage all of the parishes to send their SOYO Parish Officers to these meetings at the Parish Life Conferences and where needed help with the costs.

### Youth Worker Training, Certificate, Master, and Doctoral Programs

Educating our youth workers is essential to properly ministering to our Orthodox Youth. We continue to work on educating as many adults as possible in Orthodox Theology and Youth Ministry to expand the field of qualified youth workers across the Archdiocese and Orthodoxy here in North America.

1. Antiochian House of Studies
  - Direct the Youth Ministry track of the St. Stephen's Program.
  - Teach three of the regular courses in the Youth Ministry tract for St. Stephens
  - Teach each year for one week at the residency program of St. Stephens Program.

This was done in 2015. With the addition of the SOYO Metropolitan PHILIP Youth Worker Scholarship, we gained 5 new Antiochian students. I am rewriting two of the classes for this program and trying to find two others willing to teach in this program. Since remuneration is minimal it is difficult to find people willing to do the amount of work needed. It is the highest level program of education specifically designed for those doing parish youth work and we hope to encourage more parish youth workers to enter this program.
2. St. Vladimir's Seminary Doctoral Program
  - Teach the Required Course on Youth Ministry Doctoral level once every two years. This is taught over 12 weeks online and an additional one-week intensive residency onsite at St.

Vladimir's Seminary Campus. I teach the first semester of each new cohort of doctoral students accepted to St. Vladimir's Seminary. Expectations are that this class will be taught once every two years depending on the acceptance of a new doctoral class. The development and teaching of this class led to the development of the class at Holy Cross on a Master level and the current rewriting of the St. Stephens course in Youth Ministry.

### 3. Holy Cross Seminary Youth Ministry Class

- Teach the Spring Youth Ministry Class at Holy Cross Seminary preparing clergy and lay leaders to oversee, develop and run parish Youth Ministry efforts. In December 2015 and January 2016, I developed the class and wrote the syllabus and course instructions for an Orthodox instruction and approach to youth ministry. My goal for 2016 is to present an Orthodox approach to youth ministry for future clergy and lay workers that works towards keeping our children in the Church and spiritually feeding them.

### 4. Pan-Orthodox Camping and Youth Worker Conference

- Held each January in various locations across the United States.
- Open to all Orthodox Parish Youth Workers and Orthodox Camping Staff.
- Each year a different jurisdiction hosts the conference on a rotating basis.
- Creates opportunities for Orthodox Youth Workers to gather in one place and share in learning, concerns, ideas and resources.
- This event strengthens and encourages Youth Workers to continue their efforts, gives them resources and opportunities to share their struggles with others that have been in youth ministry for many years and can serve as mentors to younger youth workers.

2015: Walking Alongside Our Youth - The 13th Annual Orthodox Christian Camp and Youth Workers Conference was held January 22-24, 2015 at the Antiochian Village. The keynote addresses were offered by Fr. Bogdan Bucur, Associate Professor at Duquesne University, and Dr. Stefanie Yazge, Lecturer of Theology at St. Vincent College. Other activities included a series of workshops focusing on Youth Ministry as it relates to Youth Workers and Camp Staff, daily services and fellowship so that we might get to know each other better. The conference was a success with approximately 80 youth workers in attendance.

2016: Feed My Sheep: Crisis, Trauma, and Everyday Life - The 2016 Pan-Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers' Conference was hosted by the Orthodox Church in America at St. Seraphim's Cathedral in Dallas, TX, from January 21-23, 2016. The V. Rev. Steven Voytovich, DMin., Dean of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, was the Keynote Speaker. Workshops included Young Adult Ministry: Foundation of a Healthy Parish, When Crisis Comes to Camp, The College Campus, Place of Trauma and Healing, Youth Ministry in a Missionary Parish, and When Young Veterans Come Home. Approximately 80 youth workers were present.

The January 2017 Pan-Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers' Conference is being planned and hosted by the Greek Archdiocese.

Benefits of teaching on the Masters and Doctoral level to the Youth Ministry effort of the Antiochian Archdiocese.

1. It gives us a forum to seek out ideas and new methods of reaching our youth through assigned papers and projects of the students.
2. This process allows for in-depth, ongoing dialogue on current and possible youth ministry efforts on all levels of SOYO and Archdiocesan youth ministry efforts.
3. The process of preparing presentations for classes and the feedback helps further develop presentations by this department across the archdiocese.
4. The credentials received in teaching at our seminaries helps other jurisdictions see that the Antiochian presence in the area of youth ministry is held in high regard by the faculty, deans, and hierarchs of Orthodox academic institutions and is important in having an Antiochian voice heard in the work of the Assembly of Bishops.

### **Committee for Youth of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States**

1. I am the Facilitator for this committee and work directly with the Bishops of this committee, under the direction of Bishop THOMAS.
2. I oversee all of the consultants and consultant committees for the Committee for Youth of the Assembly of Bishops. This comprises all of the Diocesan and National Adult Youth Directors across the United States for all of the Orthodox Churches. Kh. Kathleen Purpura is a Youth Consultant for the committee.
3. Developed, compiled, and managed the catalogue of all Orthodox Diocesan and National Youth Directors (70+) plus, Youth Programs/Ministries, Camps and Parochial Orthodox Schools across the United States. This is an ongoing task for the Assembly of Bishops.
4. Assist Bishop THOMAS in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee for Youth of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America.
5. Help promote Be the Bee Inter-Orthodox Retreats sponsored around the United States and Canada as a joint ministry of the Orthodox Jurisdictional Youth Directors.
6. Work on a team with the other Jurisdictional Youth Directors, meeting quarterly to further our ministry to youth.
7. For further information please see: <http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/committees/youth>
  - In 2015, the Jurisdictional Youth Directors held four meetings, three by conference call and one in-person meeting. The meetings allowed us to continue the cooperation that the Jurisdictional Directors have enjoyed for years in sharing concerns, ideas and resources.
  - This past year we held one joint training conference for parish youth directors across the United States and we held a series of local pan-Orthodox retreats in various cities across the nation. With the establishment of the Youth Committee, participation of the numbers of jurisdictions sending their youth directors to these meetings has increased.
  - In 2015, the bulk of the work assigned to the committee was completed though the lack of a budget from the assembly has limited the amount of work that we can accomplish.
  - In 2016, we will continue our joint efforts. We will hold another Youth Worker Conference and more local retreats utilizing the 'Be the Bee' theme focusing on Orthodox Unity.
  - Challenges of the committee for youth continues to be lack of funding for other jurisdictional youth directors to fully participate in the work of this committee.

### **Internet Ministries**

1. Manage [www.teenSOYO.org](http://www.teenSOYO.org) and all of the e-mail accounts for SOYO.

2. Manage [www.HealthyYouth.com](http://www.HealthyYouth.com) for our efforts to reduce the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs in our youth and to teach our youth about healthy body and mind lifestyle choices (work actually done by Kh. Kathleen Purpura).
3. Oversee and Maintain the Bible Bowl Study site [www.orthodoxyouth.org](http://www.orthodoxyouth.org)
4. Provide information to the Archdiocese Website for [www.antiochian.org/youth](http://www.antiochian.org/youth) and [www.antiochian.org/soyo](http://www.antiochian.org/soyo)
5. Oversee the Teen Facebook account <http://www.facebook.com/nacsoyo> and the Department of Youth Facebook account <http://www.facebook.com/frjoseph>
6. SOYO maintains numerous Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media accounts to reach the youth of the Archdiocese, all of which I and our Diocesan Youth Directors oversee. Go to <http://www.teensoyo.org/Pages/Links.aspx> for a more complete list of Social Media Sites.
7. Maintain contact with the clergy, SOYO members and the Archdiocese Board of Trustees through periodic e-mail updates, in addition to in-person and on phone meetings.
  - During 2015, thirty-seven (37) direct e-mail campaigns were sent to the clergy and the youth of the archdiocese through our Constant Contact account to keep our clergy and youth leaders informed of the work of the Department and of SOYO.
  - We receive on average over a 50% open rate on these e-mails which is considered very good for non-profit mailings which normally average an open rate of about 23%. The average mailing goes out to approximately 500 – 700 people at a time depending to whom we are directing our mailings. In addition to the e-mail, this department also posts many of these mailings to our various Facebook pages as well, reaching an even larger number of youth and youth leaders. Often the various dioceses, depending on the content of these mailings, will further distribute these mailings utilizing their diocesan and even personal Facebook and other social media forums.
  - I received positive feedback from many clergy and youth that these mailings are helpful.
  - During 2016 we will continue to utilize direct e-mail campaigns to the clergy and youth.
8. I have started discussions with Douglas Cramer on collaborating to build out our youth sites and youth presence on the web and through our social media resources.
  - The websites in 2015 served their purposes, but they are all in need of a major overhaul to make them mobile accessible.
  - The Bible Study site continues to serve its purpose, but it is in need of a major overhaul to make it mobile accessible. This will require outside help.
  - [www.healthyyouth.com](http://www.healthyyouth.com) we are working on new directions to determine the best way to help parishes raise healthy children and how this fits with the Metropolitan's new direction.
  - We continue to extensively use Facebook and Twitter and to a lesser degree Instagram, though these efforts really need a person dedicated to this effort.
  - In 2016, we need to enhance our Social Media offerings in addition to the work this Department and SOYO extensively do through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
  - Added to the numerous Social Media avenues already in existence, new Medias are opening and will require further thought as to how we engage our youth through them.
  - The messaging App, Slack, as a communication tool has already been added by the Inter-Orthodox Jurisdictions and Diocesan youth leaders on the inter-Orthodox level and will require some thought as to the best way forward with this new and additional Social Media, as well as others as our youth move from one Media to the next.

- All of our youth ministry websites need to be evaluated and redeveloped to become mobile friendly, as they were all developed prior to the explosion in mobile media. Nearly 50% of our users view our website material on their phones. Healthyyouth.com and orthodoxyouth.org (Bible Study) were developed for computers and not mobile devices.

## Healthy Youth

1. We continue to support our federally-funded Orthodox Christian Coalition for Healthy Youth in Cicero, IL. Our Healthy Youth Coalition of St. George Cicero is in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of serving the Greater Chicago Orthodox community under the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant. With the involvement of over 80 Orthodox parishes in Greater Chicago, OCCHY Cicero has made advances in promoting awareness of underage substance abuse and the effects on the teenage brain. The coalition also works to address underage alcohol prevention and tobacco use. In addition, OCCHY Cicero has published a 16-page booklet on Hookah Health Risks, printed in English and also in Arabic. Gordana Trbuhovich and the V. Rev. Nicholas Dahdal head up our work in our Cicero Coalition and are currently re-applying for another 5 year grant.
2. We are redeveloping the outreach of our Healthy Youth Initiative to make it more accessible to all of our parishes, clergy and teens. Kh. Kathleen Purpura offers presentations to interested parishes. Parish communities have the opportunity to apply for a federal grant or grow their coalition on a volunteer basis to address substance use and abuse prevention.
3. Healthy Youth has offered resources in the form of free pamphlets on alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs at past Archdiocese Conventions, Leadership Conferences and Youth Workers Conferences. We have had numerous requests for this material and always have a run on certain material including Marijuana Facts for Teens, Marijuana Facts Parents Need to Know, Drugs: Shatter the Myths, and Positive Parenting Prevents Drugs.
4. The Healthy Youth Initiative is a critically needed area. Clergy, parents, youth workers and teens email or call on a regular basis with serious concerns and for assistance.
5. For 2016 and 2017, we will be redesigning the Healthy Youth website. A major addition will be on peer pressure and healthy decision making. We hope to offer parish communities more ideas on substance free activities and resources to provide their youth with the understanding that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. If we secure the necessary funds, we will also compile and distribute resource material to each parish and offer workshop presentations.

## General Resource to parishes, clergy, and teens

1. On a daily basis I respond to mail, e-mail and phone calls from clergy, parents, youth directors and teens concerning their youth efforts and issues.
  - In 2015, this was a daily task of responding to e-mail, phone calls, text messages and other forms of requests for assistance from youth directors, teen SOYO officers, as well as bishops, clergy, parents, teens and parish youth advisors.
  - In 2016, we will continue to respond to these needs. In 2016 and 2017 we expect to upgrade some of our technologies to better facilitate this effort.

## Francis Maria Scholarship

1. Manage all the applications, preparation of the applications for the judges, and awards for the Maria Scholarship on an annual basis.
2. Fifty-seven applications were received and eleven scholarships totaling \$27,500 were presented at the Archdiocese Convention in honor of the Metropolitan's first Archdiocese Convention, as our Chief Shepherd (normally we give about 6 each year). To date, 75 Scholarships have been granted, totaling \$187,500 since inception in 2003.
3. In 2016, we expect to give at least six scholarships. These scholarships are important in that they send a message to our young people that we care about them. The funds also help our families who struggle to meet the growing costs of education that has outpaced the costs of inflation each year. I wish we could do more for our families in this area of need. The number of scholarships we grant each year is largely determined by how fast we can grow our scholarship funds managed by the archdiocese from the funds originally donated while I was chairman of the Francis Maria Foundation for Justice and Peace.

## SOYO Youth Worker Scholarships

1. Manage the application process for the SOYO Metropolitan PHILIP Youth Worker Scholarship and manage the SOYO team selecting scholarship recipients.
  - In 2015, we granted six \$800 Scholarships to five students studying in the St. Stephen's Youth Ministry Concentration and one to a student in the Doctoral program at St. Vladimir's Seminary. All of these students are current Parish or Diocesan Youth Directors/ SOYO Advisors of the Antiochian Archdiocese.
  - 2016 will be a challenging year to grant scholarships as the funds managed have not done well this year nor last year. This has been an ongoing issue for this fund at Merrill Lynch and we should consider other ways to invest these funds.

## Quarterly Meetings of those heading our archdiocese youth efforts.

1. With the blessing of the Metropolitan, I work with the Directors of Camping, College and Young Adult Ministry, Christian Education, Home Schooling and Parochial Schools in an effort to coordinate our efforts in meeting the needs of our youth and their families across the archdiocese. Eventually we want this effort to lead towards a cohesive youth ministry effort in forming our youth from birth through the young adult years.
  - 2015 was the first year, outside of meetings between Fr. Joseph Purpura and Fr. Anthony Yazge, that these departments have met and spoken together to discuss the needs of the youth of this archdiocese. It was a great accomplishment that we sat together and dialogued on common thoughts towards forming our youth across the archdiocese.
  - In 2016, I hope, with the blessings of Metropolitan JOSEPH, that these efforts will grow and be more deliberate. I would like to discuss with the Metropolitan my thoughts on long range plans in this area.

## Other Travel

1. In addition to the above mentioned items, I also travel for the following purposes:

- SOYO Midwinter Meeting
- Diocesan Delegates Meetings
- Archdiocese Board Meetings
- Parish invitations to speak to the youth
- Parish invitations to co-present with Kh. Kathleen on Healthy Youth Initiatives
- Camp invitations to speak and/or teach at our camps
- Special events where appropriate for the Chair of this Department to be present
- Assembly of Bishops Committee for Youth
- Archdiocese Convention
- Clergy Symposium
- Invitations to speak on Youth at our Seminaries
- Parish Life Conferences
- The Antiochian House of Studies Residency Program each year
- To speak and/or present at various clergy retreats
- Any other travel that I am requested to do by the Metropolitan or other Bishops.

The preceding pages highlight the ongoing work of this department. Each year there are various other items covered by the work of this department as requested by the Metropolitan and the episcopal overseer of this department.

We will continue to train and educate our youth leaders and Youth Directors in the work of SOYO and our various other ministries for youth, so that together we may continue to carry out the Youth Ministry efforts of this department and of SOYO. We will continue our ongoing efforts of research and development to enhance each of our youth offerings and the various ministries and works of this department and of SOYO as outlined above in the specific tasks of the department.

**Communication with our Hierarchal Overseer Bishop THOMAS** – Communication with Bishop THOMAS takes place in several ways:

1. E-mail
2. Telephone
3. In person during SOYO meetings, Leadership Training, Assembly of Bishops Youth Committee Meetings, etc.

**The Department fits in the overall picture of the Archdiocese** as the backbone for growth of professional Orthodox leaders of good Christian character to lead the people of their communities and this archdiocese to Christ. The Department addresses the needs of the youth of our parishes across the archdiocese, provides resources and support to our parish youth workers/SOYO Advisors, clergy, teen leaders and parents. The department works towards raising up generations of disciples and leaders for the Holy Orthodox Church across this archdiocese, as well as representing this archdiocese amongst the Orthodox youth leaders across North America.

### **The Target Audience of the Department**

1. The Department of Youth and Parish Ministries has several target audiences:
  - a. **Teen SOYO** is a specific target on the Parish, Diocese, and Archdiocese level.
  - b. The parish **Youth Directors**
  - c. **SOYO Advisors**
  - d. **The Pastors and other Clergy** of the parishes across the archdiocese. **Parish**

**councils** are an uncultivated target audience of the department and more needs to be done to help them minister to and support the youth ministry efforts.

e. **Parents**

f. **Adults and Teens participating in the Bible Bowl and Oratorical Festivals.**

#### **Within our Target Audience we serve:**

1. The Clergy of this Archdiocese through regular communications on an almost monthly basis.
2. The Diocesan and NAC SOYO Youth Directors and Spiritual Advisors on a regular basis.
3. The Diocesan and NAC SOYO Officers on a regular basis.
4. The Teens of SOYO through our various ministries and works. While we have not done a survey of our parishes to collect numbers in recent years, the last time we did this we estimated that we were directly reaching about 50% of the teens of the archdiocese (as active SOYO members) and many others indirectly.
5. Our Facebook and Twitter posts reach nearly 1,000 people directly and many more when those posts are displayed on all of their pages and their friends read their timeline, as well as the many times that our SOYO Officers repost this information to their Facebook and Twitter lists, potentially reaching many thousands of people.
6. Our efforts reach many others through the Bible Bowl and Oratorical through both the participants and those who come to observe at the festivals. Additionally, we provide practice questions and teachings on the topic of the Bible Bowl through Facebook and Twitter reaching many more people in addition to the Bible Bowl participants.
7. The teaching work of the department reaches numerous people in the residency program of St. Stephens and in the other venues where we teach, train, and speak in the various seminaries, parishes and conferences.
8. The Outreach Communities Thousands of others are reached through the work of this department and that of teen SOYO both within and outside the Church through our various outreach efforts on the streets, in the shelters, in senior citizen's homes, in the parishes and through Special Olympics.

**Communication Methods** – The department utilizes a variety of means of communication.

1. Direct phone conversations where needed.
2. By e-mail – through direct personal communication in response to questions, by direct e-mail targeted to specific audiences utilizing the department's e-mail databases both in-house and through Constant Contact where we can track clicks and response rates, and through personal appearing mail merges, etc.
3. In-person at conferences, meetings, parish visits, workshops, etc.
4. By direct postal mail.
5. Through Social Media utilizing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Slack, Go-to-Meeting, Skype, Zoom, YouTube, etc.

**We currently track our E-mail Communication** efforts through the use of Constant Contact which allows us to see who is opening our e-mails and what they are clicking on for links within that e-mail. I have just obtained and at the very early stages of testing out Microsoft Dynamics CRM which allows me to track individual e-mails, conversations, etc. through Microsoft Outlook – allowing for a fuller picture of correspondences with each individual person. I am in the very early stages of evaluating and learning this software.

**Five Year Plan** – much of what has been set forth above directly represents our short term and long term goals over five years. Under the heading “Metropolitan JOSEPH” I have laid out several new initiatives that should be implemented over the next five years, if the Metropolitan so approves. We need to bring in another person on staff, training them, working alongside them and then eventually allowing them to run much of the administrative efforts in the department. As a new administrative director takes over more of the rudimentary efforts of this department over the next five to ten years, I see my own Youth Consultant advisory efforts as a need to work across our many youth efforts, of SOYO, Christian Education, Camping, Home Schooling, Parochial Schools, College Ministry and Young Adults to help and facilitate the directors in each of those areas to work towards one cohesive youth ministry effort across this archdiocese that seamlessly moves our children onto the next stage in forming our youth from birth to young adulthood.

**Overlap** – all of us that work with the youth of this archdiocese overlap. SOYO overlaps with Camping, Christian Education, Home Schooling, Parochial Schools, College Ministry, as do the many other offerings of this department, yet at the same time we each offer a different ministry and resources. This is why I propose in our 5-10 year plan that we start to coordinate these various efforts of youth ministry. Each is distinctive and essential and each needs a director with the authority to carry out their work and be responsible for their efforts. At the same time, we need to start moving the archdiocese towards having a full youth department that coordinates and further builds all of these ministries as a team effort.

**Dependent upon others** – This department is directly dependent upon the support of the Metropolitan, the bishops, the clergy, the archdiocese board of trustees, the Order of St. Ignatius, parents, parish councils and many others. We are indirectly dependent upon the good work of Christian Education in educating our young people so that when they come to us as teens they already have a foundational knowledge of the faith so we can raise them up and take them to the next level in their formation.

**Collaboration** – for many years, perhaps due to a long standing working relationship with Fr. Anthony Yazge who served for many years as a SOYO Spiritual Advisor and as a SOYO Special Olympics priest and as a priest who during my years as camp director helped at Antiochian Village, we have collaborated on many areas affecting SOYO, the work of the department and various inter-Orthodox efforts in which we are both active. Recently with the blessing and direction of Metropolitan JOSEPH, I have led the effort to expand our collaborative efforts to include the directors of Camping, Christian Education, OCF, Young Adults, Home Schooling, Parochial Schools and this department so that we meet on a quarterly basis to discuss ways of cooperating in our efforts to educate our youth.

**Funding** – this department receives its funding directly from the Archdiocese Budget. An additional \$7,000 comes from the Order of St. Ignatius to fund our Diocesan Youth Directors and Spiritual Advisors participation in the annual Orthodox Camping and Youth Worker Conference.

**Successes** – There have been a multitude of successes for this department over the past five years. Two specific successes have been the SOYO Leadership Conference and the Youth Worker Education offerings. The Leadership Conference has significantly raised the level and ministry of SOYO and its members. With additional funding, this Leadership Program can be a way to transform our youth by providing cutting edge tools and skills to become leaders in the Orthodox Church and in North America. It should also be noted that at Archdiocese Conventions it works best when we have a large suite where we can gather the Teen SOYO leadership for meals (brought in from the outside) and social time.

The Youth Workers Education offerings have helped raise the level of education and readiness of our clergy and laity to work with our youth. For many years, we have had very few youth workers that were trained and educated in the Orthodox faith and in Orthodox Youth Work. Our efforts to build a youth

ministry concentration in the St. Stephens program and our success in moving St. Vladimir's Seminary to include youth ministry in their doctoral program and to have an Orthodox teacher of youth ministry at Holy Cross Seminary who knows Orthodox Youth Work all speak to the growth of Orthodox Youth Ministry. I attribute both of these and many other successes to having a funded youth department and the fact that the archdiocese youth director has been in his position for the many years that is necessary to bring about large scale change that can only come with many years of work, deliberate effort and maturity in the ministry. I have watch other Orthodox jurisdictions constantly changing their archdiocese leaders and have seen their inability to bring about stability in their ministries, maturity of thought and longevity to their efforts. There is much to be said about sustaining people for the long term in ministry, so long as they are constantly growing themselves and the ministry collaboratively with many others.

**Challenges** – Over the past several years the greatest challenges have been funding and staff. We are held back in our efforts to grow and better serve our youth and families in not having enough trained and qualified people that can devote the many hours needed to grow a North American Youth Ministry effort. An archdiocese that spans across all of the United States and Canada and serves a growing youth population needs full-time staff in each diocese that can work as a team with the Archdiocese Chair of the Department of Youth to put in the serious hours of research, work, development and implementation necessary to significantly grow this ministry. The transformation that could take place would be life changing for tens of thousands of young people, their families and the archdiocese as a whole. An increase of competent staff could be implemented over a five-year period to ensure that we are moving the best people into these positions, evaluating and constantly improving these efforts each step of the way.

**Changes** – throughout this report and throughout the Teen SOYO report are numerous recommended and in process changes. Over the years this department has constantly worked and has responded to the ever growing needs of the young people of our archdiocese, which has always required changes. Change is a necessary ingredient in youth ministry as our young people come to us in ever increasing pain, stress, loneliness, depression and at the very same time with a great thirst for Christ, for life, for joy, for community, for truth and for healing.

## **Metropolitan JOSEPH**

1. **Needs** – We need to strengthen our Leadership Program. The archdiocese would see long term positive results from putting more emphasis on intergenerational support and networking our other organizations and career professionals to mentor our young people. Funding a fully structured Leadership program and supporting our youth with internships, fellowships, scholarships, and workshops to guide them to successful, Christ-centered careers and fully tithing members of our parishes. The needs of our youth are constantly changing as technology, social issues, socio economics change, yet at the same time young people of every generation need to be raised up in the faith, the faith passed on down to them, and for them to be formed first as disciples and then as leaders of the Church. There are a multitude of roadblocks in the way of our young people successfully being formed in Christ, and those roadblocks are only increasing as our culture moves further away from its Christian center and history, and therefore we need to constantly adapt to the changing and ever challenging landscape in which our young people live their daily lives. We have just touched the surface of what needs to be done for and with our young people. We need to take our youth ministry efforts to the next level challenging ourselves and our young people to do more. From the work of SOYO and what the teens seek, you see serious young men and women in the faith who are thirsty for more and want to dive deeper into their faith and relationship with Christ, despite the world trying to pull them away

from us. If we are to take our task of raising up disciples and leaders, which means raising up our faithful lay people, our parish councils, our archdiocese boards, our chanters, our choirs, our monastics, our clergy and our bishops, then our efforts and resources must match the seriousness of this effort.

2. Survey 2017-2018 - An important future project in 2017 or 2018 would be to do a real study of the progress of our youth efforts by creating and implementing a study that combines information and questions from our 1992, 1999, 2008 and 2012 Teen Surveys to see what progress and needs currently exist in various areas of youth life across the archdiocese. This survey would allow us to set a basis for future measure of progress in all areas of youth ministry ranging from Christian Education all the way through young adulthood and to make adjustments based on empirical data rather than on opinion. This is a large undertaking that would need the support of the Metropolitan and the finances to carry this endeavor out to completion.
  
3. Youth Formation 2016-2019 - We need to develop a comprehensive understanding and effort to deliberately “form” the youth of this Archdiocese, literally from birth through young adulthood. This effort necessitates the full cooperation of all of the departments working with our young people, i.e. Christian Education, Homeschooling, Parochial Schools, Camping, SOYO, College and Young Adult Ministry. Discussions have begun on this effort amongst these various departments as well as amongst the various Orthodox Jurisdictional Youth Directors. This effort needs the full endorsement of the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Bishops, as well as the full cooperation of each Department Chair working with the youth in this archdiocese.

For the past several months our Diocesan Spiritual Advisors and Youth Directors have been working on developing an understanding and direction of Youth Formation for our young people in SOYO and for other areas of youth ministry on the parish level through our archdiocese programs. The following comes from those efforts and the work of our Department of Youth Meeting in Garden Grove California on March 3-4, 2016.

#### Spiritual Formation in SOYO

Recognizing the ongoing fruitful work of SOYO, and the victory that the existence of SOYO in our Archdiocese already represents, it has nevertheless been our observation as youth directors, spiritual advisors, and other concerned clergy, that there is a critical need to reassess and refocus our efforts to spiritually form our teens. In reflecting upon a series of preliminary conversations about this need, several themes arise. Chief among these is the theme of identity. Although our young people face any number of crises, the one crisis that seems to encapsulate and aggravate the others is that of identity, with the related questions regarding purpose, belonging, and community.

Of course, as Christians, we understand our identity to be found in Christ, who shows us precisely what it means to be made “in the image of God,” and “after His likeness.” Clearly, then, our young people need us to help them discover their identity in Christ and in His Body. This would be easy enough were there not forces of darkness intent upon convincing our teens otherwise, and thereby drawing them away from Christ. However, because we are contending with such forces in the world, our work is both difficult and urgent.

Simply telling our teens that their true identity is found in Christ does not suffice when they are beset by a legion of conflicting messages from the world and temptations to reject that identity. Rather, teens must be inspired to rise to the challenge of realizing their identity in the face of obstacles. This process is described by Elder Sophrony (of Essex): “By the Gospel commandments I am summoned to actualize, to realize in myself, my personal likeness to God...”.<sup>1</sup> Our task as youth workers is to inspire and equip teens for this journey to mature manhood or womanhood in Christ. This is what we mean by “spiritual formation.”

The immediate goal of that formation might be described as cultivating “purity of heart.” St. John Cassian gives “purity of heart” as the “immediate journey” and “present mark” that leads ultimately to the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>2</sup> The noble challenge of pursuing a pure heart offers a positive model for spiritual formation. The Beatitudes (as found in St. Matthew’s Gospel) offer a framework for presenting the principles of spiritual formation, with purity of heart as both the focus of one of the beatitudes and the over-arching purpose for their study and pursuit.

Other themes and principles to keep in mind include the following: the need to present spiritual lessons in the form of compelling narratives (as found in Scripture, Saints’ lives, Church history, and elsewhere); the need for candor and openness in our conversations, and opportunities for teens to ask questions in a safe setting; the need to present spiritual life in terms of adventure and struggle for something great; the need to invest quality time in our teens to “earn the right to be heard”; and the need to take a team approach as much as possible in SOYO, in order to provide greater opportunity for mentorship with Orthodox Christian adults.

Lastly, it must be emphasized that such mentorship is indispensable, and requires spiritually mature men and women prepared to share their time and energy with our young people. For this, the ongoing formation of advisors is necessary; but equally necessary is the ongoing formation of parents and all adult members of the Church, who share in the responsibility to be good examples for our youth. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon us all to pray, fervently, for our young people. In the words of St. Porphyrios, “Pray, and when you have to, speak to your children with love. Lots of prayer and few words. Lots of prayer and few words for everyone.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sakharov, Arch. Sophrony, *We Shall See Him As He Is*. Tr. by R. Edmonds. Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> St. John Cassian, *Selected Writings of St. John Cassian the Roman*. Safford, AZ: St. Paisius Monastery, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Elder Porphyrios, *Wounded By Love*. Tr. by Fr. John Raffan. Limni, Evia, Greece: Denise Harvey, 2005.

### Proposed Lessons in Spiritual Formation

The following is a list of suggested points to cover as we teach young people the spiritual principles involved in living the life in Christ. Our goal is to communicate these principles in language appropriate to teens, with concrete examples and illustrations, activities that would support the lessons, and plenty of opportunities for questions and discussion:

Our identity is found in Christ, who shows us what it is to be fully human: made “in the image” and “according to the likeness” of God. In particular, we find in Christ what being in God’s image means for both our souls and our bodies, and how we become truly who we are as we grow in likeness to God.

Our identity in Christ is revealed to us within the context of our belonging to the Body of Christ, the Church. Our identity is not something individualistic, but is related to the community of the Church, and is clarified in particular through our relationship to the Saints.

Knowing ourselves in Christ requires knowing Christ through His activity in the world; thus we must come to know and appreciate Christ’s saving work. In particular, this includes what is accomplished by His incarnation, His suffering and crucifixion, His death and resurrection, His ascension into Heaven and His glorious second coming. Also, this includes appreciating the complimentary work of the Holy Spirit in the descent at Pentecost and in everything that follows in the history of the Church and especially in the Sacramental life.

Recognizing the existence of sin, which acts to deform our true identity and causes spiritual illness in us, we are called to make purity of heart (which is spiritual health) the immediate goal of our life, through which we realize our true identity in Christ and ultimately experience the eternal joy of the Kingdom.

With purity of heart as our goal, we embark on the path of repentance. This path requires an ascetical effort, which is a God-inspired rising to the challenge (adventure) presented by the presence of evil in the world and sin in our life. We overcome this challenge not by our efforts alone, but rather by cooperating with the grace of God available to us through baptism and the whole of the Sacramental life.

The soul is healed and the heart made pure through the three chief spiritual disciplines (almsgiving, fasting, and prayer) which correspond to the three powers of the soul: zeal, desire, and the mind (cf. St. Maximus the Confessor, Chapters on Love I.79).

The process of spiritual healing requires us to be growing in self-knowledge, which leads to the act of repentance and confession of sin, and the resulting purification. For this self-knowledge, a basic understanding of the existence and dynamics of the spiritual virtues and corresponding vices (passions) is required, and especially an understanding of the dynamics of pride and humility and the need to move from sinful self-love to divinely-inspired love for God and others.

We must make a connection between the Cross of Christ and the life of repentance to which we are called, and how we find joy in embracing the Cross as it is presented to us in our lives.

A course of presentations and discussions on the above-mentioned principles might take the form of an in-depth study of the Beatitudes (as found in St. Matthew’s gospel), following an outline designed to be used over the course of a school year. Such a study could draw from patristic commentaries on the text of the Beatitudes, as well as reflections from contemporary Orthodox authors that are available.

4. Diocesan Youth Ministry Staff Development – If we want to grow our youth ministry efforts, reach deeper into the needs of our youth and our parishes then we need to build the staff that can

accomplish this task. There is an expressed and real need to develop well qualified full time Diocesan Youth Ministry directors that have both the expertise (training) and the necessary time to devote towards building serious well developed diocesan ministries for youth and at the same time and as a key component of this work engaging, training, and developing Parish youth workers that can effectively ministry to the youth of each parish of this archdiocese. The Diocesan Youth director ought not act as a super parish youth director but rather as the facilitator and trainer of local parish youth ministry staff. While having a stronger Archdiocese Youth Department and then building out effective diocesan Youth Ministry Staff all of our youth efforts would be greatly enhanced and raised to new levels affecting in major ways the health of our parish, dioceses and archdiocese over both the short and long term. As a start we could build out one two or three of the larger dioceses first and then move from there – or even initially have one person covering a large and a small diocese in their part of the country.

5. Education and training level of our Parish and Diocesan Youth Workers. We need to move to the model of having well trained Diocesan and Parish Youth Directors that know their Orthodox Theology, youth ministry and well understand the needs of youth in an Orthodox setting. For far too long we have placed people in front of our youth who do not know their Orthodox Theology and praxis and then wonder why our young people who have not been fed Orthodoxy leave the Church. Educated and well training parish youth workers and diocesan leaders would help transform youth ministry, our young people and the entire Archdiocese over a matter of years. We have begun this program on a modest level by what we offer through St Stephens, St. Vladimir's, and Holy Cross. These efforts reach a few and already we can begin to see a difference, yet this needs to move to a large scale that can bring large scale results.

**The Department Staff** listing falls on the following pages, followed by the financial Report of the Department. We have two paid staff members, myself and Kh. Kathleen Purpura, a graduate of Holy Cross Seminary and we have an additional eight volunteer Spiritual Advisors and seven Diocesan Youth Directors, as well as an additional priest in charge of Special Olympics who is not paid by this department.

It should be noted that in the near future we should consider adding to the paid staff by employing full time Diocesan Youth Directors that are Seminary Graduates who would substantially raise the level of youth ministry in the archdiocese.

Yours in Christ,



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