



Teen SOYO Leadership Training

July 22-27, 2016 at the Antiochian Village

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH presiding

V. Rev. Dr. Joseph Purpura, Chair of the Department of Youth
and Parish Ministries

Fr. Michael Laffoon, Spiritual Advisor

Kamal Hourani, President

Munir Pavez, Vice-President

Rebekah Bandy, Secretary

Gianmarco Petrelli, Treasurer

I. Fr. Joseph Purpura opened us in prayer, and Kamal Hourani called the meeting to order at 7:41 PM EST, July 22nd, 2016. Kamal gave a brief introduction.

II. Roll Call

- a. NAC Officers—fully represented
- b. Diocese of LA and the West—fully represented
- c. Diocese of Miami and the Southeast—fully represented
- d. Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and Upstate New York—fully represented
- e. Diocese of the East—fully represented
- f. Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest—4 officers and 1 advisor
- g. Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America—fully represented
- h. Diocese of Worcester and New England—4 officers, 1 advisor, and

III. Welcome and Introduction

- a. Each teen and advisor introduced him/herself by name and hometown.
- b. Fr. Joseph Purpura went over a few basic guidelines for the conference.
- c. Erin Ghata and John Abud led a few group icebreakers.

short break taken at 8:46 PM, called back to order at 9:04 PM

- d. His Grace Bishop THOMAS spoke to us for a few minutes about his gratitude to God for us as his examples as Christians.
- e. Fr. Philip Rogers asked for examples of good leaders and their traits
 - i. Christ, Metropolitan Joseph, Father Joseph Purpura, Father Michael Lafoon, John Abud, etc.
 - ii. They have knowledge, they are servants, they have cultivated the fruits of the Holy Spirits, they have a vision/goal, they communicate, they have passion, respect, confidence, love, they know how to listen, they are humble, understanding, compassionate
 - iii. You can be a leader anywhere- your home, school, sports team, etc.
 - iv. "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity..." (1 Timothy 4:12)
 - v. When faced with a task, ask yourself these two questions: "If not me, who? If not now, when?"

- f. Fr. Daniel Bethancourt spoke about contemporary saints – “I would not have known myself had I not known saints.” (Metropolitan Hierotheos) He specifically spoke on the life of Saint Paisios.

Closed for the evening in prayer by Fr. Michael Laffoon at 10:09 PM and the teens split into small groups led by the NAC officers, where each group got to know each other and set a few goals for the conference.

Fr. Philip opened in prayer for the day at 1:25 PM on July 23rd, 2016.

IV. Executive Reports

- a. James Jabbour moved to approve the minutes from our Midwinters Meetings, and his motion was seconded by Hilda, unanimously passed.
- b. Gianmarco presented his treasurer’s report, which was accepted by a motion from Elizabeth Lengyel-Leahu, seconded by Paul with a unanimous pass.

We were introduced to the Young Adult Ministry and highly encouraged all of us to join when we are finished in Teen SOYO.

- c. Munir Pavez summarized his year as Vice-President. Our Teen SOYO Spotify is TeenSOYO and you can follow us and listen to chanting and hymns. He announced the new SOYO CD which was just recorded at the Sacred Music Institute this summer. Elizabeth Lengyel-Leahu and Anna Spencer both attended SMI and shared their experiences. The CD will be available at some point in the fall.

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH came to speak to us at 1:58 PM. He spoke until 3:30 PM. At 3:30, we paused the meeting for a short break, returning at 3:50 PM

- d. Munir Pavez finished his Vice-President’s report. Anyone with ideas for cover art for the SOYO/SMI Music CD can let Fr. Joseph know. Elizabeth Lengyel-Leahu approved his report and Valerie Tokatli seconded her motion.
- e. Kamal Hourani gave his President’s report. He summarized our activities as a board from the past year. Andrew Handal moved to accept the report, and Stephanie seconded his motion. Gianmarco Petrelli gave a word of thanks to Kamal Hourani and Munir Pavez for their service to SOYO in the past few years.

V. Elections

- a. Hilda Souid moved to elect Gianmarco Petrelli as NAC Teen SOYO President, and Mark Saber seconded the motion.
- b. Paul Rodriguez-Anter was elected as NAC Teen SOYO Vice-President.
- c. Rebekah Bandy was elected as NAC Teen SOYO Secretary.
- d. Elizabeth Lengyel-Leahu was elected as NAC Teen SOYO Treasurer.
- e. James Jabbour moved to elect Hilda Souid as social media director, and was seconded by Stephanie Batarseh.

VI. Ongoing Business

- a. SOYO Day of Service
 - i. There were many concerns raised at our Midwinters meetings regarding theme, timing, and awareness of SDS.

- ii. Valerie Tokatli suggested that in addition to posting the photos with the hashtag, the churches can send or DM the photos directly to our new social media director.
 - iii. Stephanie Batarseh suggested that we could have a website or a place on our potential SOYO app to upload them.
 - iv. Paul Rodriguez-Anter suggested that diocesan officers reach out to their parishes to check in after the fact.
 - v. Most officers agreed that it would be more effective to have a whole month of service, but Minnie Black suggested that it have a theme to keep it more unified, since it will be more spread out. It was resolved to try spreading it over a whole month, and see how much participation increases through it.
 - vi. Mark Saber and Marissa Zayed volunteered to be on the team to help work on SOYO Day of Service.
- b. Munir Pavez passed around a sign-up sheet for the social media committee. Suggestions for communications included having a monthly NAC update.

Fr. Anthony Yazge said a few words about both Sunday's challenge course and Special Olympics camp.

- c. Kamal Hourani brought up Be the Bee and Be the Bee retreats and shared that the retreats have been highly recommended.
- d. Gianmarco Petrelli gave an update on the SOYO app and explained that it would end up being far beyond our budget, so we will be directing those funds toward a new and improved teensoyo.org. All of our ideas from the app will hopefully be implemented in this new website design.

We closed in prayer for the evening at 5:17 PM, led by Fr. Nikolai Meyers. Kamal Hourani delayed the Spiritual Advisor's Report and Chairman of the Department of Youth's Report.

Fr. Nikolai reopened the meeting in prayer at 7:09 PM on July 24th.

- e. Kamal Hourani explained Special Olympics Awareness Day, which occurs on the third Sunday of every October and pays for the entirety of the camp (with the exception of an \$8,000 Grant from the Order of Saint Ignatius) every summer. Donors receive a bookmark as thanks, and this year's will have the icon of St. Paisios.
- f. Kamal Hourani emphasized the importance of Youth Month. Gianmarco recommended that each diocese have some way of getting participation, whether by a photo competition or another method.
- g. Kh. Kathleen Purpura suggested reaching out to the parishes of widowed clergy wives to make the letters we write to them more personal; finding out what the khouriyeh or priest was involved or interested in.
- h. Fr. Joseph Purpura explained the Youth Worker Education fund, and that we gave six scholarships and will most likely be able to give six more this fall. He described the program and emphasized its importance. Natalie Okal suggested that it needs to be more marketed and advertised so that youth workers know of this opportunity.

- i. Kamal Hourani and Fr. Joseph brought up that there have been discussions on making the Parish Life Conferences more educational. Teens should be growing in spirituality and our relationships, as well as learning how to run a SOYO chapter. His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH blessed opening up Leadership training to parish officers, and having a separate track for them when needed.
- j. Kamal Hourani shared our plans to use some of our NAC SOYO funds to revamp our SOYO website. Since the app is beyond our reach at the moment, many of the things we wanted to include in the app will be included in the new website. This would cost up to \$3,000. Zeina Fayad moved to fund the website development up to a cost of \$3,000, and Grace Bahbah seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.
 - i. Christina Purpura recommended that we also go through our social media to rebrand and make it more uniform between platforms.
 - ii. The website will be nearly as functional as the app would be, at a fraction of the cost.
 - iii. The photos uploaded with the new feature will need to be approved before they go live on the site.
 - iv. An anonymous Ask Abouna section is very much requested to be included on the website.
- k. Fr. Joseph Purpura raised the topic of the SOYO binders, which are very useful. Once we have all of the updated resources, we will most likely have them at the next Leadership Training.
 - i. Amal Michael suggested that the binder not have a specific year on the front, so each binder can be passed down.
 - ii. Hilda Souid suggested that just the things like the calendar that *need* to be updated be updated every year, but not the entire binder.
 - iii. Erin Ghata asked if the binder is really necessary or worth a few thousand dollars if we are revamping the website.
 - iv. Milad Hamwi asked if it would be significantly cheaper if the binder were reduced to the bare necessities.
 - v. Gianmarco Petrelli suggested that the binders simply be spread out further, and be printed every 3-5 years rather than every other year.
 - vi. Kamal Hourani asked all the officers for a show of hands of who thinks we need the binders, but there was neither a strong approval or strong disapproval of the binders. Fr. Joseph Purpura decided that the executive board will discuss this before Midwinter meetings, and the discussion was tabled to save time. It should be noted that the vote at the 2016 NAC SOYO Mid-winter Meeting was strongly in favor of the binders.
- l. Each 2015-2016 SOYO Program Response Team was summarized by its advisor, assigned, and split off into their groups to give the advisors a chance to update the new officers on the workings of their team.
 - a. The Great Friday Night Vigil Editing Team plans to condense the pamphlet and include a link to a more in-depth article. They plan on having the flyers handed out to parishes and posted around

church halls. The team would also like to include photos of teens participating in the Vigil. Tatiana suggested utilizing twitter to spread reminders about this and Prayer&Fasting.

- b. The PVC (SaGE) Packet Editing Team is building off of St. Elijah, OKC's program to make it work for SOYO.
- c. The Sacred Gift of Life Editing Team will be focusing on abortion, self-harm, euthanasia, cloning, genetic engineering, stem-cell research, etc. They want to make it clear that many of these issues depend on the situation, but build a foundation to help people make decisions for themselves. They would like to make a video explaining some of this.
- d. The Mental Health Team will be working on properly addressing these mental health issues by developing online media from an Orthodox perspective. The team will start by associating quotes or Bible verses with each type of mental illness and send them one at a time to be shared in parishes or in their bulletins. They would like to be able to compile a list of qualified speakers (Orthodox therapists, for example) who can be available to be speakers at retreats or conferences. Gianmarco suggested that this also be open to OCF.
- e. The Prayer and Fasting Editing Team will compile different prayers, quotes, and videos about fasting.
- f. The Officer Duties Editing Team will just be revising details about the duties, and emphasizing more of the spiritual side of holding office as well.
- g. The SOYO Essentials Editing Team will try to explain in simple terms the connection between chapters, diocesan boards, and the NAC board. They will be expanding on the four pillars, adding information on how to stay in touch and information on dues, and explaining elections. This team also present their first draft of the SOYO Essentials Packet.
- h. The Youth Month Team wants to increase participation, such as fundraisers and fellowship. They plan to make a new flyer, and post a video or collage at the end of the month with submissions from the parishes.

Fr. Michael Laffoon closed the evening in prayer at 10:04 PM on July 24th, 2016.

Fr. Joseph Purpura opened in prayer at 7:05 PM EST on July 25th, 2016 and the officers split up into groups for workshops led by the advisors, where they discussed different topics such as leading Bible studies and emotional intelligence.

Fr. Joshua Makoul opened in prayer at 10:00 AM EST on July 26th, 2016. Fr. Joseph Purpura presented each officer with a keychain icon of Saint Porphyrios. Fr. Joseph then seated the new NAC SOYO officers. Officers then split up to go to the final of the three workshops. When everyone returned, Amanda Sahawneh, Kh. Gigi Tannous and Amal Michael led an activity with "What-If" scenarios.

The meeting was called back to order at 7:14 PM EST on July 26th, 2016.

- VII. Each diocese presented their president's and treasurer's reports and advertised their various fundraisers.
- VIII. Erin Ghata led a "closing ceremony", and Fr. Michael Laffoon closed the conference in prayer at 8:32 PM EST, July 26th, 2016