

National Sisterhood of Presvyteres

December 2008



"Through love be servants of one another." Gal. 5:13

A Christmas message

*From His Eminence,
Archbishop Demetrios of America*



Beloved and Gracious Presvyteres,

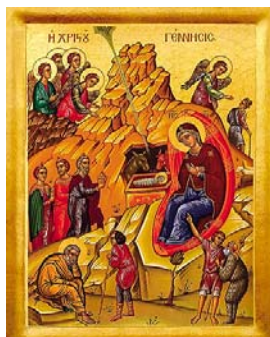
It is always a joy to address you, the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres, with a message of greeting in your quarterly newsletter. In this case, the joy is multiplied because I write to you during the season when our Holy Orthodox Church celebrates the joyous Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. On this day, our God demonstrated His abundant love for us by being born an infant in the person of Jesus Christ. Through His taking on flesh and dwelling among us, our God made it possible for us to have a genuine communion with Him, with the promise of unending life with Him in His Kingdom. This promise of salvation stands at the heart of the Christian Gospel, the "Good News."

As presvyteres, you occupy a very prominent and time-honored role in the life of our Church and in the teaching of the Gospel. As women who have freely dedicated yourselves to following your husbands in their priestly calling, yours is an offering of an intense, spiritual love and fidelity with the power to inspire, one that stands as a noble role model for others. You offer, by your words and by your deeds, a powerful and remarkable presence that is felt within each Christian community that your husband is called to serve as a priest. This is the case for all of you as presvyteres, and indeed your presence is a tremendous gift which you offer on this day and every day, one for which all our clergy and faithful give thanks.

I pray fervently upon this season of Christmas that the joy of this Feast may shine as a radiant light for each of you personally, for your families, and for the entire National Sisterhood of Presvyteres, guiding you always as you continue to be sterling examples of love and faith for others who seek salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, our Incarnate God. May His infinite love and protection be with you always, and may the New Year 2009 be a year marked by the abundant blessings of our Lord.

† DEMETRIOS

Archbishop of America



*From our
President*

Cynthia Paleologos



NSP President, Cynthia Paleologos, center surrounded Fr. Michael Kontogiorgis (left) and Fr. Joseph Strzelecki (right) and those members of the National Board who were able to attend the October meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dear Sisters in Christ,

"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with humility and gentleness." Ephesians 4:1-2

Our jobs as part of the sisterhood are to reach out to our sisters in any way we can, through meetings, get-togethers, retreats, phone calls, e-mail, cards etc. Sometimes we just need to be a listening ear.

I will do my utmost, with the help of the NSP Board to make these next two years as fruitful as possible and to perpetuate the mission and goals of the sisterhood.

- *To promote the spirit of Christian love among the Presvyteres of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.*
- *To provide opportunities for Presvyteres to get acquainted with one another.*

Continued on Page 2

- *To meet periodically to discuss the mutual concerns and to develop programs of outreach.*

I thank Stephanie Panagos, Alice Noplos, Jeannie Monos and Maria Kerhulas, who have spent many hours helping our new executive officers transition into their responsibilities. It is not an easy task to take over the positions, as I should know.

Our first stewardship appeal was sent out in September and so far has been very successful. I thank Shyla Hadzellis, Jeannie Monos and Alice Noplos for all the time they have spent helping us put together our stewardship appeal and budget. This was a very long and tedious project, but it was time for the NSP to establish a budget.

In the past few months, as your president, I have been very busy.

- We held our first NSP Board meeting October 17-19 at the Assumption Church in Town and Country, Missouri. I thank Fr. Joseph and Ranae Strzelecki and the Philoptochos for their hospitality
- After our meetings at the Assumption Church I flew to New York to attend the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council meetings to present the Benevolent Fund report and also discuss matters which concern both priests and the presbyteres. The APC was most generous in voting to present the NSP with a generous check to help us in our endeavors
- On October 25th Cyndi Anctil represented the NSP at the Archon, Athenagoras Human Rights Award dinner, where Rabbi Arthur Schneir, received this year's award. October 26th I attended a feast day celebration in honor of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios at Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York City.
- I was to attend the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee (ABC) meeting on October 28-29 at the Archdiocese in New York. Due to the trouble I am having with my foot I was not able to attend.
- During the month of November I attended an Archdiocesan Council meeting on November 6th and 7th in Chicago, IL. Mary Scoulas represented us at the National Philoptochos meeting also in Chicago.

I cannot thank the executive board for all the help they give to the sisterhood and for making me look so good and, in addition, as I said before I thank them all for taking on this commitment with me. Some steps may be small steps but they are steps in the right direction.

I thank Fr. Michael Kontogiorgis for his help and wise counsel. He is always a phone call away.

I look forward an exciting two years working TOGETHER!

With love In Christ,
Cynthia Paleologos

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14

St. Luke the Evangelist wrote these words over 2000 years ago and they are as relevant today as in the days of the early church. As presbyteres we *glorify God in the highest* not only during the season of Christmas but throughout the year. The support we give to each other, the support we give to those we are closest to, and the support we give to all those needful on

earth exemplify St. Luke's words of promoting *peace and good will toward men.*

Traveling the country to meet you, corresponding by email, speaking with you on the phone and sharing the joys and struggles of your lives bring me peace and hope for the world around us. The strength of our sisterhood is you and your support of each other is my greatest gift at Christmas.

During this magnificent season celebrating the miracle of the Christ's birth, I wish you much joy for you and your families.

Merry Christmas,

Cynthia

Cynthia

National Retreat

On October 9-12, 2009, the Metropolis of New Jersey will be hosting the 6th Biennial NSP Retreat at the Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville, Maryland. The topic of the retreat will be "Nurturing the Nurturer: Self Care for the Presvytera." Please mark you calendars and plan to attend. Additional information will be provided in a future newsletter.

Metropolis Reports Archdiocesan District

Submitted by Paula Strouzas

On August 18, 2008, we had our annual Clergy family picnic in Greenport, NY. Our hosts were Fr. Anastasios and Presvytera Georgia Pourakis. We all enjoyed a wonderful day and we thank Fr. Anastasios and Presvytera Georgia for their hospitality. It was a very nice opportunity for fellowship. We plan to have our next picnic in a more central location so hopefully more people will attend...possibly at St. Basil's Academy.

On October 9, 2008, we held our first luncheon and mini-meeting. Presvyteres and their children were invited. Although we had a small group in attendance, we were all happy to be together, break bread and discuss our future plans. Our officers are: Paula Strouzas, D.A.D. representative to the NSP, Georgia Pourakis, alternate representative; Flora Moraitis, Treasurer; and Pat Petropoulakos, Secretary. Anastasia Karloutsos Lazarakis offered to plan future play activities for the children. She will be asking for volunteers.

Xanthi Karloutsos is chairing our annual Clergy Family Christmas Dinner...it will be held on December 30, 2008, at the Boathouse in Central Park, NY. We are all looking forward to this event and know that it will be a great time and opportunity for fellowship. Plans are in the works for a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's new Byzantine wing that will open some time in November. We will notify everyone as to time and date.

Cindy Anctil will host our annual retreat at Holy Trinity Church, New Rochelle, NY. Holy Trinity, New Rochelle is centrally located within the Direct Archdiocesan District and we hope Presvyteres throughout the D.A.D. will be able to

attend. Possible dates are either March 7th or 14th, 2009. Once the date is determined we will let everyone know.

Metropolis of Atlanta

Submitted by Georget Photos

The Thanksgiving Season brings along many blessing in the Atlanta Metropolis. After the progress made at this summer's Clergy Laity in Washington D.C., we embarked on another Ecclesiastical Year of working together in our Metropolis. Our Sisterhood has grown from the initial efforts of 2007 – 2008; our mailing list has grown from 76 entries to close to 95! These entries are names of active and inactive Presvyteres including retirees, widows, and "separated" status, and not to forget some of our Russian and Antiochian Presvyteres who also requested our newsletter. As exciting as this growth is, we can do more!

Our Metropolis is filled with talented and gifted Presvyteres. The Metropolis of Atlanta Presvyteres have shined and will shine even brighter in the coming year by their talents and through their efforts to develop programs, retreats and activities. Though only nine Presvyteres attended our Clergy Laity Meeting, the electricity of ideas and projected activities stimulated the room we were using.

Among the items that were discussed included a Presbyteria directory to keep all the Sisters together, brainstorming for the 2009 Atlanta Clergy Laity in Clearwater, a Greeting Card Ministry, the breakdown of the Metropolis to workable regions, the next Summer Clergy Family Retreat and most remarkable of all a special pilot program. This small meeting accomplished quite a bit in two hours.

The 2009 Atlanta Clergy Laity is going to be exciting; by all indications, we will have something for everyone. The hotel, which is on the Gulf of Mexico, is nestled in Clearwater, Florida.

The Greeting Card Ministry is a wonderful way we can touch each other's lives during events that happen, Presbyteria Vassi Haros, Florence, SC is the liaison for this Ministry. She had volunteered to send cards, on behalf of the Atlanta Sisters, expressing sentiments from all of us.

"The Archangel's Wings", the Metropolis of Atlanta Sisterhood newsletter will entertain questions privately via email, concerning the stresses in everyday life, i.e. marriage, depression, stress management and/or parent/child relational issues. We will not be able to provide a diagnosis or prescribe drugs, but we will be able to help differentiate whether or not there is a need of additional resources, as well helping to find those resources. Questions that seem relevant to others will be anonymously published in "Dear Roxanne" with the writer's consent. The publication of the outcome might help others with similar problems and issues to find solutions.

The Presvyteres that have taken on a region of the Atlanta Metropolis will be submitting to "The Angel's Wings" periodic reports on activities and gatherings in their area, hopefully with pictures. The Carolinas and South Florida areas still need a Representative. Since the last Newsletter we have gathered twice once at St. Sophia in Winter Haven, Florida and the second time at St. Demetrios in Daytona Beach, Florida. At both Feastday Vespers we entertained each other enthusiastically with plans and ideas for the coming

year. These reports along with biographies, recipes, book reviews, and articles will provide needed information to bring the sisters together. In addition to these articles, a page will be added showing private businesses maintained by our Presvyteres, in the event Metropolis of Atlanta Parishes would like to order products or services to help their endeavors. We have a goal this year, and that is when we gather once again in the summer for the 2009 Clergy Laity in Clearwater, Florida or the superb retreat provided by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios and Chaired by Presvytera Christine Saltzman, we will look at each other as sisters who have been apart for months.

Metropolis of Boston

Submitted by Vicki Toppses



Boston Sisterhood of Presvyteres Fall gathering participants.

The Metropolis of Boston Sisterhood of Presvyteres met for their Fall gathering on Saturday, October 4th, at the Boston Metropolis Center. We had the honor of having as our guest speaker Dr. George Stavros, PhD, who earlier this year was a presenter at the National Clergy-Laity Conference. Dr. Stavros is the Clinical Director of Boston University's Danielsen Institute for Couples and Family Therapy. At our meeting he spoke on the topic: "Love's Container: Understanding and Moving Beyond Inevitable Conflicts, Disconnections, and Disappointments in Marriage." Dr. Stavros began by examining the lives of the married Saints Joachim and Anna, the struggles they faced as a couple, and the healing of their relationship through God. Because marital struggles are unavoidable, he emphasized that the strongest marriages are between couples who become skilled at repairing, rather than at preventing, ruptures in their relationship. His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios, opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed the twenty-one ladies in attendance that included Presvyteres, Diakonisses, and the wives of Hellenic College/Holy Cross students. Our next meeting will be a joint retreat in February, called by His Eminence, for both priests and their wives to focus on marital relationships and clergy health. We also look forward to our Sisterhood's Annual Lenten Retreat on Saturday, April 4, 2009.

Metropolis of Chicago

Submitted by Chrysanthe Bessinas

We are in the process of reorganizing and regrouping but we love prayer and enthusiasm! Michelle Halekakis and I have decided together that we would not be Metropolis Rep and Alternate, but rather, co-Metropolis Reps.! I am able to travel to the meetings and she has far greater organizational skills than I, so we've found a wonderfully synergistic relationship. We are off to a bit of a slow start but have laid the groundwork for a solid and hopefully uplifting year!

We will resume our annual Clergy family Vasilopita on Friday January 2nd at St. George Church in Chicago. We are planning a Metropolis NSP two-day retreat in late January. One Presvytera has indicated she would begin a monthly email newsletter. We are hoping this will begin by January if not before. Michelle is also laying the groundwork for a Clergy Family Bright Week Overnight Getaway. We have one last program that we are trying to implement. Since we have the blessing of having so many clergy families in relatively close proximity, we are trying to organize a bimonthly PK playgroup!

Metropolis of Denver

Submitted by Angie Constantinides

PROJECTS

"Get to Know Each Other Better" through weekly emails. As of October 18, the following Presvyteres have been profiled:

Angie Constantinides of Dallas, TX
Katina Gartelos of Cheyenne, WY
Stacy Armatas of Fort Collins, CO
Ruth Uhl of Highland Ranch, CO
Christa Dokos, Sioux Falls, SD

Weekly emails to those in Metropolis
Update mailing list...add email addresses
Recruitment for listeners for The Listening Connection
Recruitment for Big Sisters for Sister-to-Sister Program
Promote National Sisterhood Retreat, Fall 2009- MD
Promote Metropolis Retreat Spring 2009- Denver

GOALS

To better educate all Sister of the Metropolis as to what programs we have on a National level.

100% participation of Sisters in Metropolis to National Stewardship Program.

To create better sources of communication within the Metropolis.

Try to encourage others to get involved through awareness of our group.

Metropolis of Detroit

Submitted by Tassoula Cassis

The Metropolis of Detroit Sisterhood has compiled and mailed to each of its members a directory of all the Presvyteres that currently reside within its jurisdiction.

Presvytera Harriet Wilson of Lexington, Kentucky spearheaded the effort, collected the information and with the help of her husband, Father George, prepared it for publication. Presvytera Joan Bogdan printed and mailed it. Their efforts are much appreciated. A quarterly newsletter has also been established in an effort to stay connected with all the Sisters in our Metropolis.

Metropolis of New Jersey

Submitted by Pauline Pavlakos

During the month of November, we celebrated Thanksgiving, I am especially thankful to be a presvytera and part of an amazing sisterhood. I thank God for all of you.

As most of you know, our Metropolis headquarters have moved to 215 East Grove Street in Westfield, New Jersey. We anxiously await the grand opening.

Our newsletter, *The Light*, and new directory were mailed on November 1. If you did not receive this mailing, please send me your contact information. Also, please review the directory and send me any changes/corrections. Our next newsletter will be mailed in February, along with a revised directory.

Our Annual Metropolis Sisterhood Retreat/Meeting will be held at St. Sophia, SS. Faith, Hope and Agape Church in Jeffersonville, Pennsylvania. Katherine Thornberg is our hostess. Please register for this retreat by February 27 by mailing \$30 (check payable to "Sisterhood of Presvyteres") to Pauline Pavlakos, 6315 Wilmington Drive, Burke, VA. The registration form is in the aforementioned newsletter.

I have started a bi-monthly e-mail ministry. If you have not received any of these e-mails, please send your e-mail address to me at SISinCXC@msn.com. Our Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly will be held May 3-5, 2009 at the Venetian in Garfield, New Jersey.

Our Metropolis will host our 2009 NSP National Retreat October 9-12 at Bon Secours Spiritual Center (www.bonsecoursretreats.org) in Marriottsville, Maryland. Please contact Alice Noplos, chairperson if you would like to help in any way.

Please visit the Metropolis of New Jersey Sisterhood of Presvyteres at www.nsp.goarch.org/nj. We are always looking for information to post—send pictures, announcements, etc. and they will be posted immediately upon receipt.

During this Lenten period preceding the birth of our Lord, take the time to reach out to a sister presvytera.

Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Submitted by Becky Touloumes

First, we thank Zoe Denas for her two years of service as our NSP representative. She is continuing her support by offering a periodic newsletter for our Metropolis.

Also congratulations to Eleni Demetri of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania on her new position as NSP Board Recording Secretary.

Our Metropolis is divided into six regions with six assigned representatives to report any updates to the Coordinator and to organize regional gatherings.

New Assignments/Transfers since June 2008:

Fr. Anthony Demetri

FROM: Annunciation, Cleveland, OH

TO: Holy Trinity, Camp Hill, PA

Fr. Dean Dimon

FROM: Holy Trinity, Steubenville, OH

TO: Annunciation, Cleveland, OH

Fr. Costas Keares

FROM: Holy Trinity Camp Hill, PA

TO: St. Paul, North Royalton, OH

Congratulations to Fr. George and Dianthe Livanos and Fr. Steve and Christine Callos on the marriage of their children Kassiani Livanos and George Callos. Na zisoun!

Congratulations to Fr. Nick and Presvytera Anna-Calliope Halkias on the healthy arrival of their third daughter, Kyriaki born October 31st.



At our fellowship meeting that took place on November 13, in conjunction with our Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly, eleven presvyteres of our Metropolis (pictured above) met for a luncheon meeting. A beautifully planned luncheon that was organized by Goldie Doukas at a local restaurant was enjoyed by everyone. In addition to the group exchanging greetings, stories and selecting menu items, we briefly discussed the many wonderful ministries set up by our Sisterhood at the Archdiocese level. The group agreed that a ministry would be highlighted on a 4-6 week basis so that we could get the information out to everyone in a timely, yet detailed manner. We're beginning with stewardship. Volunteers within the Metropolis will oversee each ministry for the benefit of all.

Metropolis of San Francisco

Submitted by Barbara Retelas

Our church family is growing! We have welcomed a few new babies into our Metropolis. We wish to congratulate Fr. Alex and Presvytera Nicole Leong who welcomed their third child, baby Paul, on June 25th. They serve the Parish of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Vallejo, CA. On October 5th, Fr. Chris and Presvytera Krissy Flesoras had their second child, baby Gianna. Fr. Chris and Pres. Krissy serve the community of St. Anna's in Roseville, CA.

We congratulate Dr. Pres. Jeannie Constantinou for successfully defending her dissertation last August ('07). She has graduated with her PhD from Universite Laval in Quebec City, Canada. She said it took her nine years to finish but what an awesome accomplishment.

We do have a new Presvytera in our Metropolis, and I'm very pleased and proud to say that it is my daughter Angie. Angie and Fr. Pete Sotiras were married on June 14 in Novato, CA. Fr. Pete is the former Youth Director of the Metropolis, and he was ordained to the Diaconate on Sept. 7th in his home parish of the Nativity of Christ in Novato, CA and to the Priesthood on Sept. 14th at Holy Cross in Belmont, CA where he is serving as Asst. Priest under Fr. Peter Salmas and Angie is teaching High School Biology at Menlo Atherton High School.

From October 1-2, the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Holy Archdiocese of America convened in New York and they took action for the drafting of liturgical and ceremonial guidelines and texts and approved the text on the Procedures of the burial of priests. This has been a labor of love of our own Elaine Stephanides. After the passing of Elaine's beloved husband, Fr. George Stephanides, Elaine saw the need to have available at every parish the procedures to follow after the death of a priest. She has worked very hard to see this through and has waited patiently for the Archdiocese to officially approve and pass these guidelines. We cannot thank her enough for her diligent efforts.

The San Francisco Metropolis has moved their offices to the Cathedral of the Annunciation in San Francisco. As of October 6th, 2008 the new mailing address will be:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
245 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Phone 415.753.3075
Fax 415.753.1165

We invite everyone to join us at our retreat the weekend of January 23-25th, 2009 at St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center. We have asked Fr. Michael Johnson of Seattle, WA to be our speaker and we love to have company!

Website

Submitted by Pauline Pavlakos

The National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Website was created on May 31, 1996. We have been online for almost 12½ years. The address is www.nsp.goarch.org.

The Website consists of 20 individual pages whose titles define their content:

What's New
CAP (Confidential Assistance Program)
Change of Address
Clergy Family Corner
Constitution
E-mail Addresses
FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)
Food for Thought
Home
Memorial Page
Newsletter
Photos

Prayer List
From our President
Prez to Prez
Registration
Reps and News
Retreat
Stewards
TLC (The Listening Connection)

The Website is updated immediately upon receipt of information, so please continue to send information.

We currently have 413 presbyteres on our e-mail list. The e-mail page is password protected. If you need the password, please e-mail me (SISinICXC@msn.com) and I will send it to you.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as Webmaster.

Widowed Presbyteres

Submitted by Mary Scoulas

Dear Sisters: Our group has now grown to number 128 widows in the Archdiocese. Some have been widows over forty years and others just a few months. We also adapt in different ways. By sharing our experiences, we can be a great help to each other. That is one reason there is a Widowed Representative on our Sisterhood board. Please join in on a Sisterhood activity in your Metropolis and I am sure you will find a kindred spirit. And if you can, offer a stewardship donation to the NSP. Whatever you can afford is the right amount.

Please make it easy for us to be in contact. When we received that wonderful gift this summer, I worked hard to locate all our widows for whom we had old or missing addresses. Let us know when you move, and if you are on-line, send your e-mail addresses to me. We are doing more and more contact on the internet which is very cost effective for the Sisterhood. You can reach me at scoulas@aol.com or at 847-998-0696. I love hearing from you.

May the blessings of the coming birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with you and yours.

The Listening Connection

In an effort to raise awareness of the Listening Connection, the National Board invites you to visit the website at: www.nsp.goarch.org/tlc.html. Here we have not only listed the days and hours that our listeners are available but also a short profile on each. We have also made available the policy and guidelines, how to become a listener as well as a section for listening tips.

We have established a presence in the online community of *Facebook* on the group called *Presbyteres Coast-to-Coast*. This particular group has 71 pan-orthodox members.

Additionally, we prepared a two-page informational flyer that was added to the Sister-to-Sister welcoming boxes. We hope to capture the attention of new presbyteres that are struggling in their first few years.

The TLC has contacted the Metropolis Representatives in an effort to increase awareness and to recruit additional

listeners. We have asked them to distribute our two-page informational flyer and make an appeal for volunteer listeners.

Please contact Shyla Hadzellis at 617-530-0884 or shyla@hadzellis.com if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for keeping The Listening Connection in your prayers.

Sister-to-Sister

Submitted by Renee Lambakis

I am writing this report with great joy! I have received such wonderful feedback from our Sister-to-Sister ministry. A couple of our sisters have e-mailed me when they have received their welcome boxes and they are filled with joy in their heart. This positive feedback makes my undertaking of this meaningful ministry so much easier. I LOVE when a new Diaconisa/Presvetera receives a welcome box filled with so much information that will be so useful to them in their ministry!

Food for Thought

Once upon a time, there was a young woman who married a man. He had been a seminarian, and over time, as they worked and had children, he became a reader and a subdeacon and a deacon. One day, he became a priest. And they moved to a brand new parish, where she'd never been.

And when she came to church the first week, and wore a headscarf, none of the other women were wearing headscarves. And someone took her aside and said, "Are you trying to be more pious than the rest of us? Take that thing off!"

And the next week, she wore no scarf. And an elderly lady in a fetching hat took her aside and said, "Are you trying to undermine your husband and the bishop? Woman! Cover your head!"

And so she went home and she thought and she prayed, and she went to the crafts store. And the next Sunday, she wore a lovely snood that she knit herself, and all the ladies told her it was lovely. And her heart was content.

One of the three and a half people who came to Vigil came up to her later that coffee hour, though, and told her that it was a scandal that she and her young children were not in church on Saturday as well as on Sunday.

And the next Saturday, she brought her babies to church. And one had to go potty, and one fell asleep on the floor, and one needed to be nursed, and her evening was full of prayers, but not the same as those of the congregation.

And on Sunday, she was run ragged, and when the ladies heard about it, one said, "What are you doing to those poor children, dragging them from home like that past their bed time?"

And so she went home and she thought and she prayed, and God suggested that perhaps she should talk to her husband. And her husband said, "Beloved wife, I love having you in church with me. My memories of going to Vigil with you early in our courtship and marriage are among my fondest. But when you bring three children under the age of ten to a service they cannot follow and where nothing

happens, is it reasonable to think that anyone will pray? Here is what we will do. Sometimes, we will hire a babysitter and you can come to the whole enchilada, and my heart will sing, and so, Love, will you. And sometimes, you will come with all of them for part of the service, so they can get used to coming. But leave while everyone is still clean and happy. And the rest of the time, you can spend Saturday peacefully preparing your heart for the Sunday service, and laying out outfits for the children, and making sure I can eat before midnight, and all will be well."

And her heart was content. For there are seasons in our lives, and this was her season for lying fallow. Nobody had remembered to tell her that before. Or perhaps they had, but she had been thinking of other things and hadn't listened. And then, there's the chance that she hadn't, at the time, believed them. But time makes believers of us all.

And so, on occasion, she came to Vigil, as she had as a teenager and student and young wife, and sang. But when she did, someone said, "Matushka! Surely we could use more English, so my children won't be lost!"

But when she sang in English, someone said, "Matushka! Surely you should sing in Slavonic, so my elderly grandmother who founded this parish and Sasha who just moved here last week can understand."

And her heart was troubled. So she went home and before even thinking and praying, she cut to the chase and talked to her husband, who said, "Beloved, the use and mix of languages in a service is a pastoral matter. Since I am the priest, I will note which parts to do in each language." And even though people continued to beseech and berate, her heart was content, and she was able to listen earnestly and say, "I know it's hard for you. I appreciate your sacrifice for the good of your fellow parishioners."

This had the effect of leaving most people speechless.

And then her husband's second job vanished, the one that wasn't being priest but that did pay the bills and provide insurance. And people said, "Matushka! Why are you not working?" So she tried taking on a full time job. But her children became morose and misbehaved, and her husband, God love him, visited her on the job so she wouldn't be lonely, and most of their money vanished, being spent on work clothes and gasoline and previously prepared meals because she was too tired to cook and previously baked goods for her children's schools, where she could not be and where those who weren't relieved at her absence missed her. And she said, "Lord? This isn't working." And her boss agreed.

And she tried staying home, but the lack of money caused so much anxiety that she was not sleeping, and she became short with the children and for a time abandoned housework and talking to people and going outside and it was not good. And she recognized that it wasn't good, and she wrote to a bishop whom she loved. And he prayed for them all.

And the bishop steered her to part time work, and the Lord steered her husband to part time work, and they weren't living high on the hog but she was sleeping nights, and reading to her children before bed, and the day they reclaimed the livingroom, her husband danced, rasson and all, although not in front of parishioners.

And in time, in the parish, there arose an Issue. And many people thought one thing about the issue. And many thought another. And some thought both, and the kindest thought neither, and everyone turned to the matushka and said, "Don't you agree?"

And she prayed and said, "Lord, what should I do here?"

And from somewhere deep within that she had forgotten about, a chuckle arose within her. And the Lord answered, "Do you really think that your opinion on this one matters?"

And she smiled. And when people asked her about the issue, she replied, "I think that it doesn't matter what I think about it. The main thing is that we all love one another, and pray for the bishops who decide this one."

And her children grew, and she was able to go to church more. Which was good, because they gave her more about which to pray. And sometimes they got Saturdayitis, and sometimes they even had Sundayitis, but mostly they came with her and prayed and participated in parish life. And as they grew, when people asked them about Issues, they smiled and said, "Our opinion doesn't matter. But that pierogi you made does. It was wonderful." And when people tried to tell them that they should do this or they shouldn't do that, they smiled. They said, "Yes, we understand. We are sinners who do our best, and yesterday, that was the best we could do. But pray for us and we will do better next week."

And when people tried to tell them that they were the best children in the world, they smiled broadly, because their parents had been sure to tell them otherwise. And they smiled and said, "We are wicked sinners. But we love you for thinking otherwise."

And in time, the matushka realized that her babies had grown, and she was free to do what she wanted and think what she wanted, and that she was probably only twenty years away from going so far as to say whatever she wanted.

And it stunned her to realize that everything she wanted, she had, and that she would not do anything radically differently than she did, because she had learned the secret to contentment. And that was to be grateful, and to chuckle, and to listen mostly to her husband, but also to her heart, and to ask for help when it all became too much and to understand that the peace might have come from within but she wasn't the One who put it there. It only entered in with Holy Communion.

And so there was only one thing left to do. And that was to write it down, quick, before she forgot. Partly, she wrote it because the world is full of young women who've married men who've become priests. Someone should tell them about seasons. However it is, it doesn't stay that way. And partly, she wrote it because she knew that during the bad seasons, she was prone to forget absolutely everything she had learned. But when we put good words in a friend's heart, they are stored there for us to draw on when we've run out ourselves.

May God help us to help each other through the seasons.

A Note on Stewardship

Inspired by Angie Constantinides

The purpose of the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres is to promote the spirit of Christian love among the Presvyteres of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; to provide opportunities for Presvyteres to get acquainted with one another; and to meet periodically to discuss mutual concerns and to develop programs for outreach.

In a letter sent out in September by NSP President, Cynthia Paleologos, we read that although we are a group of more than 800 Presvyteres, only 15%, or 120, of us are stewards. How is that possible?

Think about it....once your husband becomes a Deacon/Priest you become a member. The Sisterhood has no requirements....no application....no references....no demands set on us...just a group of women who have a common love for their church, their husbands & families and for each other. This is a group that was started with no funding, and through the Grace of God has grown by leaps and bounds, offering mailings, retreats, and support to all Presvyteres.

What is this worth to each of us? There can be no amount put on a support system that comes into our hearts and helps us to realize we are not alone on this path of life.

So ladies....we all know the drill of stewardship. If you haven't sent in your stewardship yet, take a moment to look into your heart and support the stewardship program of the NSP.

Included with this newsletter is a stewardship envelope. If you haven't made your stewardship contribution for 2008, please take a moment during this Christmas season to consider the value of this very important ministry. If you have already made your 2008 contribution, please use the envelope for your 2009 stewardship.

Below is a listing of NSP stewards as of December 10, 2008. Thank you to everyone who has responded to our September appeal!

PAID THROUGH 2008

Eleni Alexopoulos
Cynthia Anctil
Jane Andrews
Maritsa Andrews
Merilynn Andruchow
Anonymous
Maria Armstrong
Sophia C. Athas
Janet Augusta
Alicia Avramis
Pearlann Bithos
Anastasia Cassis
Angelyn Christon
Angie Constantinides
Jeannie Constantinou
Konstantina Dalianis
Artemis Demopoulos
Maria Diacovasilis
Melanie DiStefano
Vivian Eaccarino
Angela Eugenis
Katina Gartelos
Nasia Gordon
Shyla Hadzellis
Maria Hondros
Nancy J. Ioanides
Helen Kalangis
Michelle Kalantzis
Helen Karamanos
Anastasia Karloutsos-Lazarakis
Athena Katsoulis
Helen M. Kehagias

Aspasia Koninos
Vicki Kontogiorgis
Photini Krokos
Elaine Krommydas
Christina Kyriacou
Vasiliki Kyriacou
Eleni Lardas
Theresa Lillios
Julia G. Longos
Effie Manikas
Kostoula Manousakis
Maria Markopoulos
Elizabeth Metropoulos
Maria Mourikis
Joanie Matsis
Magdalena Michalopoulos
Diana Moskovites
Felicia T. Mot
Helen Nacopoulos
Carolyn Nastos
Sylvia Nicozisis
Irene E. Palis
Katina Pantelis
Constantina Papanikolaou
Dimetra Pappademetriou
Mary P. Pappas
Stephanie Paris
Eva Paul
Georget Photos
Argie Pilavas
Alexandra Poulos
Matia Prevas
Barbara Retelas

Christine Salzman
Andrea Savas
Candace Schefe
Irena Stanculescu
Christina Stavropoulos
Elaine K. Stephanides
Elizabeth Tervo
Athena Theodosian
Sophronia Tomaras- *May her memory
be eternal!*
Toula Trifon
Marinda P. Tsahakis
Eleni Z. Tsigas
Kathleen Tsitsilianos
Evangeline Varonis
Faith Veronis
Chrysi H. Vlahos
Barbara Voyiazakis
Harriet Wilson
Julie Zaferes
Celia Zaharas

PAID THROUGH 2009

Evelyn Adams
Joanne Aliferakis
Georgia Alikakos
Magda Andronache
Maria T. Antokas
Vasilina Apostolakos
Maria Bakas
Anastasia Bandy
Daphne Barbas
E. M. Bartz

Zafera Bartz
Mary Lisa Bobotas
Georgia Botsis
Gloria Bratiotis
Marika Brown
Joanna J. Harris Cadieus
Eleni Chakalos
Alexandra Chakos
Georgia Champion
Theodora Chelpon
Deanna Christ
Eleni Christakos
Rozalia Christulides
Ioanna Clarke
Argeroula Combitsis
Helen Coulouras
Mary Cowles
Maria Dalber
Penelope Dassouras
Eleni Demetri
Mary Demotses
Adrienne Dickos
Mary Dombalis
Aspasia Dorrance
Goldie Doukas
Ina Dragas
Virginia Emroll
Kristi Fadel
Ione Filandrinos
Kristen Flesoras
Connie Gialopsos
Constance M. Gianulis
Mindy Gikas
Michelle Halekakis
Mary Hallick
Vassi M. Haros
Sophia Hohnholt
Olga Hountalas
Maria Karloutsos
Panagiota Katras
Nicole Keares
Areti Khitiri
Louella E. Kostopolos
Katerina Kounavis
Cyndy Kouremetis
Maria Kourouvasilis
Anastasia Leondis
Despina Leventis
Elaine Maginas
Helen Magos
Marilyn C. Magoulas
Haidee Marangos
Anna Matthews

Marusia Melackrinis
Irene R. Mentis
Georgia Metaxas
Penelope Metaxas
Cynthia Milanese
Evelyn L. Mitsos
Jeannie Monos
Carolyn Nastos
Elisabet Olechnowicz
Thea Pakes
Cynthia K. Paleologos
Georgia Papadopoulos
Anne Pappalas
Donna M. Falcinella Pappas
Christina Papulis
Kathryn Patitsas
Pat Petropoulakos
Sophia Philippas
Toula Poteres
Olga Rafael
Yvonne Raptis
Vasiliki Rousakis
Maria Saroles
Nancy Serviou
Stella Sfikas
Joan Simones
Georgia (Val) Sitaras
Gigi K. Souritzidis
Penny Stamas
Charlotte Staviski
Elaine V. Stratis
Paula Strouzas
Fotini Faye Stylianopoulos
Argie Talagan
Catherine Tavlarides
Becky Touloumes
Rose Treantafeles
Pat Tsagalakis
Joanna Tsandikos
Vasiliki M. Tzougros
Alexandra Veronis
Betsy Vlahos
C. Betty Vlahos
Sultana Volaitis
Mary Ann Wingenbach
Anne Zervos
PAID THROUGH 2010
Chrysanthe Bessinas
Joan Bogdan
Athena Gousios
Helene Hall
Anastasia Jonas
Anne Macris

Margaret Orfanakos
Stephanie Panagos
Pauline Pavlakos
Georgia Pourakis
Mary Scoulas
Ann Yankopoulos

PAID THROUGH 2012

Mary Christy
Eleutheria Dogias
Eleftheria Recachinas

PARISH SPONSORS

St. Spyridon Cathedral
Worcester, MA

If your parish would like to sponsor our next newsletter, please contact your Metropolis rep or an Executive Officer.

Thank you for your continued generous contributions.

A reply envelope is enclosed. Please consider the NSP for your end of year giving.

Are you receiving NSP emails? If not, please be sure to let your Metropolis representative know your email address. Please help us stay in touch with you by notifying us of any email address and changes of address.

I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose. ~Woody Allen



Calling all Clergy and Presvyteres

Please share a funny or unbelievable moment with the NSP.... You know what we're talking about. We all have them ~ an embarrassing, funny or memorable moment with other clergy members/Presvyteres; parishioners, family members or even total strangers. Several years ago at our National Retreat in Woodstock, IL we participated in an icebreaker where we had to talk about our most embarrassing experience. It ended up being a hysterical evening. The NSP is now currently putting together a booklet of these experiences. Please help us out by sharing your stories! The ultimate idea would be to publish these stories into a book and use it as a fundraiser for the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres, but it all depends on you...so please share those stories. You have the option of having your name next to the story, or remaining anonymous (in which case we would still need your name, just to verify the validity of the story). Please fill out the back of this form and mail it to :

Presvytera Alice Noplos
11 Longbottom Court
Kingsville, MD 21087

(or email the information to anoplos@comcast.net)

National Sisterhood of Presvyteres

Book of Laughter

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Church _____

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
National Sisterhood of Presvyteres

2008 – 2010 National Board

President

Cynthia Paleologos
89 William Street
Worcester, MA 01609
508-791-1089
cpaleo@yahoo.com

Vice President

Alice Noplos
11 Long Bottom Court
Kingsville, MD 21087
410-817-9651
anoplos@comcast.net

Treasurer

Jeannie Monos
PO Box 6773
Charlottesville, VA 22906
434-589-9529
jmonos@newrome.org

Corresponding Secretary

Eleni Demetri
5105 Mendenhall Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17959
717-761-6729
preseleni@hotmail.com

Recording Secretary

Ranae Strzelecki
913 Dover Falls Drive
Manchester, MO 63021
636-225-5642
fjs4@juno.com

Past President

Flora Chioros
120 James Landing Road
Newport News, VA 23606
757-597-7786
floradc@aol.com

Metropolis Representatives

Archdiocesan District

Paula Strouzas
10 Briarcliff Lane
Glen Cove, NY 11542
516-671-6649
pbstrouzas@aol.com

Atlanta

Georget Photos
3641 Queens Cove Blvd.
Winter Haven, FL 33889
863-294-7816
Theamos@aol.com

Boston

Vicki Topps
33 Rejane Avenue
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-784-5698
presvicki@hotmail.com

Chicago

Chrysanthe Bessinas
1429 E. Michele
Palatine, IL 60074
847-963-1455
papathoula@yahoo.com

Denver

Angie Constantinides
17505 River Hill Drive
Dallas, TX 75287
972-447-0108
Angiemarie@aol.com

Detroit

Anastasia Cassis
7836 Glen Oaks Court
West Chester, OH 45069
513-874-6842
WRC_1@MSN.com

New Jersey

Pauline Pavlakos
6315 Wilmington Drive
Burke, VA 22015
703-239-2627
SISinCXc@msn.com

Pittsburgh

Becky Touloumes
515 Diablo Drive
Bethel Park, PA 15102
412-831-3574
beckvt@theologic.com

San Francisco

Barbara Retelas
11856 Pyxis Circle
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742
916-682-2846
retelasbr@yahoo.com

Visit us online at: www.nsp.goarch.org



National Sisterhood of Presvyteres
Presvytera Eleni Demetri
Corresponding Secretary
c/o 895 Jefferson Drive
Palmyra, VA 22963

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED