

SOYO Leadership Conference
Minutes
2010

*Followed by the 2011
Midwinter Minutes*

2010 SOYO Leadership Conference

Antiochian Village, Pennsylvania

July 23-28, 2010

- I. Call to Order** Fr. Joseph calls the meeting to order at 7:31pm on July 23, 2010.
- II. Opening Prayer-** led by Bishop Thomas.
 - a. Fr. Joseph gives the rules of the meetings to SOYO and asks for NAC SOYO Nomination Forms.
 - b. Fr. Joseph discusses the current president and vice president absence-Michael Massad and Jenna Badra visiting the Middle East.
 - c. Liz Mamey- Reads the life of the saint of the day.
- III. Roll Call** (attached)
- IV. Liz Mamey** welcomes SOYO and talks about what will be going on in tonight's meeting. We will be discuss our expectations for leadership training and will have elections for the new NAC SOYO board 2010-2011. The executive board will also give their reports if time allows.
- V. Fr. Joseph** tells teens how to welcome Metropolitan PHILIP and explains elections for the new board
 - a. Announces Nominees for NAC Board 2010-2011
 - i. President-Hiba Ojaimi
 - ii. Vice President- Laney Wagner, Anees Mokhiber
 - iii. Secretary- Mara Schuler, Jason Ioannides
 - iv. Treasurer- Jonathan Spencer
- VI. Liz Mamey** congratulates everyone on their new positions and starts icebreakers with the group. SOYO gathered outside for icebreakers for us to get to know each other.
- VII. Fr. Joseph** gathers SOYO back together in meeting room to continue with business portion of the meeting.
 - a. Jonathan Spencer receives gift from Fr. Joseph for being diligent in responding to emails quickly; Father discusses the importance of responding to emails on time and with good communications skills.
- VIII. Expectations of the Week-** Lead by Liz Mamey
 - a. Teens shared their thoughts on the week's goal; made posters with expectations that were hung in the room for encouragement throughout the week and to help seek goals.
 - b. **Fr. Joseph** discusses the importance of keeping to our schedule. Everyone must attend all the events on this year's schedule. Entertainment for Leadership Training will be planned by Laney Wagner. Anyone wanting to perform is to see Laney to find a slot to perform. He talks about the goals him and Fr. Anthony Yazgee have for SOYO this week. Their primary expectation is for Teen SOYO to remove themselves from unhealthy situations. Secondly, they want everyone to

be ready, on time, and participate. No one is allowed off the property for any reason unless they have discussed it with Fr. Joseph. There are no secrets here, we are to model the right behavior to others as leaders.

- c. **Fr. Anthony Yazgee-** “Early is on time and on time is late.” He talks about how camp is separate from leadership training. He explains how he may be absent from portions of meetings while directing the camp.

IX. Hymns- We practiced hymns to sing when Metropolitan PHILIP enters the room.

X. Executive Reports

- a. **Secretary, Liz Mamey-** She asks to have the minutes approved from the Mid Winter Minutes in 2010. Anees Mokhiber moves to approve the minutes. Laney Wagner seconds the motion. The minutes are approved.
- b. **Treasurer’s Report-** given by Liz Mamey in the absence of Adam Murphy. She goes over the amounts in the accounts. The NAC bank account contains \$4,578.08. Dues were collected from each Diocese. If NAC dues have not been turned in from each Diocesan treasurer they are to be turned in to the newly elected NAC Treasurer. She asks to have the financial report approved. A motion is made by Cathryn Kruse and Jonn Spencer seconds the motion. Liz asks for any discussion on the report. A question is brought up about what Special Olympics money is used for. She answers the question; \$40,000 is raised to send athletes for Special Olympics Camp at the Antiochian Village. Fr. Anthony Yazgee expands on the question with SOYO’s history with Special Olympics in Pennsylvania. He mentions the icon bookmark and brings up the idea of making a icon bookmark of St. Ignatius in 2012 to help commemorate his work. Fr. Joseph talks about why the youth workers fund was created and its growth throughout the years. After discussions the report is approved.
- c. **Fr. Joseph** discusses next year’s theme and how we need to take an active role with the theme; in the bible bowl and oratorical festival. The idea of a “theme” bookmark is brought up. He elaborates on this year’s logo.

XI. Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop ANTOUN, and Bishop THOMAS came into our meeting and we greeted them with hymns. Bishop ANTOUN discusses how teens should participate in bible bowl and oratorical festival, no excuses. Liz Mamey tells them what we have done so far in our meeting with our expectation posters and reads them some examples of our goals. Metropolitan PHILIP talks about how our meeting is highly attended and how he is proud of our achievements in our meetings. We go over who all is here by diocese. Metropolitan PHILIP speaks on how there is no substitute for the bible. He attends conferences with the expectation of high participation in the Bible Bowl and Oratorical Festival. He reiterates Bishop ANTOUNS point about participation in these activities. We go over the numbers of participation this year for both the Bible Bowl and Oratorical Festival in all the dioceses. We need to work on increases these numbers. Metropolitan PHILIP expresses how he is more than willing to answer any questions. He answers one

about how to increase participation in SOYO Chapters. He tells us that in the past teens have been elected to participate. We need to prioritize and take time for things outside out social activities: Facebook, texting, and internet use. The church and the bible should come before all of these things. He also answers questions on how travel/hotel expenses keep some teens from attending PLC's and participating in such events as the Bible Bowl and Oratorical Festival. He tells us that money will always be an issue and the United States is wasting money on pointless expenses. He talks to us about how education is key for our future.

- XII. Elections for the New NAC Board 2010-2011-** Each officer running made a short speech before elections. Teens were given the chance to ask the nominees questions after their speeches. Speeches were as follows: Hiba Ojaimi (President), Anees Mokhiber (Vice President), Laney Wagner (Vice President), Jonathan Spencer (Treasurer), Jason Ioannides (Secretary), and Mara Schuler (Secretary). We voted and the newly elected officers were as followed:
- a. 2010-2011 NAC Board
 - i. President- Hiba Ojaimi- A motion was made by Laney Wagner and the motion was seconded by Laney Wagner and Cathryn Kruse. Hiba was unanimously elected the new president.
 - ii. Vice President- Laney Wagner was elected by popular vote.
 - iii. Secretary- Jason Ioannides was elected by popular vote.
 - iv. Treasurer- Jonathan Spencer- A motion was made by Laney Wagner to close the floor for nominations; the motion was seconded by Chris Abdelahad. Anees Mokhiber moved to elect John by proclamation. A second was made by Dana Zawahri. Jonn was unanimously elected the new treasurer.
 - b. Presidential Advisor- Amanda Sahawneh was appointed the Presidential Advisor by Fr. Joseph for the new NAC SOYO Board. She will help guide them with their new responsibilities throughout the year.
 - c. The new board was introduced and will immediately be placed into their officer position during leadership training.
- XIII. Meeting Adjourned** Fr. Joseph led closing prayers at 11:04pm
- XIV. Meeting Called to Order** by President Hiba Ojaimi at 1:54pm on July 24, 2010. She welcomes Bishop Thomas into our meetings and thanks him for joining him.
- XV. Secretary of Media-** Hiba Ojaimi opens discussion for a new NAC position, Secretary of Media. Mara Schuler is appointed and position is opened for discussion, a committee of people will be selected to draft a job description.

XVIII. Diocesan Recaps

a) Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest

- Spring meeting in Canton Ohio, Basketball tournament combined with Spring Delegate Meeting, over 300 teens attended.
- Fall Gathering 100 teens came, 2 youth outreach programs, Zoe house and St. Herman of Alaska's Monastery
- Want to make more of the SOYO chapters involved and active in the Midwest Diocese.

b) Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

- 2nd year of winter camp and 3rd annual basketball tournament and a new website made, just a resource for teens to get registration easier.
- B-Ball or 135 teens participated with registration free, at a hotel instead of church; a much better environment.
- Fr. Michael Nassar was guest speaker
- Winter Camp in Houston, TX
- YES trip in Oklahoma City
- No SOYO left behind, way of keeping in contact with all of the SOYO Parishes in the Diocese. Split them between the four delegates and each teen has to keep their churches updated by e-mail, phone call, etc.
- Current balance is \$4351
- Brought bracelets to sell Kyrie Eleison or Christ is Risen, 1 dollar each and recommend sell to other parishes and teens for 3 dollars each.

c) Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

- Made blankets for Project Mexico for the Fall Gathering Project Mexico
- Winter camp had the largest attendance ever
- Had all the parishes pay their dues
- Ending balance \$3994.30
- Fundraise by selling prayer ropes

d) Diocese of New York, Washington, Charleston, and Oakland

- PLC in Allentown, Metro Phil and BP Thomas, over 100 kids at the Meeting
- New Advisor Fr. Joshua instead of Fr. Stephen
- New Board Member, VP Jason Ioannides
- Big Thing is our SOYO socks fundraisers
- A lot of OYO and YES activities, a lot of people got involved
- Fall Delegates meeting at the Village, over 100 kids at the Meeting
- Many parishes sign up for Village at Home
- PVC was widely used and priests gave many talks about it.

- Balance 2000, because we spent 4500 on the socks. In 2 days we made back 500 dollars. 2 types, Long White or Long Black-\$12. Short White or Short Black-\$10
- Declared by BP Thomas church appropriate.
- Board came up with new idea, we sell socks to other Diocese and that Diocese sells them at the delegate meetings and PLC.

e) Diocese of New England

- Fr. Michael Nassar held a retreat on keeping the faith in a chaotic world in February.
- March the and annual Lenten retreat, well attended by most of the Teens
- NEMO (New England Mission Organization) in April, Habitat for Humanity, Breakfast searches, Goodwill housing to help wrap Christmas presents.
- After Habitat for Humanity went to a nursing home and played bingo with the elderly.
- August try to go to a Red Sox game with the Diocese Teens and kick off the new SOYO year.
- Because the geographical locations of New England it is easy for Teen SOYO members to get together and participate in activities and fellowship together.
- Starting Balance of July 11th \$2651.65.
- Total income \$13300.13
- Ending balance \$3950.36
- PLC in Sturbridge MA, 20 Teens attended very small and discussed kick-off Red SOX game, and possibly another YES trip.
- New 5th Office for this Diocese, Secretary of Media. Hopefully this makes things easier, and the new position take cares of the accessories for the Board; an extra office to help out.
- FB, Yahoo Page, Scrapbook, Pictures are all taken care of by the Secretary of Media.
- Property donated many years ago to SOYO, and they sold it and put all the money in an account, to be used when needed by organizations of the Diocese.

f) Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

- In August got new credentials (at the meeting, get all the attendees to write down their name, officer position, email, and phone number. This is used to keep in touch with them and make sure parishes pay dues.) Teens active in Youth Month, they sent out information on Due letters.

- January Delegates meeting and volunteered at a Local Rehabilitation Clinic, and established Good Samaritan Project, and promoted it by writing an article for the word
- Monthly Conference calls
- PLC in June, over 50 teens, encouraged Teens to attend Camp St. Theckla, and they also donated money to CST.
- They are making diocesan binders this year and they made a parish contact book to include in the new binders.
- Balance as of June 11th \$2600.98
- Total income \$4570, mostly dues and Lord Have Mercy bracelets and new t-shirts
- New Balance \$2965.15
- Delegates meeting in St. Petersburg with new project, Good Samaritan Project.
- Had a lock in at the Delegates meeting
- PLC in Jacksonville, FL. GSP brought up again and each parish made a scrapbook page for the GSP
- Outreach was a local community service at the local Zoo.

g) Diocese of Ottawa and Canada

- A whole new board this year
- Patty and Habib worked on unity and communication between parishes, very cliquy, so they are trying to fix this.
- Had hard troubles with money, and primarily dues and donations that set them back on track
- Theme of this year's retreat: Keep it Real, over 60 teens attended
- New Shirts being sold for \$10
- SOYO participated in the Soccer Tournaments
- A powerful arm you can participate in your diocese is through the camp ministry. For Canada-Holy Transfiguration Camp.
- PLC biggest meeting, and found a new way to present reports so everyone does not bore and lose interest.
- Expenses over \$2000, but not sure.

XIX. Break at 3:06pm

XX. Meeting Resumes at 3:10pm

Fr. Anthony If you are on board this year, Teen SOYO comes before diocesan camp, it is a higher priority. Apply for Special Olympics camp if you are between ages 16-19, or just turned 20.

Liz Mamey Went over schedule, discussed what we would be doing for the rest of the week.

XXI. Reviewed the Binder

- The Binder Shrunk this year, and 2 years ago NAC made a new CD of the binder to upload to your computer.
- The spine has a neat drawing of our Teen SOYO Logo, drawn by Liz Mamey
- The blue color came from Fr. Purpura's office, the color of his office walls.
- Inside we have Fr. Anthony Yazgee's and Fr. Joseph Purpura's business card. E-mailing is the best way to contact them.
- A new map under addresses of all the Antiochian Churches in North America and Canada.
- Completed Constitutions:
 - NAC-new
 - Ottawa
 - Toledo
 - Eastern Region
 - Worcester
 - Miami and Southeast
- Incomplete Constitutions:
 - Wichita
 - Los Angeles and the West
- Great Friday Vigil
- NAC Minutes and also include diocesan minutes
- OCCHY: Orthodox Christian Coalition for Healthy Youth
 - Deals with Teen Issues: drugs, alcohol, pre-marital sex...

XXII. Meeting Adjourned at 3:42pm by NAC President Hiba Ojaimi

XXIII. Meeting Called to Order by President Hiba Ojaimi on July 25, 2010 at 1:05pm

XXIV. Break off into Diocese office groups

- a. Amanda leading Presidents and Vice Presidents
- b. Liz Mamey leading Secretaries
- c. Fr. Purpura and Adam Murphy leading Treasurers
- d. Advisors led by Fr. Anthony

XXV. Officer Break-Outs each office met together in separate meeting rooms to discuss their officer duties.

- a. **President and Vice Presidents:** Dana Zawahri speaks on behalf of the presidents and vice-presidents. The roles of the VP and how they work together is a co-team

effort. The president has to run the meeting and adjourn them, and we talked about how to run one. Writing reports using new and old businesses are mandatory. It's important to set realistic goals that help improve SOYO.

- b. Secretary:** Michelle Hourani spoke on behalf of the secretaries. Liz Mamey teaches us how to write the minutes and the find main crucial parts of the meetings. We learned how to organize minutes, and that it is important to be good with communication. Secretaries are in charge of credentials and they have to write thank-you notes.
- c. Treasurer:** Matthew Shportun spoke on behalf of the treasurers. Fr. Joseph gave them a flash drive in case of emergencies, and there is new software, Quicken, which makes things easier to organize, making the year more successful. He also informs them how to write checks, void them, and how to handle them.
- d. Spiritual Advisors and Youth Directors:** Joel Finley speaks on behalf of the spiritual advisors and youth directors. They formulated job descriptions and what the role they play in helping the teens. The PLC was also confusion as in what their role was, so they developed ways on how to advise, plan, and help out more with the teens.

XXVI. Break-out session at 2:36pm for Team Building exercises led by Fr. Anthony Yazgee.

XXVII. Meeting called to Order by President Hiba Ojaimi at 7:44 pm

XXVIII. OCCHY (Orthodox Christian Coalition for Healthy Youth) Kathleen Purpura is the president of the group and she speaks on how she wants SOYO to play a role in this new coalition. A coalition must fulfill its mission to reduce the use of substance abuse. This coalition is looking to establish Orthodox Christian Coalitions that address the issues of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and sexual activities to educate Orthodox Christians, so we can reach out to our local communities.

Supported by:

- a.** Metropolitan PHILLIP
- b.** The Archdiocese Board of Trustees
- c.** The Order of Saint Ignatius

XXIX. PVC (January)

XXX. Alex Younes

- Main topic Addiction, passions, thoughts, and temptation...alongside this substance abuse. Stresses the importance of thoughts, and the negative and positive effect of it. We only have one life to live; what a sacred thing.
- We are all part of a spiritual warfare. We are all part of the militant; St. Paul says go out and fight, so we can find God, and seek and glorify him.
- Two elements in life, physical in the sense of fleshly- constantly fighting us. The spirit, the source of life. So will I choose the fleshly addictions or the life of the spirit? The flesh has a dead end, it rots and decomposes, but the spirit was created for eternal life, it lives on forever. The flesh fallen is a dragon that leads you.

- We are called to do one thing in life, but we aren't called to conquer our passions. If we want to connect to the spirit, there is only one thing we can do, that is to come to know and love God. We must decide if we will be addicted to the life of the flesh or the life of the spirit.
- We are people that are always looking for the destination without thinking of the pathway to get there. Thoughts are your key to heaven or to "down there." We need to purify our thoughts and be vigilant.
- Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life. Jesus is the only one who can heal our passions.

XXXI. Sacred Gift of Lift packets are located in the SOYO Binders. The SGLS is on the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade.

XXXII. Youth Worker Fund (January) Talk to treasurers to get that in. January chapters are supposed to do events in parish to raise money for this. Put on agenda for Fall Gatherings.

XXXIII. October Youth Month Amanda speaks about this and tells us to encourage our parishes to participate.

XXXIV. Meeting Called to Order at 9:58am Hiba Ojaimi calls meeting to order and she welcomes the new arrivals.

XXXV. Opening Prayer given Fr. David Moretti, followed by President Hiba Ojaimi reading Lives of the Saints.

XXXVI. Introductions Each diocese's spiritual advisor and youth director introduce and tell us interesting facts about themselves.

XXXVII. Diocesan Reports

1. Fr. Joseph explains what we are to talk about during the diocesan meetings.
2. Break for Lunch at 12: 30pm
3. Meeting Called to Order at 2:08pm by President Hiba Ojaimi.

a) Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest: President Dana Zawahri speaks on behalf of the Midwest Diocese. Many ideas for fundraising were brought up and we purchased bracelets from DOWAMA to sell at our individual parishes. For our basketball retreat in Canton, we have decided to make t-shirts specifically for this retreat. Every first Monday of every month we are going to have conference calls to discuss ideas and plan. For the fall meeting we are having a Humanitarian event and talked about our guest speaker. The parishes of the different regions of our diocese are being split up between each officer to fulfill the No SOYO Left Behind.

b) Diocese of Los Angeles and the West: Melissa Khoury speaks on behalf of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West. Last year we had 12 dues given to us by our diocese, but we have made a goal for 20 dues this year. We will use a more personal approach when sending out dues by making a nice introductory letter with our pictures on it. This year we want to have a southern California deanery retreat in the spring to catch up with everyone. A main goal is to get more

participants from active churches, and to help with this is making a nice credentials list. Some fundraising ideas are t-shirts for our diocese, and making cross silly band bracelets. No SOYO Left Behind is a one of the main projects to focus on this year so for kids that are apart of smaller parishes. Last year we had no committees so we hope this year to create some and make our diocese more productive.

- c) **Diocese of Worcester and New England:** Tim Markatos speaks on behalf for the Diocese of Worcester and New England. Morgan Sutton is appointed as Media Director, a fifth delegate on board. We addressed the new office of Media Director what its real duties are. The unique opportunity that all of our churches are all geographically close to each other is something we want to utilize and visit the smaller parishes as a board and explain to them to participate on a Diocesan level. For fundraising we have decided to make a shirt and sell to the parishes in our diocese. We planned a very active calendar for this year where the diocese comes together for an activity every month. Morgan Sutton introduces her job description on the new office created (press secretary), which was open for discussion on whether it should be an elected position or an appointed position by the diocesan board.

a) **Amanda Sahawneh moves to table the discussion to a later time.**

Joel Finley seconds that motion.

- d) **Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and upstate New York:** Karla Samman speaks on behalf of the Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and upstate New York. Fundraising is the first thing discussed regarding our shirts and how we also want to buy SOYO socks from ER Diocese. At the PLC we might have everyone stay in a hotel and stay together because we haven't had this in the past. For the Fall Gathering we want to establish a Teen Room dedicated for fellowship. We are also going to introduce the OCCHY to our diocese. Every parish in our diocese will be asked to donate because of the situation our diocese is in.
- e) **Diocese of Miami and the Southeast:** Matt Shportun speaks on behalf of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. We want to stay organized and keep good communication with our chapters, our selves, and other officers. To structure our SOYO better and help out our new chapters so we developed a calendar with a category spot and one event spot so every chapter can plan the whole year in advanced. SOYO is God's bank; we don't want to do fundraisers just to have the money in an account. At the PLC Bishop Antoun challenged us to help out the missions in any way we can. So to help this, we are asking one of the months every SOYO to have fundraisers strictly to put into the diocesan fellowship committee with a goal of \$10,000, which distributes money to the missions. A retreat is being organized, and we want to integrate this retreat with Camp Saint Theckla (CSL), eventually becoming a winter camp, CSL on Ice.

- f) **Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:** Laney Wagoner speaks on behalf of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. We have now finished our constitutions because it has been something weighing us down. At our Fall Gathering we are going to introduce it and pass it. For our annual basketball tournament, we have now decided the dates, registrations, and discussed general logistics. WAMP (Winter + Camp) dates haven't been decided, but it will be decided at our Fall Gathering. Some of our fundraising ideas are to make liturgical pocket calendar, and we decided this because we did a lot of donations at the Mid-Winter meetings and paid for the registration for our winter camp. No SOYO Left Behind is another big concern, and we have this year to start talking about Oratorical and the theme at the Fall Gathering to make the SOYOs more aware and get them to participate. Dallas is going to have a Lenten Retreat two Sundays before Pasha because from February until June we have no retreats.
- g) **Diocese of New York and Washington D.C. and the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic:** Anees Mokhiber speaks on behalf of Eastern Region. To have a successful year, setting realistic goals and picking a few to really attack and pursue is key to succeeding. We discuss the new fundraiser, SOYO socks, and how we don't want them to become dead clothes but hopefully sell them in bulk to other diocese. A main goal is to have small, active, unheard of SOYOs to become active with the diocese gatherings, and to develop credential book with each church having their own page to keep in contact with active SOYO parishes. Phone calls are now a priority. In the past e-mails and Facebook has been used to contact the church, but we want communication to be more personal. A new committee might be established for the oratorical festival and bible bowl to continuously remind parishes of this to keep these competitions alive. We want to plan a retreat that will focus on bringing our diocese in a more spiritual direction at a monastery in Pennsylvania. We unanimously decide to request to add Paul Abernathy as the ER Lay Advisor because Kh. Janet asked to resign from her position.

XXXVIII. The Meeting is Adjourned at 3:14pm by President Hiba Ojaimi.

XXXIX. Meeting Called to Order by President Hiba Ojaimi at 7:07pm.

XL. Opening Prayer given by Fr. Phillip Rodgers

XLI. Dan Abraham President of the Order of Saint Ignatius. Coming here is not a sacrifice for me, it is a privilege. The Special Olympics, College Conference, and other programs in our archdiocese is how we help the youth of this age grow in the faith. The Order represents a third of the archdiocese budget, while it scares me it inspires me to not turn anyone down. (Meanness doesn't happen overnight. The best sermons are lived, not preached. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.) Following and serving our Lord is our number one priority. For those of you repeating a SOYO office, keep in mind the responsibility you have on your shoulders to set an example and show others what it means to be a leader. As

president, you are responsible for being organized and being a person who lets others know where you are going with your meeting by having an agenda. The treasurer has the most responsibility because you handle the money of the organization; you are responsible for the financial stability. The VP plays the important role of the support of the President, to help them work through a problem, and give them secondary advice. I feel that in these trainings you need to learn how to delegate, learn how to get others involved. Do not fall into the temptation of trying to do everything yourself, involve others in the organization. A leader doesn't give up; we persevere, acknowledge our mistakes, and learn from them.

XLII. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA President of OYM, Natalie, is the youth and young adult advisor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The most important objective is to bring all of the youth to Christ. Each parish should have a program to fit the needs of their parish. We try to help each parish to see what would work best for them. We have one camp, All Saints Camp, where youth from all around the country attend. We run three programs at this camp: Mommy and Me program, a Diocesan Church School Camp, and a Teenage conference. The Camp's staff is all volunteers. Mission trips for college students and high school students are also an option in our diocese. In Ukrainian Culture, they still don't fully understand that mentally and physically challenged people do not have the same quality of life as regular people do. Parents of mentally and physically challenged kids are sent right to orphanages, so mission trips are taken over there. High School Domestic Mission Trips are 8 days long, and mission work doesn't have to be away from home, it should start at home. Types of missions consist of community outreach, catechism, and repair/build. Youth Worker Conferences where youth workers from all jurisdictions get together and discuss various topics. The president of the Ukrainian Orthodox Youth Program, Natalie talks about what her job is and the different activities in which the youth organize and participate.

XLIII. Meeting Adjourned at 10:22pm by Vice President Laney Wagoner

XLIV. Meeting called to order Tuesday Morning by President Hiba Ojaimi at 10:11am

XLV. Expectations of Youth Directors

- Keep us on track
- Show us concern. If we do something well thank us, and when we do something wrong, call us out on it
- Help us to stay organized, know what the diocese's agenda is, being able to guide us along
- Know the difference between being a teen and an adult
- Positive feedback and constructive criticism, keeping us all accountable
- Admit failure and learn from it
- Relate and communicate with them as a peer, not a mother or a father, but being approachable
- Reliable source, available and present
- Set a good example for us
- Don't be afraid to tell us the truth

- Helping us keep focus on what is important

XLVI. Expectations of Youth Advisors

- Strengthening our faith, and help us see how God is working in us.
- Relationship between spiritual advisor and SOYO kids, and having knowledge of the 2010-2011 “teen culture.”
- Relate ourselves to scripture
- Provide a spiritual teaching
- Keeping us humble with the big responsibility our positions carry with it
- Paternal figure
- Connect us with God by serving, preaching the Word, and praying for the diocese
- Teach us to anticipate what can be coming upon us. Be vigilant and know what is coming ahead

XLVII. Good Samaritan Project Mara Gabrielle has been heading this project. Each diocese will make a Good Samaritan Scrap Book. In the diocese, each chapter has two pages of a Good Samaritan scrapbook. The scrapbook pages will consist of each chapter taking pictures during their humanitarian projects and explain what they did at the service project. The Good Samaritan Project encourages teens to love their neighbor as themselves, and minister to the poor and hungry. It will help SOYO to come together in fellowship, and learn to love each other just as God loves us.

XLVIII. OOCHY Fr. Joseph and Hiba ask Teen SOYO if we want to become a sector of this coalition and take action. As teens, we live with this issue and witness it firsthand. The reason the federal government wants teens on this coalition so we can explain our problems to the organization. It is also very important that as teens apart of this coalition, to know that we are the ministers and we must set an example for other kids struggling with tobacco, drugs, and alcohol.

XLIX. PVC NAC Vice President Laney Wagoner gives us background information on what PVC is and how it kicked off. This packet is a resource for SOYOs, parishes, and teens, serving to inform teens of problems they face on a regular basis. It wasn't always a big topic in parishes so it was created to offer an Orthodox perspective on these crucial points us teens face today. We took the information compiled in PVC, and developed a program, Understanding Sex on What God Intends It.

L. Meeting Called to Break by Hiba Ojaimi at 11:44am.

LI. Meeting Called to Order by Amanda Sahawneh at 1:08pm

LII. Old Business

- a) Great Friday Night Vigil: Encourage your parishes to have Friday Night Vigils. It is very important to have this at your own parish and spread the word throughout your diocese.
- b) October is Youth Month: In your local parishes, strongly encourage your teens to participate in the liturgical life. Have them read the epistle, give sermons, chant and

sing, usher, take collections, etc. Make sure teens also raise awareness of and collect money for SOYO Special Olympics.

- c) Orthodox Unity Sunday: Make sure you encourage your parishes to plan a pan-Orthodox event during this time.
- d) SGOL (Sacred Gift of Life): Amanda Sahawneh gives a presentation on the Sacred Gift of Life.
- e) January Education Month: Liz Mamey speaks about the Youth Workers Fund. It is an account that we raise money for to educate the Youth Workers through the St. Stephen's program.

LIII. OCCHY Discussion There was an open discussion over the importance of OCCHY and how involved SOYO should be in it. Teens might be more likely to listen to other teens rather than adults, so we need to decide the amount of commitment and activity SOYO gives to this coalition. We must also answer the simple question; does SOYO want to help reduce the use of substance abuse by our teens in this country?

- a) **Anees Mokhiber motions that SOYO be the sponsoring part of the youth coalition sector for OCCHY. Jake Rinvelt and Raja Salti second this motion. The SOYO board had an open discussion Liz Mamey moves to end the discussion and vote on Anees Mokhiber's initial motion.**
- b) **There is a unanimous vote in favor of Teen SOYO sponsoring part of the youth coalition sector for OCCHY.**
- c) **Alex Younes wants to note that once we commit to this, we need to be coached on the steps we will be taking once we join this. We need to have a road map for this and be guided directly.**

LIV. Break taken at 3:15pm

LV. Meeting Adjourned at 3:55pm

LVI. Focus North America

LVII. Laney Wagoner Tells us a personal story about her getting involved with Teen SOYO. I made a huge commitment by running for NAC Vice President. Think about what your commitment is as being a part of Teen SOYO. What are your priorities and why did you run for the position? NAC President Hiba Ojaimi joins the talk and she explains how she has to choose her priorities and that you have to be pumped up and ready for SOYO. Be committed, and what do you want out of this year.

LVIII. Discussion What was worthwhile vs. what we can improve?

- a) **Beneficial**
 - Icebreakers
 - More Breaks
 - We love us- fellowship
 - Diocese Breakouts
 - The discussions and time of compliance
 - Longer diocesan reports were very productive. 2, 2 hour meetings on different days

b) Needs improvement

- A 1-5 hour meeting is ridiculous and if we could add more breaks there would be more involvement in the meetings

LIX. Fr. Anthony Yagzee Asks people what it is they want to suggest, find out what to prioritize based on the list, and save the discussion until we figure out what is most important. The concept of fundraising is that we feel like we have to sell stuff more for the fun of it rather than making money for our diocese. Dues and donations are the most effective way to raise money. I am not suggesting to stop your fundraisers, but don't rely on it. We aren't the future leaders of the church; we are the current leaders of the church.

Midwinter Minutes

February 2011

Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center

2011 SOYO Mid-Winter Meetings

Antiochian Village, Pennsylvania

February 4-6, 2011

- I. **Meeting Called to Order** by Treasurer Jonathan Spencer at 7:43pm
- II. **Opening Prayer** led by His Grace Bishop Thomas
- III. **Scripture Focus**—Rev. Fr. Fouad Saba He introduces himself from St. George in Cicero, IL as new Mid-West Diocese Spiritual Advisor. Father speaks to the teens about the one essential item needed for Teen SOYO, and without it everything would fall apart, which is The Holy Bible. The Bible can reveal to us everything to one inquiring a deeper self-understanding of his/herself, life, and everyone around us. “We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.” This is the one strength in the bible, and the rest are weaknesses. What are we to do with this one strength and the numerous other weaknesses? In Saint Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy is one passage that is extremely important because Timothy was one of the main disciples of Saint Paul. We are all leaders, and extension of the Right Hand of the Bishop; secondly we have been all charged according to this letter to do whatever our calling needs of us. St. Paul mentions an element that we all have, which has destroyed mankind from day one. It is one thing that controls us, and has the power to tear us apart. The Human Ego takes control of our mind and tears us apart. Christ, the judge of the living and the dead, came in the beginning and will come in the end. We as servants must always be prepared, ready for when we depart to the next life. The decisions we make determine our future. The future is not written by anyone, we have a brain to choose a choice between what He wants and the Human Ego. If we choose the Human Ego, there is no telling what the future will be like, but if we endure what Christ desires of us, “there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”
- IV. Break for Five Minutes at 8:53pm
- V. **Diocesan Reports**
 - a. **Dioceses of Toledo and the Midwest:** Dana speaks on behalf on the Midwest. They are focusing on No SOYO Left Behind. Jake Rinvelt, Vice-President, established a public relations committee, which advertises upcoming events, and then recaps the event in flyers, sent out to the parishes across the diocese. We have been working hard to receive as many dues as possible. This year we received 19 dues, while the past year we only received 7. This fall, we had an officer meeting in Cicero, Illinois. Here we met with our new spiritual advisor, Fr. Saba, and spent a long time reorganizing all aspects of Midwest SOYO. Our Fall Gathering, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was a huge success, with attendance of about 90 teens, almost double of the previous years. At our basketball tournament, we had a great outcome of around 400 teens.

- b. Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and upstate New York:** President Karla Samman speaks on behalf of the diocese. The first big step this year was the Fall Gathering, covering topics on PVC, the Bible Bowl, Oratorical Festival, OCCHY, and SOYO Education Month. Out in the lobby, we had mini leadership trainings, where we discussed how to increase the attendance of teens to our meetings throughout the year. We also really strove to improve the communication within each parish so that they could communicate with us. During our Skype Conference calls, we invite presidents from across the diocese so they feel that they are a part of the diocese on a personal level. We have planned our first annual basketball and volleyball tournament and combined it with our Annual Teen SOYO Retreat. During the tournament, we plan on selling SOYO Socks and our other fundraising materials. We invite you all to attend.
- c. Diocese of Miami and the Southeast:** Jonathan Spencer, the President, speaks on behalf of the diocese. In August we began by developing a SOYO calendar to structure our chapters' activities throughout the year. We delivered monthly updates suggesting activities and highlighted notable dates, both contained in our calendar. From September through December, we collected money for Special Olympics, helped chapters fulfill their Service pillar of SOYO through a humanitarian activity, and developed a scrapbook for the Good Samaritan Project. In January at our Delegates Meeting, where 13 teens attended, and discussed difficulties facing our chapters. We also donated 10 percent of our dues to Camp Saint Thekla, and have been preparing money of our Money for Mission project, to take place in May.
- d. Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:** Melissa Khoury, President, speaks on behalf with Vice-President Brooke Romley. Our main goal this year was to tackle the subject of receiving dues. We set a goal of receiving 20 dues, around \$250 per parish, and greatly exceeded our goal with 36. Because of the amount of dues received, we want to have a retreat on the beach in the Spring called So Cal Spring Retreat to thank our diocese for their great support. For teens far away from California, we are trying to establish a scholarship to help fund transportation for teens needing monetary help, which will hopefully encourage more dues in the future, and a greater attendance across the diocese. As a fundraiser, we developed new shirts, paying \$190 to have them made, and sold all of them totaling \$272.
- e. Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:** President Laney Wagoner speaks on behalf of the diocese. Our fourth annual Basketball tournament was held in Oklahoma City, OK. We decided to have a \$5 registration fee to break free on the cost of the shirts for the teens. Winter Camp at Camp Saint Raphael was a great outcome with over 150 teens, and the theme was "A Christ-Centered Life." For our project of No SOYO Left Behind, we began by e-mailing parish priests with little to no response. We then tried Facebook messaging, so our goal is to improve the success of this mission in the

coming months. At the Annual Sex as God Intends in Oklahoma City, OK, the parish priest speaks on the Orthodox perspective on sex, and we have a female and male doctor explaining the anatomy of the body and reproductive system. There were specific sessions for all age groups and as well as parents.

- f. **Diocese of New York and Washington D.C. and the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic:** Anees Mokhiber speaks on behalf of the Eastern Region. Besides our three new officers, we also have a new spiritual advisor, but lost a youth director. At Leadership training, we decided upon things we wanted to do: a Lenten Retreat to the monastery Agia Skepi, learning from the nuns about the monastic life: inspired by the Midwest and their Canton Basketball Tournament, “a Delegates Meeting on steroids”, we plan on having a similar basketball tournament. We established a new dues committee and a Bible Bowl/Oratorical festival committee to encourage teens to participate as instructed by Saedna Phillip. Unfortunately, our SOYO Socks did not sell as expected, learning that we need to focus more on our dues for a source of money.
- g. **Diocese of Worcester and New England:** Tim Markatos presented the report on behalf of the officers. Pawtucket invited the Diocese to a Red Sox game to gather the teen together. At the Regional Fall Meeting there were presentations on Special Olympics and the Good Samaritan Project. A presentation on Hellenic College was made also. In Providence there was a YES! Trip which teens participated in. In March they will hold a Lenten Retreat reaching out to teens who have not always participated in SOYO. The Diocese will be purchasing socks to raise money for projects in their local area.

VI. Hiba Ojaimi grants 5 minute break at 10:24pm

VII. Hiba Ojaimi calls the meeting back to order and gives Elizabeth Mamey the floor to discuss how to present yourself as a leader.

VIII. **Elizabeth Mamey- Presenting Yourself as a Leader**

- a. She says we need to be affective leaders. We need to articulate and communicate clearly. There are many traits a leader should have. You must be perspective, be secure and self-assured, you are leading your peers for a reason. You have to be persistent with your goals. You have to be determined and take a stand for what you’re saying. You must be trust worthy and dependable. You have to be outgoing around others and meet new people to get them involved. Every leader must have confidence to help get the message across and make you a better speaker. Leaders can’t let the nerves get to them. You have to be aware of your non-verbal communication. Eye contact can help persuade others to listen to you. Making eye contact with everyone in the room engages them in the conversation. Father Joseph mentions how important it is to stay focused and be able to bring your group back together. To become a better leader you need to find the points you can improve upon. Good posture shows you’re attentive, friendliness, and

confident in what you're saying. Poor posture shows lack of attentiveness and gives off a negative feel. Your attire shows that you are professional and you are dedicated to your organization. Volume, pitch, and emphasis effect how your speech and meeting is received. When you are speaking in front of others you need to be aware of the speed at which you are talking and be conscious of your use of language. Make sure those who you are talking to are aware of the terms you are using, such as explain what NAC is. NAC is made up its' leaders for a reason. Everything you do effects your ability to lead others.

- IX. **Closing Prayer** led by Father Anthony Yazge and meeting adjourned at 11:05pm.
- X. **Meeting Called to Order** by President Hiba Ojaimi at 10:08am.
- XI. **Opening Prayer** given by Fr. Joseph Purpura.
- XII. **Orthodox Church Unity** Tim Markatos, the President for the Diocese Worcester and New England, attends both SOYO and GOYA events. He wants us to all contemplate on how we can reach Orthodox Unity, because despite cultural differences, we all share the same dogma. Sunday of Orthodoxy is a time when we rejoice in the triumph over the iconoclasts in the early church. This year I want Orthodox churches in cities to all get together and celebrate the Eucharist as one body of Christ and plant this seed in all of our minds.
 - i. Hiba Ojaimi reads a letter written to the NAC Board from the Ukranian Orthodox Youth Board President, Taylor Gladys, whom attended our summer leadership training to educate herself about SOYO's structure. She expressed that she is determined to have much more church unity between the Ukranian and Antiochian Youth Organizations in the near future.
- XIII. **Executive Reports**
 - a. **Secretary, Jason Ioannides**— offers to read the minutes from Leadership Training in July, 2010. Dana Zawahri moves to approve the Minutes from Leadership Training, July 2010. Jake Rinvelt seconds the movement.
 - a. **Treasurer, Jonathan Spencer**— Received dues from Diocese of Miami and Ottawa. Current balance is \$ 1,469.89. Talk from Fr. Purpura concerning dues – each diocese pay for every parish with an active Teen SOYO regardless if dues have been paid. Hiba Ojaimi moves to accept the NAC Treasurer's report, Anees Mohkiber seconds the movement.
 - b. **Vice-President, Laney Wagoner**— Over the summer, we created a committee where the presidents and vice-presidents update NAC on their diocesan activities. Out of the all the diocese, only two upheld the responsibilities by responding to the e-mails with a list of activities.
 - c. **President, Hiba Ojaimi**— Remarks over Laney's report. She stresses that us teens need to really work on responding to our e-mails, which takes minimal amounts of our time.

- XIV. **FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) North America** Katrina Bitar is the president of the YES (Youth Equipped to Serve) ministry in North America. The ministry of YES, a branch of FOCUS North America, is designed to provide local parishes and youth workers with the resources necessary to involve junior and senior high students in local community service and short-term mission projects. YES is not out to conquer the poverty, but unite the gap between the rich and the poor. We are not a community organization, but we are a service learning program, acting as real human beings interacting with our neighbors. There is a four step curriculum used to educate the teens during their participation: expose (interactive curriculum), engage (local and cross-cultural service projects), equip (leadership development projects), and entrust (student led missions). The ultimate goal is to raise a generation that will choose Christ, love their neighbors, and say YES to serve their community.
- XV. **Al- Kafaat** Hiba Ojaimi makes a motion to help out Al Kafaat by help sponsoring a booth at the Archdiocese National Convention in Chicago, July 2011. Jake Rinvelt accepts the motion and Dana Zawahri seconds it.
- XVI. Laney Wagoner moves to make a motion that NAC will have an advertisement in the Archdiocese Journal at the convention. Jake Rinvelt accepts the motion and Anees Mokhiber seconds it. The vote is unanimous.
- a. **CrossRoad presentation:** A video about CrossRoad was presented. CrossRoad is a summer program for current high school Juniors and Seniors at Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology where teens learn about their faith and life callings. Laney Wagoner, Jason Ioannides, Tim Markatos, and Anees Mokhiber spoke on their experiences at CrossRoad. They mention how it is life changing, a touching experience, and helps you understand what Orthodoxy is. At the end of the day you learn about yourself and reflect on your experiences.
 - b. **Saint Katherine College** Lindsey Buhler speaks about the opening of the new Orthodox College, Saint Katherine's. Saint Katherine College is the first independent Orthodox Liberal Arts and Sciences College. This college is not a seminary, but it emphasizes undergraduate degrees with an Orthodox foundation upon graduation. The college is affordable, with small learning environments and committed and experienced Orthodox professors. All of my passion comes from integrating your education path into our Orthodox life.
- XVII. Lunch Break- Continuous Meeting was re-opened after Lunch in prayer by Fr. Antony Bahou
- XVIII. **Saint Katherine College** Lindsey Buhler continued her discussion on Saint Katherine College and answered questions. She stressed the small class size and passed around a contact sheet to help spread the word about St. Katherine's. She is able to visit Parishes and PLC's to get the word out.
- XIX. **Involvement in Archdiocesan and Diocesan Events** Laney Wagoner talks about the Parish Life Conferences and how important it is to get teens involved with the Bible Bowl and the

Oratorical Festival. She also points out the Creative Arts Festival and how that is also important and to get participation. She asks if there are any questions about PVC and Hiba Ojaimi asked if there were questions regarding OCCHY, both topics are moved to a later discussion.

- XX. **Special Olympics** Fr. Anthony gives the financial report for Special Olympics and discusses Special Olympics Awareness Day Collection. Special Olympics Camp applications are available online. Fr. Anthony discussed the dates for the camp in August and details for the schedule of camp. He encourages all officers to apply for the experience.
- XXI. **Fr. Joseph** encourages the officers to read *Letter to St. Lidia* and asked Lindsey Buhler to discuss her experiences in a non-Orthodox college. Lindsey Buhler gives snapshots of her experiences to help us better understand the important of our faith in college. She mentions how she struggled by not speaking up for her faith which privatized her spirituality. Fr. Joseph also states how an Orthodox setting will hopefully help with the environment teens grow in. The officers who attend college speak on their experiences with temptations and the struggle they face with their faith.
- XXII. **Presenting Yourself a Leader: Part Two** Elizabeth Mamey continues her presentation with SOYO on a parish level. She says we are here as leaders to be resources and better SOYO on a parish level, and we are here to help and be their resource. Leadership Training is for feedback and to learn from each other. How can we be the best resource for others? We have to know how to help and get the teens resources to become a successful SOYO. Meeting with a parish makes a personal connection. We must put ourselves on their personal level so we will be able to have an introductory meeting with them, talking to the parents, and build connections with the church and teens. The work we do as leaders is service for our teens to get them involved. We must stay on top of our large parishes to keep them involved. Communication is also important in being successful, stressing conference calls once a month to set realistic goals. You have to be persistent with your board to make sure everyone is following through with their responsibilities. A lot of parishes don't have help with SOYO and we must follow through with communication. We must make our parishes aware of how to start a SOYO.
- XXIII. **Fr. Joseph** discusses how it is important to be aware of how we speak with the use of "like, so, and um." When we are aware of how we are speaking people can hear us better and we come across more professionally. He wants us to work on how we speak so what we say comes across more powerfully and better presents us as leaders.
- XXIV. **Hiba Ojaimi** mentions that the next time we will be together is Leadership Training at the Archdiocese Convention in Chicago and we must be mindful that we are leaders and aware of how we present ourselves. Fr. Joseph lets us know that the funds each diocese gives to the Youth Worker Fund will be split to help fund Leadership training. Out of the \$1,500.00 given to the Youth Worker Fund by each diocese will split the amount into \$1,000.00 to the Youth Worker Fund and \$500.00 to the fund Leadership Training. It is mentioned that those diocese that can afford to pay the \$1,500.00 to the Youth Workers Fund and an addition

\$500.00 for Leadership Training have that choice. Anees Mokhiber makes a motion to split the annual \$1,500.00 for the Youth Worker Fund by giving \$500.00 to Leadership Training and \$1,000.00 to the Youth Worker Fund. Jonathan Sourial seconds the motion. The motion is passed.

XXV. **Closing Prayer** led by Fr. Anthony and the meeting is adjourned by President Hiba Ojaimi at 3:36pm.