

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.