

MARCH IS ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S MONTH

(March 2024)

I am glad that I can speak to all of you today on behalf of Ss. Peter and Paul's chapter of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly tell you about the important focus for our 2024 PROJECT, "Establishing an Endowment Fund for Our Beloved Widowed Clergy Wives."

This year's Antiochian Women Project seeks to honor our widowed clergy wives for the years of selfless service they have given to our Archdiocese. Our love for them and our deep respect have moved us to establish a dedicated Endowment Fund, from which the yearly dividends will be distributed among them. The amount of financial support we can offer each year will directly depend on the amount of funding we raise for this year's Project. So, let's show our heartfelt support for these well-deserving ladies and inaugurate this Endowment fund with a generous financial base.

Metropolitan SABA, in his letter to the Antiochian Women, wrote the following, "This year, your North American Board is focused on the needs of our priests' widows, and I am overjoyed to bless this as your annual project. As we approach Great Lent, with its many services and other responsibilities for our priests, let us not forget how their wives make this ministry possible: the priest is able to conduct services, to teach us, to hear our confessions, and all the rest because his wife manages so many other family needs; moreover, priests' wives themselves bless our parishes as gifted choir directors, teachers, organizers, and counselors and in so many other capacities. Let us show gratitude for all these blessings by remembering these women in their retirement—all the more so, since caring for widows has been laid down as a test of true faith. For the scriptures declare this: "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27)"

Of course, fundraising for the annual NAB Project is not our only focus during March. This is Women's Month in the North American Archdiocese where we recognize the contributions of the women in our parish. If you are 18 years old or older and a member of this parish, you are an Antiochian Woman. We thank each of you for the hard work you do to support all the ministries and activities of this parish. You truly are the backbone that keeps the parish on track, and we thank you for your efforts.

Finally, I would ask for your prayers for our Antiochian Women in this parish, our diocese and across North America. We thank all of you for your generous support. May God bless this parish, and the work of the Antiochian Women. Amen. ♦