Maintaining a Strong Philoptochos Chapter

Opening:

- Welcome everyone
- If a priest is present ask to open with a prayer
- Introduce myself and Helen (Parish President, Metropolis Board, Parish)
- We are going to discuss collaborative efforts to increase participation in Philoptochos within your parish. Whether you already have a chapter, your chapter is not active or you’re interested in starting a chapter in your parish

Ask everyone to stand up:

- Stay standing if you’ve heard of Philoptochos
- Stay standing if you know what Philoptochos does
- Stay standing if your parish has a Philoptochos chapter
- Stay standing if you’ve participated in a Philoptochos event
- Stay standing if you have a Philoptochos chapter and you know who the president is
- Stay standing if you are a Philoptochos member

**Remarks of who remains standing!**
Does everyone know what Philoptochos is and does? Its mission?

- In short, the Philoptochos Mission is: To promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach; to preserve the sanctity of life and family; and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions
- The very beginnings of Philoptochos can be traced to the late 1800s but Philoptochos was officially founded by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of blessed memory in 1931. From its inception, Archbishop Athenagoras charged Philoptochos not only with assisting the needy in their communities, but also planning family events with music, education lectures and performances
- One of the largest woman’s Philanthropic organizations in the Nation

Qualities of a Strong Philoptochos Chapter:

- Keeping our faith at the center of all that we do
- Lead by example
- Seek the guidance of your parish priest, your Metropolis president, a Metropolis board member in your parish
- Pray together and for each other, at the beginning of a meeting, ask if there are any prayer requests and then ask everyone there to keep the request in their personal prayers
- Be open to new ideas and opportunities
- Everything doesn’t have to be on a grand scale – do not compare your chapter to other chapters or the past
- New chapters – start out small, if you do not have the funds for every National and Metropolis commitments – send what you can. (Can relate our story of giving $10.00 to each commitment and each year gradually increased our amounts)
- Engages younger members or tech savvy members. Give members an opportunity to serve and to use the gifts that God has given them to be a blessing to others
• Have fun events - a wine night, a night out to dinner, visit a monastery; foster relationships with your sisters and brothers in Christ – not everything has to be a fundraiser
• Report the successful outcome of your efforts to your community and remember the THANK everyone involved

**Philoptochos is the philanthropic right arm of the church but without collaborative efforts with the parish priest, parish council and our membership we would not be able to maintain a strong parish chapter

Support from our Clergy and our Parish Council

Within our Philoptochos bylaws it states that we promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council. The Parish Priest shall act as the spiritual advisor of the chapter.

Parish Priest:

• Your priest as your spiritual advisor keeps you grounded in the faith with decisions and upcoming projects
• Gift your priest an associate membership if he isn’t already a member
• Encourage your parish priest(s) to attend events. Ask them to open and close the event with a prayer along with sharing their remarks
• Create a positive, respectful relationship between the priest and the chapter, along with other leadership, so communication remains open

Pause – does anyone have other insights?
Parish Council:

- Having parish council members that are also a Philoptochos member/associate member produces a positive impact
- Working together with your parish council reinforces our church and Philoptochos’ common purpose to promote church, family and culture
- Have a liaison to the parish council, keeping everyone informed that way conflicts or misunderstandings can be avoided
- The chapter and parish council works together to have events for the entire parish, including youth, not just members

Pause – are there others ways to involve the parish council

Fostering relationships with members and associate members:

Who can become a member:

- Members are women 18 and older
- Associate members are: A non-Greek Orthodox woman married to a Greek Orthodox man; Greek Orthodox man, A non-Greek Orthodox man married to a Greek Orthodox woman
- If you have a chapter – how many associate members do you have? Currently our chapter has 11 associate members of which 10 are men, including our priest Father George
How do we foster relationships with our members/associate members?

- Mentor new members - pair up with some of your veteran members to ensure a welcoming environment
- Personally invite those in the parish who are not members to a meeting/event
- Spend time pursuing relationships, get to know your members, to understand them
- Focus on the next generation – offer membership to graduating students 18 and over, or a new member of the parish
- A man or non-Orthodox man/woman may feel uncomfortable joining your chapter, assure them that their gifts will be acknowledged and you welcome what they have to offer
- Bringing associate membership to light encourages men and women to come together in a comfortable environment

Pause – Thoughts?

**Short video

To wrap this up I hope that you can see the importance of a strong Philoptochos chapter working in collaboration with your parish priest, parish council and members. “One Faith, One Body, One Family”

Because Philoptochos = Faith in Action

Thank you!

Questions – Discussion??