

Renewing<sup>the</sup>  
Male and Female  
Diaconate<sup>in the</sup>  
ORTHODOX  
CHURCH

*A Pan-Orthodox Conference*  
October 6-7, 2017  
St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church  
4949 Alton Parkway  
Irvine, California 92604

This conference will examine the theology, history, and purpose of the diaconate; both male and female. It will include four sessions: the present state of the diaconate; the ways men and women are engaged in diaconal service today; the opportunities to engage with both clergy and faithful on rejuvenation of the male and female diaconate; and the current challenges and future possibilities of the diaconate for the building up of the body of Christ.

**FRIDAY, October 6**  
**7 to 9:30 pm**

**Keynote address** by **Rev. Archdeacon John Chryssavgis**, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on the “The Missing Link: A Fresh Look at the Diaconate”

Reception to follow

**SATURDAY, October 7**  
**8:00 am to 5 pm**

Welcome: AnnMarie Mecera, President of St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess  
Prayer Service: **Rev. Father Steven Tsihliis**

**Session One “The State of the Diaconate Today”**

Introductions and moderator: **Rev. Deacon Dan Cunningham**

Panelists:

**Dr. James Skedros**, Dean, Professor of Byzantine Studies and Early Christianity at Holy Cross School of Theology, and Director of the GOA Diaconate Program

**Rev. Father Anthony Roeber**, Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies at Penn State and Spiritual Director to Deacons in AOCA Mid-Atlantic

**Rev. Father Alexander Rentel**, Professor of Canon Law and Byzantine Studies at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary

**Session Two “Serving the Body of Christ: Men and Women Engaged in Diaconal Work Today”**

Introductions and moderator: **Teva Regule, Ph.D.** (candidate), St. Phoebe Center Board Member

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Panelists:

**Dr. Demetra Velisarios Jaquet**, Greek Orthodox pastoral counselor, spiritual director, and chaplain *on Pastoral Counseling*

**Rev. Protodeacon Peter Danilchick**, Orthodox Church in America; Member, Secretariat of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA; Trustee of St. Vladimir's Seminary *on Administration and Governance*

**Rev. Deacon Paul Cherkas**, Graduate of St. Stephen's House of Studies, serving the Ukrainian Orthodox Church *on Hospice and Homebound*

### **Session Three "Engaging the Clergy and Faithful About the Diaconate"**

Introductions and Moderator: **Rev. Protodeacon Peter Danilchick**

Presentation on Orthodox Bishops and Synods: "Synods and Church Order: Testing the Spirits,"

**Rev. Deacon Nicholas Denysenko**, Director of The Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University, Associate Professor of Theological Studies

Presentation on Engaging with Clergy and Faithful: **Gust Mecera and Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost**, St. Phoebe Center Board Members

### **Session Four "Current Challenges and Future Possibilities of the Diaconate"**

Introductions and moderator: **Dr. Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos**, St. Phoebe Center Board Member

Panel One: Benefits and Difficulties of Ordaining Women Deacons

Benefits: **Dr. Valerie A. Karras**, Professor of church history and patristics

Difficulties: **Rev. Protodeacon Brian Patrick Mitchell**, St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Washington, DC

Panel Two: Benefits and Difficulties of Ordaining Male Deacons

Benefits: **Rev. Father Michael Courey**, St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Redondo Beach, CA

Difficulties: *Not yet confirmed*