

# St. Phoebe Center

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## FOR THE DEACONESS

### RENEWING THE MALE AND FEMALE DIACONATE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Pan-Orthodox Conference  
October 6-7, 2017

St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine, California  
<http://orthodoxdeaconess.org>

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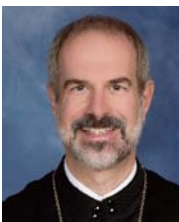
### SPEAKERS



**Reverend Archdeacon John Chryssavgis, Ph.D.** is the author of *Remembering and Reclaiming Diakonia: The Diaconate Yesterday and Today*, a definitive book on the diaconate. He earned his doctorate in patristics at Oxford University and co-founded St. Andrew's Theological College in Sydney, Australia where he also taught at the University of Sydney. He has taught at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and the University of Balamand in Lebanon. As archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, he serves as the environmental advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch.



**Reverend Deacon Paul Cherkas** was ordained to the diaconate in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 2013 after completing St. Stephen's House of Studies Certificate Program. He recently completed the Pastoral Program at St. Sophia Ukrainian Theological Seminary. He and his wife Pani Mary Ann minister to shut-ins, and will receive training to care for those in hospice. They have taught marriage preparation classes, and Deacon Paul plans to extend his ministry to orphanages in Ukraine.



**Reverend Father Michael Courey, D.M.** is the priest of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Redondo Beach, California, where he has trained and worked with a full-time, paid deacon for the past twelve years. Father Michael serves on the Advisory Board of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute. He received an M.Div. from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and a D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is also an author and iconographer.



**Reverend Protodeacon Peter Danilchick**, while working for corporations overseas, spent almost half of his forty years of diaconal service in parishes in Japan, Singapore, Australia, Germany, and Hong Kong. His book, *Thy Will Be Done: Strategic Leadership, Planning, and Management for Christians*, includes a chapter entitled, "Service: Leadership of the Deacon." He is Liaison to Committees of the

Secretariat of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA, and a Trustee of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary.



**Reverend Deacon Nicholas Denysenko, Ph.D.** is the Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, where he also holds the position of Assistant Professor of Theological Studies, Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts. He is the author of "A Liturgical Theology of Primacy" in *Primacy in the Church: The Office of Primate and the Authority of Councils*. Deacon Nicholas received his doctoral degree from The Catholic University of America and M.Div. from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. He has taught at The Catholic University of America, George Washington University, and at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.



**Dr. Demetra Velisarios Jaquet**, has taught Religious Studies and was a Pastoral Counselor/Spiritual Director, a Board Certified Chaplain, and a Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education. She founded Orthodox People Together and sponsored four conferences on Orthodox unity. She also founded the Women's Orthodox Ministries and Education Network. She was an Orthodox representative at three European World Council of Churches conferences and at several interfaith conferences of women theologians in America.



**Valerie A. Karras, Th.D., Ph.D.** has been a professor of church history and patristics at several universities, including Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. She has been a member of the steering committees of the Eastern Orthodox Studies Group and the History of Christianity Section for the American Academy of Religion. She has published articles related to the diaconate, including "Female Deacons in the Byzantine Church" in Cambridge's *Church History* and "The Liturgical Functions of Consecrated Women in the Byzantine Church" in *Theological Studies*.



**Jenni Malyon, M.A.** is a County Jail and Juvenile Detention Chaplain in Whatcom and Skagit Counties in northern Washington State. She holds an M.A. in Applied Theology from Regent College of Vancouver, British Columbia, and was formerly a chaplain to those struggling with addiction in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, one of the most drug-riddled populations in North America.



**Very Reverend Father Alexander Rentel, S.E.O.D.** is Director of the M.Div. Program, Assistant Professor of Canon Law and Byzantine Studies, and The John and Paraskeva Skvir Lecturer in Practical Theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. He is an M.Div. graduate of St. Vladimir's, and he completed his doctoral work at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. Most recently, he participated in the meeting of Orthodox Scholars at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in January 2016.



**Very Reverend Father Anthony Gregg Roeber, Ph.D.** is Spiritual Advisor for the annual Antiochian Deacons Retreat, and Professor of Early Modern History and Religious Studies at Penn State University. He received B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Denver and he holds a second M.A. and Ph.D. from Brown University. He also completed an M.A. in Orthodox Theology from the Antiochian

House of Studies and the University of Balamand in Lebanon. Father Anthony served as a deacon for eight years prior to his ordination to the priesthood.



**James Skedros, Ph.D.** is Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and Director of its Diaconate Program. A graduate of Holy Cross, he received his Th.D. from Harvard Divinity School in the History of Christianity. He was Assistant Professor of Orthodox Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. His research areas include popular religious practices in Late Antiquity and Byzantium and history of the Byzantine church.

*Note: Orthodox jurisdictions have varying conventions of address for deacons: some as “deacons” and some as “fathers.” Without intending disrespect, for the purposes of clarity during this conference deacons are listed here with “Deacon” as their title, and priests are listed as “Father.”*

## PRESIDING PRIEST & MODERATORS

### Presiding Priest



**Reverend Father Steven Tsichlis** is priest of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California. He earned his M.Div. from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and S.T.M. from Yale Divinity School. He is the coordinator of the Archdiocesan Diaconate Program for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. He studied at the University of Missouri, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Yale Divinity School, and Fordham University.

### Moderators



**Reverend Deacon Daniel Cunningham** is parish deacon of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California. Deacon Daniel was ordained after completing the Diaconate Program at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In addition to serving at liturgies and sacraments, Deacon Daniel leads the parish prosphora baking ministry and takes Holy Communion to the sick and elderly. He continues to work full-time in his lay-profession in the software engineering industry.



**Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D.** is a board member of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess and a scholar of Orthodox theology. She received her doctorate in theology from the University of Virginia and is a Professor of Theology at Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary.



**AnnMarie Mecera** is founder of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess. She became passionate about the female diaconate after researching the topic for a paper she presented at the University of Leeds in 1998 and years of involvement in the Orthodox Church. With a degree in journalism from Ohio University, AnnMarie has worked in the marketing field for thirty-six years. She has written several religious education books and has served on various Orthodox Church in America diocesan

and parish committees.



**Gust Mecera** is a board member of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess, and has been a construction manager with the McDonald's Corporation for thirty-one years. He served on the Parish Council as Building Committee Chair at St. Gregory of Nyssa Orthodox Church in Columbus, Ohio for over twenty-five years and was a Church School teacher for the high school class for eight years.



**Teva Regule, PhD** (candidate) is a board member of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess, and for the past twenty years has focused on the ministry of women in the Church. She is the Managing Editor of the St. Nina Quarterly, a publication dedicated to exploring the ministry of women in the Orthodox Church. She has also served as an Orthodox consultant for a number of consultations on women and men in the church sponsored by the World Council of Churches. She completed her M.Div. degree at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and is currently a doctoral candidate in liturgical theology at Boston College.