

**Department of Christian Education & Curriculum**  
**2013 Report**

**WOMEN'S RETREAT**

After a five year hiatus, the Annual Women's Retreat was held on Saturday, August 17. Eighty-one women from various jurisdictions throughout the diocese attended the Women's Retreat, sponsored by the Department of Religious Education of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, at St. Tikhon's Seminary.

The retreat opened with a prayer and a welcome by Fr. Sergius , Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery. Mother Magdalena of the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA, discussed the importance of Prayer in our everyday lives, and taking time for ourselves. She also answered questions from the participants. She also spoke on some of the challenges women face on a daily basis.

At the conclusion of the morning session, His Grace, Bishop Mark, administrator for the Diocese of Eastern PA, spoke to the women about we are never too old to learn. His Grace, lead the women in prayer before lunch and then joined them for the meal.

During the lunch break, the women were able to visit the Monastery Church and shop at the St. Tikhon's Bookstore.

Mat. Valerie Zahirsky, Chairperson of the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America and OCEC Representative, spoke about; **“Godly Women Who Were Not Afraid to Speak.** Mat. spoke about many of the many women saints who gave their lives for others.

The day concluded at 2:45 with a survey completed by the women. The overwhelming majority of women would like future retreats at St. Tikhon's because of the ability to spend time at the Monastery Church.

Some topics the women would like discussed at future retreats include: Saints of the Church, Sacraments, Role of Women in the Church, Moral Issues, and Meeting Our Spiritual Needs.

The goal of the Department is to hold an Annual Retreat. However, in order for this to be even more successful, cooperation by ALL parishes in the diocese would be greatly appreciated.

Plans are being made for a 2014 Women's Retreat.

**2013 -Memorial Day Pilgrimage** – Thirty-five children ranging from ages 3-16 participated in the activities on Memorial Day. Many of the children this year were seven and younger.

**Participation Statistics:**

10 - Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern PA.

11 - Diocese of New York/New Jersey

4 –Non-Orthodox

I also presented a *Common Sense Approach to Church School Education* at the Parish Ministries Conference at Marymount College from July 11-13.

Additional Parish Education materials are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.

If you have any suggestions, questions, or comments for the Department of Christian Education, please contact me at: [mariapr22@hotmail.com](mailto:mariapr22@hotmail.com)

Respectfully submitted,

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