



# The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

## The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

*Works of The Order in Action!*

### **LEARNING CHRISTIAN LIVING, THROUGH THE ORTHODOX CAMPING EXPERIENCE**

Over the next few months, young people will be registering for one of the eight summer camps in our Archdiocese. If you know any of these young people who have been to camp before, you know that they have started their countdowns to the first day of camp, they spend hours on Skype and Facebook talking to their camp friends throughout the Archdiocese, and they go into a post-camp depression when they return home from camp.

So what is it about the camp experience that makes our young people love it so much? Certainly, there are many things that contribute to this experience: the friends, the activities, the counselors and staff, and being in the outdoors, to name a few. But the thing that makes camp so special is the camp environment which presents a living experience of the Orthodox faith. In 1978, the Archdiocese purchased the Antiochian Village, and His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP appointed the Archmandrite Fr. John Namie (+ 2001) of blessed memory as the first Camp Director. Thanks to the vision and leadership of these two great men, this mission of presenting a *living experience* of the Orthodox faith in the camp setting has become the standard at all of our camp programs in the Antiochian Archdiocese.

When asked why camper's come to camp, Fr. John Namie responded, "...[*Christian living*] that's why people come here: to learn Christian living by doing it. It's the best way to learn. The best way to learn is by doing things. When you come to the Village you get to do everything in a Christian fashion. You get to love each other, and that means that you get to share with each other your life. ...We get to pray, both privately and in church. We learn church hymns, we have a good time at our meals, and we play a lot and play hard. It's great to be at camp. It's one of the greatest experiences that a young person can have."<sup>i</sup>

In today's society of busy schedules, instant communication, personal independence, and an abundance of choices, our summer camps offer a much needed break to our young people. Camp offers a simple lifestyle where the focus is to live in community as Christian brothers and sisters. There is only one option for meals, church services are offered twice daily, and 8-10 campers live together in one cabin sharing a bathroom. Yet it is a haven of joy for our young people.



*Campfire at Camp St. Nicholas,  
Frazier Park, CA*



*Camp St. Raphael, Wagoner, OK*



*Camper Receiving Blessing,  
Camp St. George, Cedar Rapids, IA*



*Fishing at Camp Transfiguration,  
Arden, ON*

Our Archdiocese is blessed with eight summer camp programs for our young people (*see complete listing on the following page, or visit [www.antiochian.org/camps](http://www.antiochian.org/camps)*). Each year, over 2,000 young people attend our camp programs. In the summer of 2011, a partial scholarship or full scholarship from The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch was awarded to 773 campers from all over the Archdiocese who attended one of our eight camp programs. That is more than one out of every three of those that attended camp who received a scholarship. The Order has been extremely generous with their scholarship support for all eight of our camps, providing \$175,000.00 annually in camp scholarships. They have made a commitment to help every camper that needs financial assistance so that no one will miss out on the camp experience due to financial reasons.

Our camping programs have become a vital part of the spiritual growth of the young people in our Archdiocese. Camp provides not only a place for them to learn *about* our

faith, but also to learn how to *live* our faith. Without the support from The Order, many of our young people would not have this experience.

On behalf of each of our camps, their counselors and staff, and all the campers who attend camp, we thank The Order for their generous support to make sure that no camper misses out on the camp experience.

Khalil Samara, Vice-Chairman  
Antiochian Archdiocese, Department of Camping

*For more information on The Order, please visit [www.orderofstignatius.org](http://www.orderofstignatius.org)*

***Listing of Camp Programs in the Antiochian Archdiocese***

Antiochian Village  
Ligonier, PA  
Very Reverend Anthony Yazge, Director  
[www.avcamp.org](http://www.avcamp.org)

Camp St. Thekla  
Greenville, SC  
Reverend Philip Rogers, Director  
[www.campstthekla.org](http://www.campstthekla.org)

Camp St. George  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Very Reverend Patrick Kinder, Director  
[www.campstgeorge.org](http://www.campstgeorge.org)

St. John Summer Camp  
Willow, AK  
Kevin Dougherty, Director  
[www.stjohnalaska.org/summercamp.html](http://www.stjohnalaska.org/summercamp.html)

Camp St. Nicholas  
Frazier Park, CA  
Katarina Bitar, Director  
[www.campstnicholas.com](http://www.campstnicholas.com)

St. Mary Summer Camp  
Newport, WA  
Barbara Schaefer, Director  
[www.campstmary.org](http://www.campstmary.org)

Camp St. Raphael  
Wagoner, OK  
Reverend James Shadid, Director  
[www.campstraphael.org](http://www.campstraphael.org)

Camp Transfiguration  
Arden, ON  
Alex Younes, Director  
[www.camptransfiguration.org](http://www.camptransfiguration.org)

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<sup>i</sup> Quoted from an interview of Fr. John Namie in 1998 conducted by Mr. Constantine Nasr.