



## **Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States**

### **Monthly Message for the Priests Wives**

**September 2022**

## **Superficial Relationships**

My Dearest Sister in Christ,

It's another Sunday morning. You're walking around the church grounds after Divine Liturgy.

I want you to count on your fingers... How many people are you greeting quickly?

How many people do you nod at, shake hands with, and smile at—but nothing more?

Probably more people than you have fingers!

No matter how big or small your church is, you likely greet a lot of people without ever getting to know them.

Last month, we talked about proxy interactions—those conversations we have with people who try to reach our husbands through us.

This month, I want to talk about superficial interactions.

As the wife of the priest, I often struggle to fit in more than a quick greeting with people at church before my (or their) responsibilities get in the way.

We say hi and bye. We ask, “How are you?” without a chance to really listen. And they do the same.

Because of this, we never develop any depth to our relationship. It stays at the surface.

How can we deal with this kind of interaction?

First, we need to understand that it's normal and healthy to have a large number of superficial relationships. It's to be expected in any large community.

We shouldn't grow disheartened or discouraged to find that we have a lot of superficial interactions. Each of those interactions is important and can be enough to show some people kindness and love.

Not only that, but each interaction is an opportunity for a relationship. We need to be willing to invest quality time in some of those relationships to see if they can become deeper friendships.

For example, go to that baby shower, baptism, or birthday party. Sit at a particular table and let the conversation grow in a healthy direction.

Take it a further step and ask a prospective friend out to coffee or to lunch. Meet her in a different environment where you can both open up more.

Only with this time investment can we identify the people who can become friends.

As it says in the Book of Proverbs, the person “who has friends must himself be friendly” (Proverbs 18:24a).

This doesn’t just apply to our congregation members, of course! This can apply to coworkers or fellow priest-wives. It only takes a small investment of time in the beginning to find the people worth investing your heart.

So, my sister, remember that it’s okay for relationships to be superficial with most people. And remember that all it takes is a little investment of time for a superficial relationship to develop into a true relationship, with some trust and depth.

Then, we might find that friend described in the rest of that verse, the friend who “sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24b).

Your sister in Christ,

Ni-Ni