

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF

Very Rev. Father John Badeen

Alfred John Badeen was born in Damascus, Syria, April 9, 1927 to John M. Badeen and Farida Abou-Sha'aya Badeen, naturalized American citizens living abroad. Alfred attended St. John Orthodox Parochial School in Damascus until his parents returned to their home in the United States, in McAlester, Oklahoma, in December 1934. He attended schools in McAlester, Oklahoma and graduated from McAlester High School in 1943. He worked briefly and then enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Following his training, he served aboard a navy patrol craft in the Pacific and was later transferred to the U.S.S. Rooks, a destroyer in the Asiatic Pacific, on which he served to the conclusion of World War II. He was discharged in January of 1946. He decided to continue his education and attend Louisiana Polytechnic Institute. He received a B.A. degree in 1949, having majored in history and political science.

While working in Kansas City, Mo., during the latter part of the summer of 1948, he met Louise Hale, and they were married after a brief courtship. He studied law at the University of Kansas City from 1949 to 1953. He worked briefly as a law clerk for a Kansas City law firm, but decided against the practice of law as a career, preferring instead business management; specifically in the field of Medical Administration. He was appointed business manager of the Kansas City Medical Center in January, 1954. At the same time and through 1955, he took courses at State University of Iowa, Extension Division, in Medical Administration and Clinic Management. In 1956 he was offered the position of Administrator of Downtown Hospital in Kansas City. He held both posts until he resigned for health reasons in 1958.

After a brief rest, he was offered a position in top-level management training by the Monarch Life Insurance Co. After a year's training, both in the company's home office in Springfield, Mass., and in the field, he was assigned the post of Managing General Agent of the company's Oklahoma Operations, with offices in Oklahoma City, Okla. A series of corporate mergers brought together the Monarch Life, Springfield Fire and Marine, Michigan Fire and Marine, Standard of Tulsa, and New England Life, as the Springfield Group, Badeen was assigned to oversee the consolidation of these companies' operations in the State of Oklahoma, with 278 independent agencies, 27 direct sales agents, claims department, and consolidation of accounts billing.

As busy as his life was with his work, and a family with three children, there was dissatisfaction in his life. He felt he was meant for something else. During this period he became a very close friend of a new priest assigned to Oklahoma City's St. Elijah parish, Rev. Gregory Ofiesh. He and the young priest discussed his restlessness and dissatisfaction on numerous occasions. Ofiesh encouraged him to dig deeper into Orthodox Theology and the Church. During a visit of Metropolitan Antony Bashir to Oklahoma City, the Late Metropolitan added his voice to that of the priest. At the same time, he encouraged him to pursue deeper studies. Not long after, the Rt. Rev. Ellis Khouri, Protosyngelos of the Antiochian Archdiocese, visited Oklahoma City. He called Badeen, told him he wanted to see him. The late Metropolitan had asked him to meet with Badeen. It was this meeting that decided the course and direction of Alfred John Badeen's life. Metropolitan Antony was contacted, and a special program of theological studies was arranged. Rev. Gregory Ofiesh, Rev. Constantine Chokanis, and later Rev. Spyridon Makris supervised and instructed Badeen in this special program approved by the Metropolitan and St. Vladimir's Seminary. This course of study spanned the fall of 1959 until the summer of 1961. The Metropolitan called Badeen and told him he would like to ordain him to the priesthood. Though his was what he had decided to do with his life, still doubts filled him. A few weeks later the Rt. Rev. Ellis Khouri was again visiting Oklahoma City. He called Badeen and invited him over. When he arrived, he found Fr. Ofiesh with Fr. Ellis. Some two hours later, with all doubt removed, Badeen returned to his office and typed out his letter of resignation, effective September 1, 1961. He was Ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Antony on November 18, 1961, in Cleveland, Ohio. He was sponsored by Rev. Fr. Philip Saliba.

He was assigned pastorates in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Beaumont, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; and in August 1985 returned home to Beaumont.

During the years of Father John's priesthood, his accomplishments have been quite numerous. Within the Antiochian Archdiocese, he organized the first Regional Teen SOYO, in 1962, in the Southwest Region. He instituted the Catechism Bowl, in 1963, in the Southwest Region. This has now become a regular event at our Parish Life Conferences, nationally. He was instrumental in initiating the organization of Teen SOYO on the Archdiocesan level, and drafted the first Constitution and By-Laws for the National Organization, on instruction of Metropolitan Philip.

and political parties on the State, County, and Local levels. In 1975, he was appointed by Mayor Roman Gribbs, City of Detroit, to the Bicentennial Commission. He also served as a member of the Board of United Community Services. He was Chairman of the Wayne County Community College Foundation and was on the Advisory Council of Wayne State University College of Education. He served as President of the Eastern Orthodox Churches of Metropolitan Detroit three terms and also served as President of the Eastern Orthodox Catechetical Association for three terms.

Some of the Special Honors bestowed upon Father John include the following: Elevated to rank and dignity of Archpriest by Metropolitan Philip Saliba in 1972. Elevated to Proto-Presbyteros with a second Pectoral Cross, by Patriarch Elias IV in 1974. Received an Outstanding Service Award by the Moslem Community of the Islamic Mosque of Dearborn Michigan in 1973. Designated Man of the Year by Detroit Chapter of Arab-American University Graduates in 1975. Received the Distinguished Leadership Award by the Ramallah Club in 1977, and the Distinguished Service Award from the Arab Community Council for Economic and Social Services in 1982. The Michigan Speaker Pro Tem Community and Civic Affairs Award in 1984. The City of Detroit Common Council Distinguished Service Award in 1985 and the Wayne County Executive Community Service Award in 1985. Also in 1985, the Michigan Governor's Special Certificate of Tribute and the State of Michigan Legislature's Special Tribute Award.

He was appointed to the Constitution Commission of the Archdiocese, serving as secretary of that body, and drafted the present Archdiocese Constitution, the model constitution for use in the parishes and church organizations. He was named to the special committee to prepare the Priest's Guide, which lays down the guidelines for our clergy. He was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the Clergy Retirement program and drafting the By-Laws of same. He was appointed chairman of that commission and has served in that capacity for the past 17 years. He assisted in organizing the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America, at the direction of Metropolitan Philip, and drafted its Constitution and By-Laws. He served as its spiritual Advisor for 10 years. He assisted in organizing the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and on the direction of the Metropolitan, helped in the preparing, and finally, drafting of its Constitution. He was appointed by Metropolitan Philip to the Dialogue Commission with the Orthodox Church in America. During his tenure in Detroit, he worked to obtain Federal financing and then did oversee the construction of the St. George Towers, a 205 unit, high-rise apartment building for the elderly and the handicapped, at a cost of seven and a half million dollars, on 7 acres of land acquired in Clinton Township, Michigan.

His work and accomplishments over the years, on behalf of the Arab-American Community on the national scene, have been noteworthy. He was a founding member, and former member of the national Board of Directors, of the National Association of Arab-Americans. He has spoken extensively throughout the country on behalf of the Arab cause, to promote better understanding. He has spearheaded Arab refugee relief drives in communities where he has been assigned, and assisted movements aimed at alleviating the suffering of these unfortunates. He has worked closely with the many organizations involved in the settlement of immigrants from the Middle East countries, regardless of their religious persuasion and has unselfishly given of his time and resources to assist them in overcoming the problems confronting them in the areas of language, cultural shock, employment, education, child care, immigration and naturalization, and physical and mental health. He was most instrumental in founding the Arab-American and Chaldean Community Social Services Council. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Arab-American Media Society, and the Arab American Anti Discrimination Committee. In 1973, he was appointed by Governor William Milliken, State of Michigan, a member of the Michigan State Fair Campaign Practices Commission. This Commission conducts hearings and attempts to resolve problems arising in the areas of moral ethics in the conduct of campaigns by candidates