

Biography of Father Dimitri Darwich

Fr. Dimitri was born Samer Darwich in Damascus, Syria on August 27th, 1969. He is the seventh of eight children born to Michael and Adiba Darwich. They were all raised in Damascus where they completed Elementary and Secondary Schools. Samer, then, went on to Homs, Syria to obtain a degree in chemistry for two years before training for one year at the Archdiocese of Homs under His Eminence Metropolitan ALEXI (Abd Al Karim) of thrice-blessed memory. In 1991, he journeyed to Lebanon for an interview at the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology at the Balamand University where he was accepted. He returned home to notify his family and met a young math teacher named Ghada Malouf, who was visiting his sister. However, he quickly returned to Lebanon and began a one year language preparatory program for his seminary studies. The program also included four years of theological studies. During his years at the seminary, he participated in inter-Christian dialogues within the Middle East Council of Churches and traveled with his class for a pilgrimage to Mount Athos where he visited and venerated the tomb of St. Demetrius the Myrrh-Bearer located in Thessalonica, Greece. He made the decision to take the name, 'Dimitri,' upon this visit to the Saint's tomb. He returned to Lebanon and completed all his studies in July of 1996. In August of the same year, on his birthday, he became engaged to the young lady he had met years before. They were married on October 3rd, 1996 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Damascus and Samer was quickly ordained to the Holy Diaconate on the Feast of the Archangel Michael on November 8th in Safeta, Syria through the laying on of hands by His Grace Bishop BASILIOS (Nassour) who had trained the young seminarian for 5 years during the summers in many areas of Church life. He was the wise teacher who paved the way for what would be a long relationship between him and the future priest who would later serve under him for 5 years. The newly ordained Deacon Dimitri was recommended immediately by Bishop BASILIOS to be ordained to the Holy Priesthood. On December 13th of the same year, at the hands of His Eminence Metropolitan BOULOS (Bandaly) of Akkar, Dn. Dimitri was ordained a priest and became the Reverend Father Dimitri at St. Elias Orthodox Church in Kafroun, Syria, in the same parish where he would serve the next 5 years. It was Metropolitan BOULOS who sponsored Fr. Dimitri for his entire Seminary career and gave him his blessing to serve an additional 2 parishes in the local diocese of Tartouse and Safeta under His Grace Bishop BASILIOS. As a young priest serving 3 parishes, full-time,

Fr. Dimitri became active in all areas of Church life. He started programs, activities, Bible Studies, constant house visits, and established youth organizations. His energy became evident in all he did and all 3 parishes are bearing fruit to this day! Thank God! During their time in Kafroun, Fr. Dimitri and Khourieh Ghada welcomed two beautiful children, Nicole in 1997 and Andre in 1999. In 2001, Fr. Dimitri received the opportunity to serve in the Archdiocese of North America under His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP and was given the blessing to do so on September 23rd when he arrived in New York. On September 26th, he was assigned by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP to the Virgin Mary Church of Yonkers which was established by His Eminence upon becoming the Metropolitan in 1966. Fr. Dimitri has been serving in Yonkers for the past 5 years and during which, the parish has grown by many families, become active in regional and national programs, and has reestablished youth organizations. The first 3 years were especially difficult for Fr. Dimitri and his family. They lived away from each other due to his family not being able to come to America until 2004. However, this situation created an opportunity where Fr. Dimitri was able to know his new parish and become close to all his families. The Virgin Mary Church quickly became his new family. Fr. Dimitri also participates in inter-Orthodox events, services, and meetings and, also inter-Christian events and services among the Arab Churches located in Yonkers and the New York area. Upon the arrival of his family on October 15th, 2004, Fr. Dimitri spent the first months acquainting his family with several new friends, scores of community members, and their new home. On August 21st, 2006, Fr. Dimitri and Khourieh Ghada welcomed their third child, Nancy. His entire family and parish are set to celebrate the elevation of Reverend Father Dimitri to the Archpriesthood by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP on October 15th, 2006. AXIOS!!!