

## To Our Readers

The idea of a special issue about women in the Church took shape organically from various conversations, writings, ponderings on current events, and other threads of the multicolored tapestry of church life. The immediate catalysts were an effort by a group of Orthodox Christians to encourage women's representation at the Holy and Great Council of Crete, and an essay by Patricia Fann Bouteneff on the blog *Aphaia Resources* about women's leadership in the Church. Subsequent discussions on the relative invisibility of women in the Church—despite their numerical prevalence and many daily contributions—inspired the editors of *The Wheel* to invite Bouteneff to serve as our first guest editor. The energy and expertise with which she approached this formidable project surpassed our most ambitious expectations.

A former academic and corporate chief of staff, Bouteneff is now a strategic communications consultant as well as an independent scholar specializing in folklore and Pontic Greek studies. Her corporate, consulting, and academic work over the last thirty years has maintained a focus on discerning and amplifying women's voices, whether in folk tale repertoires, corporate histories, or religious traditions. She has been active in church communities in Greece, England, Switzerland, and the U.S., and currently serves as parish council president at Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers, New York. Her essay on pilgrimage in Pontic tales was published in issue two of *The Wheel* (Summer 2015).

The editorial board thanks Patricia Fann Bouteneff for serving as guest editor and for creating what we hope will be recognized as an important contribution to ongoing discourse.