



The Torch

The official
publication of the
Midwest Antiochian
Women

February 2011

Antiochian Women *Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest*

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP
Founder



From The Torch Editor... Kh. Jeanette Gallaway

Dear Sisters in Christ: In this Newsletter you are receiving valuable information to keep you up to date

Dates to remember:

Please send the 2010-11 Dues of \$150.00 by Dec.1 to Libbie Kohl, 1414 8th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids IA 52403

May 1, 2011: NAB project monies are due to Libbie Kohl

May 13th – 15th -6th
Annual Midwest Women's
Retreat at Dormition
Monastery

Toledo Diocese of the
Midwest will hold it Annual
Conference June 15th –19th,
2011 in Cleveland. Make
plans to attend.

Archdiocese Convention in
Chicago July 25th – 31st. See
you there.

Pray for the health of:

Fr. Alexander Atty, Dean of
St. Tikhon Seminary

Libbie Kohl, Midwest
Treasurer and Kh. Joanne
Bitar

From Sheryl VanderWagen, President, Midwest Antiochian Women:

Christ is in our midst! He is and always shall be!

Greetings to our Fathers and Sisters in Christ!

I pray that your holidays were filled with fun and blessings. Once again we have seen the New Year in and it is time to begin our work again with renewed energy and openness to God's work in our lives.

In fact, isn't that part of what Theophany is about? We are given a sense of newness, renewal and energy as the priest sprinkles us with the blessed water and we are blessed with the presence of our Lord. I felt recharged and ready to continue the work which I am so blessed to have including serving as your Midwest Antiochian Women president.

In the coming months you will be hearing more about our annual retreat and about our model bylaws and constitution project which comes on the heels of last fall's distribution of the revised Antiochian Women Handbook.

In a recent mailing to all of the chapters, we promoted the NAB project, the building of the Convent of St. Thekla at the Antiochian Village. I pray that you are all undertaking plans to raise funds for the new monastery. You can read about Mother Alexandra's recent pilgrimage to Syria and Lebanon, the Shrine of St. Thekla and several monasteries in the January issue of the Word magazine. This article is a good resource to use when talking about the new monastery at the Antiochian Village.

I trust that by now all of the Midwest chapters have sent 2010-11 dues to our treasurer, Libby Kohl. If your chapter has not yet paid the dues, please use the form in this newsletter and send those to Libby at your earliest convenience. We have been asked by NAB Treasurer, Sherry Abraham-Morrow to send in those funds as soon as possible.

And finally, I would ask that you pray for all of your sisters in Christ. I recently received a notice from NAB President, Cindy Nimey regarding the falling asleep of Matilda Josephs, mother of Kh. Joanne Abdalah of blessed memory and mother-in-law of Right Rev. John Abdalah, spiritual advisor to the NAB Antiochian Women. May her memory be eternal! We have also been asked to pray for Kh. Joanne Bitar (Little Falls, NJ) who is experiencing some health issues. And pray for the recovery our Midwest Treasurer, Libby Kohl who recently underwent surgery in Cedar Rapids, IA.

MIDWEST PROJECT FOR THE NAB PROJECT - UPDATE

We would like to remind everyone that Elaine Shaheen still has baby bibs available. This is our Midwest fundraiser for the NAB Project, the Convent of St. Thekla. We would like to remind everyone who places orders with her that there is a charge for shipping and she needs to be reimbursed for the shipping charges. That will ensure that all the profits from the sale of the bibs are given 100% to the NAB project. Contact Elaine Shaheen at 810-733-8114.

The Midwest Antiochian Women project monies are added to funds received from local parishes for the project and sent in total to the NAB in support of the Convent of St. Thekla.

Congratulations to St. George, W. St. Paul, MN for selling over 35 bibs. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and we encourage other parishes to step up their efforts to sell them as well.

In the next issue of the Torch, we will give an update on the progress of the bib sales to-date.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

At the beginning of the new year we celebrate the very great feast known as the Epiphany or Theophany. This feast is older than the Feast of Christmas. It is a feast that originated in the East; most likely in Egypt.

When I was a child, we called this feast “little Christmas”. We were told how the word Epiphany meant a “manifestation” or an appearance. We were told that it commemorated Our Lord’s manifestation to the Gentiles in the persons of the Three Wise Men or Three Kings.

In the Orthodox Church, this feast is the commemoration of an Epiphany or a Manifestation of God. But it is much more than the manifestation of Christ to the Three Wise men. On this day we recall the Baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan waters. We remember that event because something utterly marvelous occurred on that day.

There was a manifestation, an epiphany. But it was not the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. It was the manifestation of God to the World as a Trinity of Three Divine Persons. On the day Jesus was baptized the voice of the Father was heard. The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. And Jesus of Nazareth was revealed as “the beloved Son” of the Father.

Several years ago, I was showing a visitor around our Church, shortly after the icon on the Baptism of our Lord was installed. He happened to be professor of Religion at Brigham Young University in Utah. It was a friendly encounter. He was a Mormon. He said that he would like to ask me a question. I told him that he could do so. He said “I know that you Orthodox place a great importance on the Trinity. What exactly do you believe? Why do you believe in the Trinity?”

I asked him to look at the icon of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. I told him that the icon depicted something that happened that day. Maybe the most important thing that ever happened in human history. The faith of Orthodox Christians in the Trinity is not based on something that the Fathers of the Church figured out, or that someone thought was a nice idea. Our faith in the Trinity was based not on what was written, but on what happened, on an event. And that event was the revelation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those who were there that day probably did not completely understand what had been revealed. And neither can we. The Trinity is the ultimate mystery of the Godhead. It is a mystery beyond understanding. But it is a mystery that has been revealed to us.

It is true that Jesus was made manifest to the Wise Men. But more important is the fact that the Trinity has been revealed to us. As the troparion of the feast says "When thou O Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was revealed. For the voice of the Father bore witness unto thee, calling thee his beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a Dove, confirmed the truth of his word. O Christ our God who hast revealed thyself and enlightened the world, glory to thee."

In the great feast of the Holy Theophany, God not only reveals Himself to His Creation. He literally steps into it. He who had become flesh for our salvation, immerses himself in the waters of the Jordan. He who was there at the beginning of creation, The Word of God before all ages is baptized in the waters of His creation. He begins his work of making a New Creation. The great gulf, the great separation between God and his creation is now overcome.

On this we have the Great Blessing of Waters. The prayers and hymns associated with the Epiphany are especially beautiful. The prayers of the blessing of the waters contain some of the most beautiful poetry of the Byzantine Services.

Over twenty times we hear what the coming of the Trinity to the world means to the creation. Over and over again we hear that "Today" something has been done.

"Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has descended on the waters..."

"Today the light that never sets has shone....the world is lighted by the Lord"

"Today the stars adorn the universe..."

"Today the uncreated God accepts accepts the laying on of hands by his own creation."

"Today the waters of the Jordan are changed to healing by the presence of the Lord"

"Today the Forerunner draws near to his master...as he witnesses the condescension of God"

"Today paradise has been opened.."

"Today we are delivered from ancient mourning..."

"Today we have escaped from darkness....we have been illumined by the light of the knowledge of God."

"Today the celestials celebrate with the terrestrials."

Today the Lord comes to be baptized to elevate man above..."

Today we have bought the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of heaven has no end."

Yes, we believe in the Trinity. For the Trinity was made manifest on this first Epiphany or Theophany. But we also believe that God has become part of our history in a new way.

"Today thou hast appeared to the universe, O Lord, and thy light has been shed upon us, who praise thee....."

St. George Cathedral Mad Hatter Tea is a Great Success



party. Welcoming the guests the Queen of Hearts, Ann Hughes as the Mad Hatter, and Rabbit. No one was late to this each guest arrived wearing her represented different styles, A luncheon was served that rabbit-shaped, and diamond-shaped finger sandwiches. Accompanying the tea sandwiches were individual vegetable "shooters" and fruit cups. Lady Finger



cookies were served as dessert. Our ladies sipped many different flavors of tea as well as a variety of juices (and Mimosas). Centerpieces were different at each table, which included teapots, flowers, and pink flamingos. The placemats were large playing cards, which also served as the key by which door prizes were awarded to all participants. The tea party concluded by choosing the two best hats from each table, and winners were also awarded prizes. The afternoon passed quickly, and all in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the event, which was held to celebrate and thank the women who work so diligently to serve our church.

The Mad Hatter Tea Party held at St. George Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio, was a great success. The event modeled the tea party in which Alice participated in Wonderland, and was attended by "ladies" from ages 3 to 93. As the ladies entered the "tea room", they were met with decorations representing the theme of Alice's tea



were Andrea Bassett as Howard as Alice, Kathy Ellen Kisov as the White very important date as very best hat. The hats eras, and personalities. included heart-shaped,



Minutes of Fall Meeting held Oct. 2, 2010 in Grand Rapids, MI

A roll call and sign up sheet was passed. Seventeen women from four parishes were present.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by President Sheryl VanderWagen in the library of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Grand Rapids, MI.
2. **OPENING PRAYER:** Spiritual Director Fr. Daniel Daly opened the meeting with the Antiochian Women's prayer.
3. **BISHOP MARK'S COMMENTS:** His Grace arrived shortly after the prayer. He thanked the women for their support of the 12 mission churches in the Midwest Diocese. Forty thousand dollars was distributed to the missions in the last year. Because of the generosity of the people and the organizations—the women, the fellowship and the teens—the missions are thriving, he said. Nine of the missions are located in “big 10” cities where there are college students who attend the churches. The priests are called to minister to these students, even though these young people cannot support the churches. We have an obligation to help these churches (financially). The students want substance, and a church where they can meet any day of the week. They are looking for a priest who can tell them the truth. This is the time when six out of 10 young people are not coming back to the Church after high school graduation; we need to figure out what to do differently to keep them in the Church. Ramona Darmour mentioned her recent visit to the mission in Bowling Green, KY, where Fr. Michael Nassar is priest. His Grace said that, incredibly, there are 24 families there who give above the tithe level because they want a priest so badly. He added that a mission needs a designated place to meet, where they can have more services, where they can meet any day of the week.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

1. **SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Secretary Karen Mann was not present, Roberta Royhab took the minutes. The women silently read the minutes from the July 1 meeting held at the parish life conference in Toledo, OH. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Libbie Kohl, seconded by Margaret Simon to accept, motion carried.
2. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer Libbie Kohl said that the deadline for chapter dues is Dec. 15. Beginning checking account balance (Sept. 1) since the July 1 meeting was \$4,475.14; current balance is \$4,126.94. Recent expenses were cost of baby bibs, \$205.20, (new Midwest project); new Metropolitan PHILIP award pins (\$160.); Fr. Daniel's expenses (\$73.00) from PLC. There was one deposit, for aprons (\$90.) The Kemper Fund has stayed the same, \$4,514.33. His Grace suggested that we review the Kemper Fund. The women agreed to check with an advisor or other women's groups and move the monies to a different fund. Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Margaret Simon, seconded by Francis Sears. Motion approved.
3. **VICE-PRESIDENT/PROJECT:** Kh. Elfriede Daly said that the Convent of St. Thekla at Antiochian Village will again be the annual project of the Antiochian Women in the archdiocese. We will probably do this for several more years. Plans are proceeding but construction has not yet begun. Fr. Daniel told the women that they need to talk about this project in their chapters/parishes. “Talk it up, do something that gets the word out. There may be people who want to contribute to this project; any one can make donations. Do a fundraiser, pass a tray and add to your fundraising on a continuing basis.” Monies from the chapters for the project are due May 1.

4. PUBLIC RELATIONS: Kh. Jeanette Gallaway was not present. She has finished the Midwest newsletter, *The TORCH* and will mail it this week.

FR. DANIEL'S REMARKS: Fr. Daniel discussed "The Mission of the Church". The Church is in the world to carry out the mission given to it by the Lord Himself. The church must carry out the ministries of: 1. **evangelization and witness**; 2. the **sacramental mission of worship and sacrament**; 3. the ministry of **fellowship**; 4. the ministry of **charity**. From time to time in our parishes and in our organizations, things (concerning projects, programs and activities) come across the table and we need to ask ourselves whether it is something we should be doing. There is a way to judge them, as there are certain things that we should stay away from. The four words—evangelism, worship, fellowship and service (charity)—describe what the Lord Jesus Christ asks us to do. If there is an issue that is raised and the issue has to do with one of these four areas of ministry then it a legitimate project, program or activity.

COORDINATORS' REPORTS:

1. MEMBERSHIP/MISSIONS: Sheryl said that she has been talking to Kh. Michelle Dresdow about chairing this position.

2. HUMANITARIAN: Coordinator Margaret Simon has not received materials recently from the NAB Humanitarian Coordinator. She asks that parish chapters send her information concerning humanitarian projects that they have done or are doing. Ramona Darmour of St. George, Cleveland, OH, talked about a new outreach project that they are doing: visiting the sick and needy, both parish members and those outside the church.

FR. JOHN OJAIMI from St. George, Cleveland, OH, whose parish is hosting the Parish Life Conference 15-19, 2011, visited us and asked for help in promoting the event. Metropolitan PHILIP will preside and information is now online; you may register now at the website, www.stgeorgecleveland.com. There are many added activities for kids, teens and college students. The hotel is 3/4s mile from the Ohio Turnpike exit. Hotel cost per day is \$90. and there are no parking fees. All Orthodox Christians in the Cleveland area will be invited to a special service.

3. RELIGIOUS REPORT: Coordinator Roberta Royhab distributed information on the church New Year and feast days from Jaime Isaac, NAB Religious Coordinator and also information on "Self-Care Strategies."

4. MIDWEST PROJECT: Coordinator Elaine Shaheen presented the new project: two baby bibs. One is a "Where's Grandfather" bib, with grandfather written in green in 10 languages. The other is a "Where's Grandmother" bib, with grandmother written in purple in 10 languages. Midwest Antiochian Women are selling the bibs as a fundraiser for the building of the Convent of St. Thekla at Antiochian Village. Elaine designed the bibs which are for sale for \$7.00 each (the cost to Midwest is \$3.50 each). She is taking orders with payment from chapters, bookstores and individuals. The bibs are terry cloth with vinyl backing and are made in the U.S.A. Aprons are also for sale at \$15. each.

5. METROPOLITAN PHILIP AWARD: In the absence of this year's recipient, Daisy Isaac, Ramona Darmour said that the jeweler has 11 pins available, enough for our award through 2015. She asked whether we should continue to buy them from this supplier or find another one; they are \$60 each. The women agreed to continue with the current jeweler.

6. FIANCE: Coordinator Marie Bojrab was not present.

7. HISTORIAN/ARCHIVES: Coordinator Dianne O'Regan was not present.

FR. JOSEPH PERPERA visited our meeting. He asked us to encourage the teens in our parishes to participate in Bible Bowl. Fr. Joseph also spoke about OCCHY (Orthodox Christian Coalition for Healthy Youth) a relatively unique national alliance, founded and supported by the Department of Youth and Parish Ministries of the Archdiocese, which deals with teens and alcohol and substance abuse. Churches in Cleveland and Cicero, IL, now sponsor this project. We need to raise funds to match money available from the U.S. Department of Human Services; he asked the women to support this project.

NEW BUSINESS

1. RETREAT: Sheryl said that we need ideas for speakers; last year's speaker was Mother Abbess Alexandra of the Convent of St. Thekla, who was absolutely wonderful. This will be our sixth annual retreat. Kh. Elfriede suggested that Fr. Ed Hughes of the Diocese of Worcester and New England be asked to speak on a subject that concerns women, either contemporary women or women saints.

2. NAB Membership Handbook: Sheryl will send them to all the parishes; the excellent handbook is also online.

3. SAMPLE CONSTITUTION: Sheryl and Roberta, immediate past president, talked about the need to have a sample constitution for chapters available. It would be a "recommended" constitution/bylaws" (based on the North American Board constitution and by-laws) for the parishes to follow. A number of the chapters have misplaced theirs. "We have many missions, each of these missions is going to need guidance on how to set up local Antiochian Women's chapters," Sheryl said. She appointed Roberta and Ramona to a committee to write the sample one. Sheryl is also on the committee. The women present requested that they have input. A survey will be sent to the chapters, asking them about such things as dues, how often elections are held, how often meetings are held, etc. The committee will report at the next meeting. They hope to have it completed by the PLC in June.

4. MIDWEST CONSTITUTION: Sheryl said that it needs to be updated; it was last updated in the 90s. She will scan it and send it out by e-mail it so that we can review it.

5. NAB WINTER MEETING: The meeting will be at Antiochian Village in February 4-6. Sheryl and five others delegates from the Midwest are to attend. Please let her know if you want to go as a delegate.

6. SPRING DELEGATES' MEETNG: It was not yet announced.

7. NEW ACTIVITIES: Judy Kanag talked about a "Mad-Hatters' Tea" at her church, St. George Cathedral, Toledo, OH, that the women enjoyed. It was a lot of fun and it didn't cost anything, she said.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Francis Sears made a motion to adjourn, Libbie seconded, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Roberta Royhab for Karen Mann, Recording Secretary

GREAT LENT

The Season of Great Lent helps us prepare our Souls and Bodies for the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us begin by asking Forgiveness to those we have offended, knowingly or unknowingly so that we can enter this season with a pure heart.

Spend time away from our noisy lives, running around doing all the busy things that we don't remember where the time went and why we did what we did. Set time aside for quiet time, maybe read the lives of the saints, or a special book that would lift us spiritually. Turn the TV, or radio off.

Attend at least one additional service per week and make an effort to be in church 10 minutes prior to the service starting so that we can "lay aside all earthly cares" as we hear in the Cherubic Hymn each Sunday. During this season there are many services to help us keep focused prayer and fasting.

Remember the needy, use your Food for the Hungry boxes each day to remember those who have no food, clothes, or warm homes to live in. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, or charity home, or visit the sick or elderly in your community.

Follow the fast season to cleanse our bodies from all the heavy food that weighs us down. The energy our body is saving from digesting heavy food can be used to pray. The money that we save on meat and dairy products should be used to feed the poor, and the time saved on doing less cooking should be spent in Church and helping the needy. Also when we are able to control what goes into our mouths, we develop a discipline to direct our lives away from sin and toward our risen Lord.

HAVE A BLESSED LENTEN SEASON.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S MONTH IN THE ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE

A packet will arrive soon to each parish to encourage us to participate more fully in the life of the church ie taking collections, doing Epistle Readings, Ushering, etc.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

***THE 6TH ANNUAL MIDWEST WOMEN'S RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE
MAY 13TH - 15TH
AT THE DORMITION MONASTERY IN RIVES JUNCTION, MI.
PLAN TO ATTEND.***

Survey of Chapters' Constitution and By-laws

At the 2010 fall meeting of Midwest Antiochian Women it was decided that a “sample constitution for the chapters” (or “sample constitution/by-laws”), based on the North American Board constitution and by-laws, would be written and distributed to Midwest chapters. Those present requested that they have input in this project. Following is a survey.

You may write additional comments on the reverse side of this form; please return by MARCH 1 to: Roberta Royhab at robertaroyhab@bex.net or PO Box 1128, Perrysburg OH 43552-1128.

1. Does your Antiochian Women’s chapter have a constitution and/or by-laws that your chapter uses (other than the North American Board or Midwest constitution and by-laws)?
2. Have you been told that your chapter once had a constitution (and/or by-laws) but it has been lost?
3. How often does your chapter hold business meetings?
4. How often do you elect officers? When (during year) are elections held? Do you have chapter dues?
5. Does your priest approve the nominees who run for office? Are there qualifications for serving as an officer? Are qualifications enforced?
6. Is there a nominating committee? Is there a chair of the nominating committee? Who runs elections at the meeting? Are nominations accepted from the floor (and are they prequalified)?
7. Do you have term limits for the officers? Are they enforced?
8. What coordinator positions does your chapter have?

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO & THE MIDWEST
2011-2013 NOMINATION FORM**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

Parish (Please Include City and State): _____

Your Priest's Signature (**REQUIRED**): _____

Please put an "X" next to the position for which you would like to be considered
(OFFICERS MAY RUN FOR A SECOND
TWO-YEAR TERM)

Officers (elected to a two-year term)

President Vice-President/NAB Project

Public Relations Treasurer

Recording Secretary

Coordinators (appointed)

Finance Humanitarian

Historian/Archives Membership/Missions

Parliamentarian Religious

Midwest Project Antiochian Women's Tea

Corresponding Secretary

***Please return this form no later than June 1, 2011 to:
Roberta Royhab, Nominating Chairperson
PO Box 1128
Perrysburg OH 43552-1128
419-340-4560***

Antiochian Women, Diocese of Toledo & the Midwest

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN DUES & PROJECT MONIES
2010 - 2011

It is time to renew your Antiochian Women dues for the 2010-2011 year period. *Dues must be submitted by December 1, 2010.* All parishes are obligated to pay **\$150.00 of which **\$75.00** will go to the North American Board Treasury. *All churches are required to pay dues, even if you do not have an active Antiochian Women Chapter. Missions are not required to pay dues.***

Our 2009-2010 Antiochian Women Project is the St. Thekla Monastery at Antiochian Village. Together, let's have 100% participation in this project which supports our clergy. *Please send Project monies no later than May 1, 2011.* All 48 parishes and missions are kindly asked to contribute to the Project.

Please make your check payable to the Midwest Antiochian Women and indicate whether your payment is for DUES or for St. Thekla Monastery Project. Please provide current contact name/address/email in order that we may keep our records current.

PLEASE TEAR OFF FORM BELOW & RETURN WITH MONIES TO:
Libbie Kohl, Midwest Antiochian Women Treasurer
1414 8th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids IA, 52403

Contact Name: _____

Name of Church: _____

Church Address/City/State/Zip:

Phone: _____ **E-Mail (church or contact)** _____

MIDWEST ANTIOCHIAN PROJECT ORDER FORM

INFANT BIBS FOR GRANDMA & GRANDPA

PRINTED IN 10 LANGUAGES

Church _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

No. of Bibs ordered at \$7 ea. _____

(Make checks payable to: Midwest Antiochian Women)

Send orders to:

Elaine Shaheen
2049 Crystal Wood Trail
Flushing, MI 48433- 3511

Phone: 810-733-8114