



The Torch

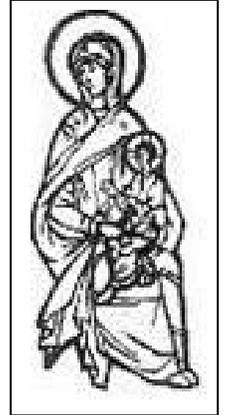
The official
publication of the
Midwest
Antiochian Women

November 2016

Antiochian Women *Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest*

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY



From The Torch Editor... Kh Vickie Nasser

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

Dues for Midwest Antiochian Women are due December 1, 2016. Not too late – send them in today.

Midwest Antiochian Women Project money is due May 1, 2017

Clergy and Laity Fall Gathering was held in Madison, Wisconsin **October 23 & 24th**. Thank you Madison for a wonderful time.

Pray for the health of:

Elaine Shaneen, Fr. Elias Bitar, The suffering Christians in Syria and the Middle East.

Please send pictures of projects your women do in your church for our special project

Strengthening the Ministries of our Church.

From Cynthia Beckes O'Connor, President Midwest Antiochian Women



Christ is in our midst!

Dear Your Grace, Clergy, and Sisters in Christ,

I come to you as a nearly two-year President of the Antiochian Women of the Midwest. During my tenure it has been my great joy to visit many of you in your home parishes. As you know, our Diocese includes my home state of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, parts of Missouri and Ontario province in Canada. My travels have taken me so far to nearly every state represented. I hope to complete my visitation schedule before June of this coming year. My self-imposed goal is to visit each and every one! Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Ontario - -this means you!

Having served for nearly two years, I can tell you that the burning issues that were prevalent when I was voted into office still remain. Our parishes are concerned with the many immigrants escaping the war-torn Middle East, we are continuing our search for the best way to include younger women in our organization and we are remaining vigilant in the production and dissemination of health and education kits to Syria and beyond.

Only time will tell how the new administration's immigration policy will affect persons fleeing from the Middle East. Pray God that they will permit a continued acceptance of them into our country. When Jesus said, "Love one another," I feel sure he meant for us to help these strangers in his name.

As for our humanitarian work, please refer to Sue Perry's, (our Humanitarian Coordinator), article about the wonderful work women in so many parishes are doing to provide health and education kits. Our work here can never really be done until the conflict ceases and rebuilding begins.

The task that remains before us, in addition to all the many good works each of you does in your own parish, is to find a way to welcome younger women into our fold.

This was the topic of discussion at our most recent Parish Life Conference, graciously sponsored by the Basilica of St Mary in Livonia, Michigan. It was again discussed at the Fall Delegates Meeting kindly hosted by St. Ignatius Church in Middleton, Wisconsin.

At both of these meetings I received wonderful suggestions on ways to make this happen. One of the most interesting ideas being floated is to have our luncheon at the next Parish Life Conference open to include women of all ages. It was brought to my attention that women often leave our meeting and/or luncheon to visit with family members as well as take part in other scheduled activities. It was suggested, and I believe it is a good suggestion, that by opening our luncheon, we could bring these ladies and girls together under the umbrella of the Antiochian Women. We would, of course, encourage all of them to attend our meeting and stay for the luncheon. In this way, these new potential members could see the important work we were doing and possibly want to join. **What do you think? Shall we try this in Cicero?**

I would appreciate hearing from you regarding this important subject. You can reach me via email at mwantiochianwomen@gmail.com or via my cell phone which is 330-307-6422. Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Wishing you Blessed Nativity Season,

Yours in Christ.

Cynthia

I'm Coming Out! I want the World to Know!

36 years ago, one of my favorite singers, Motown great Diana Ross sang this song. Today, we in the Orthodox Church and other Christians throughout the world are preparing to celebrate the coming (*advent* in Latin) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The church puts in front of us this season of preparation, as She does for the Feast of Feasts: Pascha, to get ready. But what are we getting ready for?

The Gospel Reading at the climax of our celebration of "Christ's Mass"/Christmas at our Nativity Divine Liturgy speaks about the Wise Men and their dealings with King Herod (Matthew 2:1-12). What's so interesting in this short but powerful story is how, after they meet the incarnate Word of God, they went a different way!

Our life as disciples, students, followers of Christ is how we must do the same ~ over and over and over again. It's not a once-in-a-lifetime change, but a constant change, a constant transformation/transfiguration of moving from our "old" self to our "new" self which is our new life in Christ. The Nativity Fast, as all of our fasting, is a tool which helps us with this!

The reading from St. Paul at Liturgy will be a reminder for all of us that we are no longer slaves [to sin and death] but children, and if children, then inheritors of what Christ did. And what did He do, He defeated the Devil, defeated death, raising the dead to have eternal life. So again, as God intended in creating mankind, we can eat of the Tree of Life (Holy Communion) and live forever (Genesis 3:22).

Another catchy song from Diana is *Upside Down* where she sings, "upside down you turn me, boy, you turn me inside out". The "boy" for us is he who grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52), Who's teachings,



miracles, death, and resurrection is Who we live for, is Who we belong to, is Who constantly is waiting for us to change our lives so we can be inheritors of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Have a blessed and fruitful Nativity Fast!

Love in our Incarnate God,
Fr. Joe Abud
Spiritual Advisor
Midwest Diocesan Antiochian Women

FALL DELEGATES MEETING IN MIDDLETON, WISCONSIN



**Minutes of the Midwest Antiochian Women meeting
Fall Gathering in Middleton, WI
Hosted by St. Ignatius Orthodox Church
October 22, 2016**

President Cynthia O'Connor called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. There were 14 women from 8 parishes present.

Bishop ANTHONY led us in an opening prayer.

Bishop ANTHONY opened the meeting with words of encouragement to us. He talked about Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus. We are both Mary and Martha at the same time. We worship faithfully in our churches just like Mary. And at the same time we are Martha because we walk to where the work is in our churches. We are the working hands of our parishes.

Motion by Sue Perry to approve the minutes from the June 23, 2016 Meeting as corrected. Seconded by Claudia Reidel. Motion carried. Sue noted that the minutes didn't mention the addition of the Humanitarian Coordinator to the Dues form.

Sheryl VanderWagen greeted everyone on behalf of the NAB and thanked them for faithful participation in NAB projects.

Motion by Judith Brant to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Seconded by Dottie Malooly. Motion carried. VanderWagen reminded everyone that dues are due in to the Midwest Treasurer by December 1, 2016 and 2017 NAB project monies by May 1, 2017.

NAB Project/Vice-President: Kh. Jeanette Gallaway sent a written report. All NAB project funds raised need to be submitted to the Diocesan treasurer, Mary Polson. There was confusion last year about where to send monies. NAB project monies are submitted to the Diocesan treasurer, Mary Polson who then forwards them on to the NAB treasurer. This is so that each parish can receive credit for funds they raise toward the project. The 2017 project is called Strengthening the Ministries of our Church and funds will go towards ministries throughout the Archdiocese including senior housing projects, founding missions, supporting seminarians, encouraging youth ministries, protecting the unborn, teaching the Faith, caring for the elderly and those in prisons, nursing homes and hospitals, helping to feed, house and clothe the poor and inspiring monastic vocations.

Kh. Vicki Nasser is our new PR Coordinator. At this time we are looking for articles for the Diakonia and for the Torch. The Diakonia deadline is December 1. Kh. Jeanette Gallaway will assist Kh. Vicki with the publications.

President's remarks: Cynthia has talked to the PLC planning committee to make the luncheon all inclusive, so that the younger women may come with us. We are looking for a way to make a no conflict time for everyone but we will have to see how the schedule is finalized. Sue Perry told us that their chapter gives each woman attending the PLC and Antiochian Women meeting and luncheon \$25 to help defray the cost of the luncheon.

Archives: Continue to send Dianne O'Regan anything that is archival or historic related to the Antiochian Women.

Humanitarian: Sue Perry provided a written report. IOCC kits are still the humanitarian project. Cynthia asked everyone send kit updates to her email address and to Sue's email address.

Membership: Regina Bojrab had reported that in their parish they are doing a fashion show to help bring younger women. Sue Perry gave testimonial on what is happening at St. George MN, they have elections and a whole new slate of officers. They also do Turkey Bingo and Disney family night in November to include moms with children in the women's activities. Cynthia noted that not everyone is a two parent family, and we have to be more inclusive. Claudia Reidel noted that as their parish grew, she noticed stratification develop between members of various ages. Institutionalizing relationships with meetings is no longer a great practice. Pan-Orthodox activities are also encouraged and available in many communities.

Religious Coordinator: Sheryl VanderWagen provided a written report which gave several good Orthodox social media and internet resources. She noted that we need to refrain from participating in current mood of hatred and division that is so apparent in social media and expose our news feeds to uplifting and Orthodox resources. She also distributed the latest mailing from NAB Religious Coordinator, Kh. Dannie Moore. Kh. Dannie's mailings are also distributed via email. Please let us know if you would like to receive them.

Old Business:

The retreat was scheduled for May 2016 and had to be cancelled for lack of registration. The group discussed the challenges of traveling to a single Midwest retreat. Many parishes host retreats in their local areas and there are often Pan-Orthodox opportunities as well. The group discussed the possibility of hosting retreats in the deaneries which are smaller areas. In addition scheduling and timing is often an issue.

Bishop ANTHONY's name day: The envelopes for the mailing were stuffed by the ladies during the meeting. Cynthia thanked everyone for assisting with the stuffing. Cynthia will be mailing them to the parishes in November so that 2017 contributions can be received by the end of the year in time for January 17.

Bylaws update: Sheryl VanderWagen noted that we have a draft and they need to proof read. She hopes to get them ready for approval at the June PLC in Oakbrook, IL.

Cynthia noted that in some parishes the women's groups do not have Antiochian Women in their names and therefore don't pay dues to the Antiochian Women. She is planning to reach out to about 5 parishes that are in this situation.

Metropolitan PHILIP Award Committee: We still need a chair. Sheryl VanderWagen will work with Margaret Simon and get the forms and mailings out after the first of the year. There was discussion about changing the criteria. However, the award as initially designed with activity at the Diocese level as a requirement and should stay the way it is now. The group discussed the possibility of coming up with a different award to recognize activity at the parish level. Sue Perry, Sheryl VanderWagen, and Cynthia O'Connor will confer over the next few months and bring this back to the group at the PLC meeting.

Fr. David Moga from St. Nicholas, Cedarburg WI closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl VanderWagen

Religious Coordinator for Secretary Janalyn Salhaney

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Bishop Anthony Michaels visited St. George Antiochian in West St. Paul, MN. These three young ladies, new AW, offered to help serve the head table. They served His Grace Bishop Anthony and the Clergy on Fathers Day. At the PLC the following week, many young men and ladies graduated high school. Rebecca Michaels, is a new member of the Antiochian Women. Our AW society have four ladies circles at our church and we rotate the four positions, of cook, serve, set up and clean up. The young ladies who graduated high school are added to the ladies circle list to get them involved at a young age. Sometimes they help if able for a special event at church. We contact the ladies by email, phone call or in person for an upcoming event. Everyone is included to make our task to serve the church easier. Team work! At the PLC, the AW luncheon was a success. We were queens for the day and wore crowns like St. Helena as we learned about her life.



**ST MARK CHURCH
2ND ANNUAL HOLIDAY
COOKIE SALE
by Cynthia O'Connor**

The Antiochian Women of St. Mark Parish in Youngstown, Ohio, recently raised \$1000 from their 2nd Annual Holiday Cookie Sale. The money raised will be divided with half going to the Metropolitan's Project, "Strengthening the Ministries of Our Church" and half will help send our Teens to the National Convention in Miami.

Our success is in large part due to the information that was shared by Dottie Malooley, of our sister church, St. George of Spring Valley, Illinois. St George has had a wonderfully successful sale for the past 20+ years and they were kind enough to share the essentials of a winning sale with us. For example, scheduling baking hours at the church at staggered times to increase participation.

We offered five Middle Eastern cookies and five traditional cookies, featuring everything from Ghraybe to Peanut Butter Chocolate chip. Our cut-out cookies have always been a big seller. Our ladies gather to decorate and have fellowship at the same time. It is an enjoyable evening that the members look forward to.

Pictured are Samira Rafidi (in the ball cap), Mireille Chammas, Rene Rafidi and Cheryl Barkett and the results of their hard work. Well done ladies!

WOMEN OF ST. ANDREW IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Our women of St. Andrew in Lexington, KY are very busy with our charity projects. Our goal is to get together as women of the Church and to help those in need. Pictured below are the women working on one of our annual projects, making Linus Blankets to be used by children in the hospital to give them comfort and security. We have done this project for at least 10 year and enjoy the fellowship it brings to our community.



Some of the other projects include, collecting gifts for children of women that are in prison to give as gift to help them realize they aren't alone,. We also have a Middle Eastern and Slavic Bake sale which raises money to be used for charity. Once a month we serve food at a homeless shelter, as well as help clean and decorate the Church for special feast days.



**Antiochian Women, Diocese of Toledo & the Midwest
Dues & Project Monies Request
2016-2017**

It's time to renew your Antiochian Women dues for the 2016-2017 year period.

Dues should be submitted by December 1, 2016. All parishes are obligated to pay \$175.00 dues (\$100 of this goes to the North American Board Treasury), even if the church does not have an Antiochian Women Chapter. Missions are not required to pay dues.

Deadline for Dues: December 1, 2016

The Antiochian Women are excited to announce that the 2016-2017 project theme is **“Strengthening the Ministries of our Church.”** For more info: www.antiochian.org .

All parishes and missions are kindly asked to contribute to the Project.

Please make checks payable to Midwest Antiochian Women.

Deadline for Project Monies: May 1, 2017

Mail dues and project monies with bottom portion of this form to:
Midwest Antiochian Women
Mary Polson, Treasurer, 416 South Fork Road, Glasgow, KY 42141

*Please return bottom portions with Dues by December 1st , 2016 and Project Monies by
May 1st, 2017.
Thank you!*

Dues Enclosed by December 1, 2016: Project Amount Enclosed by May 1, 2017:
Dues: _____ Project: \$ _____

Church Name: _____ Church Address: _____
President Name: _____ President Phone: _____
President / Church Email: _____
Humanitarian Coordinator Name: _____
Humanitarian Coordinator Email: _____

**Make checks payable to: Midwest Antiochian Women.
Mail to: Mary Polson, Treasurer, 416 South Fork Road, Glasgow, KY 42141**

ST. MARY'S – LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

The Antiochian Women of St. Mary's in Livonia are always busy. We start off the year with our annual Wine Tasting, a great fundraiser and a favorite event. We continue with a Lenten Lunch where we get to sample all the delicious Lenten dishes that our ladies prepare and donate. This past year we were honored to host the Parish Life Conference and His Grace Bishop Anthony. In the fall we hold our Fashion Show. The ladies all look forward to this fun evening of looking at all the beautiful fashions. November brings our annual Thanksgiving Lunch. This event gets bigger every year. It is a great way for us to kick off the holiday season, enjoy a delicious lunch and fellowship. In December, we host our Christmas Potluck where everyone brings a dish to pass. We ask each person to bring a grocery store gift card to donate to a needy family. Last year we collected \$1425 in gift cards.

The Basilica of St. Mary's is a big community with many different ministries. The Antiochian Women are always willing to step in and help whenever needed. We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful and generous community. We are blessed to have the support of Father George Shalhoub and Father Jim King.



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S PROJECT

Your Grace, Clergy, and Antiochian Women of the Midwest,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am so sorry I could not be with you for the Fall Delegates Meeting this year. I pray all of you are enjoying the hospitality of our host parish.



As you know, His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph announced that the 2016-2017 Antiochian Women's Project this year is **"Strengthening the Ministries of our Church."** The goal is to strengthen the foundation of the ministries of our Archdiocese so that we can continue to do the good works in many areas. I realize this is a wide spread project, but with your support we can meet the needs asked of our Archdiocese and continue to do the good works.

Each parish was mailed a poster and letter from Kh Suzanne Murphy, VP of the North American Board & NAB Project Coordinator. If you have not received it please let me know after checking with your parish priest, since it was mailed to each church address. As Kh Suzanne stated "In the Project poster, the lights of the cities and towns across North America represent the thousands of faithful men, women, and youth of our Archdiocese showing forth the Light of Christ through their selfless ministries within the Church and to the world around us."

This is truly a worthy cause and I pray all of you will have special fundraisers to support this need. It is only through your work and diligence that this need can be met. Each parish and mission is asked to contribute to this Project and we are aiming at 100% participation. If everyone gives to this project, no matter how big or small, we will be working together to accomplish this great goal.

If you have any question concerning this project you are welcome to email me at jdgallaway@aol.com or call me at 859-277-1763.

We ask that all donations be sent to:

Mary Polson, Treasurer, 416 South Fork Road, Glasgow, KY 42141

Please make checks payable to Midwest Antiochian Women.

Deadline for Project Monies: May 1, 2016

Your servant in Christ

Kh Jeanette Gallaway

Vice President of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest. Project Coordinator

HOLY APOSTLES LADIES SOCIETY CELEBRATES ST. ANNA SLAVA



Holy Apostles Ladies Society Celebrates St. Anna Slava Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission in Bowling Green, Kentucky embraces an array of parishioners from many different backgrounds. To incorporate a Serbian tradition, the Holy Apostles Ladies Society celebrated their first “Slava” (the custom of celebrating a family’s patron saint day) guided by a Serbian parishioner. The custom dates back to the Serbians in the 9th century. Earlier this year, our Ladies voted St. Anna, grandmother of Jesus, as our patron saint, and our first Slava of St. Anna was celebrated on September 9th.

Fr. Jason Blais served St. Anna Vespers, including prayers for the grandmothers of our ladies, both living and departed. Ladies made special offerings of kolach, slavski kolach, and kolivo, and the all-women choir sang responses beautifully. Following Vespers, the Ladies

continued the celebration at Mariah’s, a local restaurant. At each place setting was a keepsake program that included the inspirational story of St. Anna. The prayer, offered by Kh. Emily Blais, and a motivational spiritual speech, given by Kuma Anna Norris, were encouragement to all of us.

In preparation for the Slava, each member created a scrapbook page of their grandmothers. This activity not only helped us to honor and remember our own grandmothers, but also to emphasize that St. Anna was the grandmother to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The scrapbook pages sparked us to share memories of our grandmothers and emphasized the family that we represented. The Slava of St. Anna, Patron Saint of the Antiochian Women at Holy Apostles, was truly a celebration of family.