The DAG (Diocesan Altar Guild) Goes GREEN ! ! !

HOLY RECYCLING:

Our “Free Market” at the Diocesan Convention was a tremendous success. We had a generous supply of clergy and acolyte vestments, altar linens, candles, a marble aumbry, and many other gently used items donated by churches throughout the Diocese. All items were free to anyone who promised to give them a loving new home. On Saturday afternoon we still had a few items left, and just as we were getting ready to pack them up to save for next year, Fr. Panel Marc Guerrier from St. Paul’s in Naples showed up and took all the remaining items to distribute to churches in Haiti.

SAVING TREES AND MONEY (and TIME):

Starting with this issue of the Altagram, this publication will be sent to all churches in the Diocese as a PDF attachment to an e-mail. If we have an e-mail address for the AG Director it will go to her or him. Otherwise, it will be sent to the Rector or Church Office. Whoever receives the Altagram, please print off one copy to post in the AG Sacristy and also e-mail it to all AG members for whom you have an e-mail address. This will save the DAG approximately $44.00 per quarter in postage, not to mention the potential cost of printing (St. John’s in Tampa has been generously allowing us to use their paper and copier) and time involved in printing address labels, affixing them to the printed newsletter, folding and taping them, sticking on the stamps, and taking them to the Post Office.

ANNUAL DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD DUES NOTICES will also be sent out by e-mail in January. Dues are $20.00 per year for a Parish and $10.00 per year for a Mission.

DIOCESAN WORK DAY
(suggested by the Standing Committee, affirmed by the Bishop)

Saturday, November 13, 2010
9:00 am – 3:00 pm (lunch included)
St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church
10888 - 126th Avenue
Largo, FL 33778-2710

Altar Guild members and all Episcopalians in the Diocese are encouraged to pitch in and help St. Dunstan’s clean up, get organized, and move forward as they reclaim their church from the ground up. Plenty of jobs for everyone! Come when you can and leave when you must!

Please contact the church office at 727- 586-6968 or email Fr. Stuart Swann stuswann@stdunstansfl.org to let them know you are coming to ensure the loaves and fishes are ample.

“HEADS UP” on 2011 ANNUAL MEETING
(see Page 4 for dates and location)

The speaker for our 2011 Annual Meeting (Joint North-South) will be Lynn Hendricks from Birmingham, Alabama. Lynn is currently the Treasurer of NAGA (National Altar Guild Association) and has been active in both Province IV Altar Guild and NAGA for many years. You may find this hard to believe, but Lynn has found FUN in back of the Book of Common Prayer. HINT: You may want to read (or re-read) the Rubrics prior to March 2011. When Lynn gave a similar presentation to Province IV AG members, a lot of long-time AG members discovered they really didn’t KNOW what they thought they knew!

Encourage your AG members and clergy to attend the annual DAG Meeting. Altar Guilds serve to assist clergy in making worship sacred and beautiful, and clergy support is greatly appreciated. Our Bishop is extremely supportive of the DAG (perhaps stemming from his days as a Sacristan at Nashotah House?) and always gives a great sermon – last year we learned that we are spiritual descendants of the Kohathites (see Numbers 4:4-15).

As soon as possible, e-mail your President (Sarah Hill, North, or Carol Ann Brumbach, South) with a rough estimate of the number from your Church who plan to attend the Annual Meeting.

St. Raphael's in Ft. Myers Beach could use some extra AG support for the original church family which remains. Contact Fr. Donald Nicholson nicholsodr@mac.com or call church at 239-463-6057 (answering machine) to offer assistance!
BELIEVE IN A MIRACLE  
(A Day of Renewal for Women)  
Saturday, February 5, 2011  
9:00 am – 3:30 pm (lunch included)  
Charlotte Harbor Event Center  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  

Guest speaker is The Very Rev. Marilyn Engstrom, Dean of St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Laramie, Wyoming. Musical performance by Elisabeth von Trapp. Advance registration is required. Deadline Jan. 15, 2011. Cost is $15.00 per person. Go to www.episcopalswfla.org/organizations, scroll down to Women’s Ministries and click on link to download registration form.  

“HEADS UP” on 2011 PROVINCE IV ANNUAL CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP  
(make sure your AG’s AG Director is attending)  

Make plans now for a retreat where you don’t have to worry about your next meal, work, or rush here and there. Kanuga and Province IV Altar Guild are calling your name! Keynote speaker will be the Rt. Rev. Charles L. Keyser, Assisting Bishop for the Diocese of Florida. Plans are being made for a visit to Carl Sandburg’s home in Flat Rock, NC. Hands-on workshops and other fun activities will combine to make this an inspiring and restful time with a great group of Altar Guild cohorts.  

Ecclesiastical Vocabulary  
Here are some “B” words – can you think of others?  

**Baldacchino:** A canopy, which covers the altar.  
**Baptistry:** (Also, Baptistery) In liturgical churches, wherever the font is located, usually near the entrance of the church.  
**Bier:** The carriage upon which the coffin is placed in the church.  
**Bier Lights:** Tall candlesticks which stand on the nave floor at the chancel steps beside a coffin. There may be two, one on each side, or as many as six, three on each side.  
**Biretta:** A stiff four-sided cap worn by the clergy. A priest or deacon wears black; an Archdeacon wears black trimmed in purple; a bishop or Archbishop wears purple.  
**Bishop Coadjutor:** A bishop elected and given jurisdiction to assist and later to succeed the diocesan bishop.  
**Bishop, Suffragan:** A bishop elected to assist the diocesan bishop, but without jurisdiction or right of succession.  
**Bishopric:** The territorial jurisdiction of a bishop.  
**Bishop’s Chair:** A special chair on the gospel side of the sanctuary, reserved for the diocesan bishop on his visitations.  
**Boat:** A vessel, named by its shape, for holding incense before it is put in the censer orthurible.  
**Bread Box:** A box, usually of silver, in which is kept the bread or wafers for the Holy Communion.  
**Burse:** The case for the corporal.  

. . . look for “C thru Z” words in future issues.

FROM THE DESK OF CAROL ANN . . .  
Well, summer is now over, Altar Guild members have returned from vacations and are planning for the ecclesiastical year.  

During the summer many of the Deaneries had their annual AG meetings. I attended all three meetings held in the South portion of our Diocese, and it was nice to see so many members again.  

We are still looking for an AG Director for the Venice Deanery.  

Rather than have separate meeting on subsequent weekends, the North & South sections of the Diocesan Altar Guild will hold a JOINT MEETING in 2011. This will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2011, at the Church of the Nativity, 5900 North Lockwood Ridge, Sarasota 34243-2523. Starting time and other information will be provided in a later issue. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS and bring as many of your members as possible by carpooling.  

Yours in Christ, Carol Ann Brumbach, President-South

FROM THE DESK OF SARAH . . .  
Thanks to all who helped with the DAG’s “holy recycling” – the “Free Market” at Diocesan Convention was a roaring success.  

If anyone is interested in a liturgical calendar, St. Peter’s Cathedral has once again produced a beautiful calendar. Calendars are $10.00 each with all proceeds going to the Cathedral. Checks should be made payable to: St. Peter’s Cathedral. If you would like one, call the Cathedral office at 727-822-4173 or call or e-mail me (see Page 4 for my contact information). This year’s calendar features pictures of needlepoint from the Cathedral. Shown below is one of the “4 Evangelists” cushions (all 4 shown on March 2011 page).  

Florence Holden has moved out of state, so a new AG Director for the Clearwater Deanery is needed.  

Yours in Christ, Sarah Hill, President-North  

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MARY MARTHA or MARTHA MARY?

(Excerpts from "The Bishop’s Chair" in Summer 2010 issue of the NAGA Epistle)

The Rt. Rev. Kirk Stevan Smith, Ph.D., Diocese of Arizona

Mary and Martha have places in our liturgical calendar and are honored by the church. We know they were sisters of Lazarus of Bethany, and by all accounts were two of Jesus’ closest friends. From the earliest days of the church, biblical commentators have viewed them as embodying two opposing types or models of faithful Christian women. Martha, the activist, always scurrying around taking care of all the chores; and Mary, the contemplative, who, much to her sister’s irritation, neglected the housework to sit at Jesus’ feet.

Whenever I hear this story, I think of two of their real-life namesakes who were parishioners of mine. One was the wife of a priest who worked with me at St. James’ in Los Angeles. Martha was a nurse by training and was the consummate caregiver. She opened her house to a constant stream of visitors who could be sure they would never leave hungry. Martha loved to cook and also loved to eat, especially while watching pro-basketball games on TV. She was also the co-director of the altar guild and was a force to be reckoned with. Martha had no patience for liturgical experimentation, which she referred to as “monkey business.” For Martha, worship was to be finished as quickly as possible so she could get back to work.

Then there was Mary --younger than Martha and of a completely different temperament, even though the two were friends. Mary sang in the choir. Her voice was not professional, but that was not why she was there. For her, singing was a form of prayer, a way to glorify God. I could always count on Mary to be present at Bible study and worship and to ask deep and thoughtful questions. If Martha was always to be found in the parish hall kitchen, Mary was equally likely to be found in the church sanctuary.

Mary and Martha, like the women in the Bible for whom they were named, represent two different expressions of spirituality, and not only for women. There has always been a dichotomy between these two kinds of Christians, between the monk and the caregiver, the prayerful introvert and the fellowship hall extrovert, the meditative and the active Christian, the parishioner who likes Gregorian chant, candles and dark Gothic spaces and the one who prefers the bright lights, upbeat singing, and big crowds of a mega-church. Episcopalians tend, on the average, to be Marys, while Martha is more likely found among the Baptists.

But whatever the denomination, I suspect that most of us tend toward one type or the other. Some of us are Marys who are the caregivers and who volunteer for every church activity and program, while others, the Marys among us, would rather be left alone in a quiet nave or Bible study class.

The point of the story, however, is that Jesus loves both types. True, he tells Martha that Mary has chosen the “better part” by electing to sit at his feet, but he makes it clear that he loves them both and that both their ministries are important and valued.

Jesus, in other words, opts for a balanced or holistic spirituality. We are asked to move prayerfully inward as we confront our deepest longing for God, while we move outwards towards compassionate engagement with those in need. One theologian call this “the radical journey inwards and the radical journey outwards.” Prayer without action is just navel-gazing, while action without prayer is shallow do-goodism. We need to be both Mary and Martha.

In the Episcopal Church until just 30 years ago, it was fine for women to be active on the ECW but not on the vestry, diocesan convention, or even to read the lessons on Sunday morning. They could teach children in Sunday school, but not adults. This has changed as women in the church have begun to reclaim their Mary-side. Prayer, contemplation, and worship have again become central in the corporate life of church women. Take, for example, the Daughters of the King. Whereas the ECW has traditionally been more oriented towards service work or raising funds to support ministry to those in need, the Daughters have dedicated themselves exclusively to a ministry of prayer and contemplation. They have said, in essence – to a male dominated church – “make your own coffee.”

Both Marys and Marthas are needed. Jesus could not do without both his friends and the church cannot exist just with contemplatives or just with activists.

* * * * *

I think being an altar guild member gives us a unique opportunity to be both Mary and Martha. I am Mary when I enter into a quiet church on Saturday, when I contemplate the beauty of early morning light through stained glass windows, when I lay out the priest’s vestments according to ancient custom, when I vest the chalice, when I pray for the clergy and those who will take communion from the table I have set. I am Martha when I polish silver and brass, dust the church, straighten hymnals, straighten wax candles or fill oil candles, wash and iron linens, or fret because WHERE are the purificators someone took home last week to wash and iron? Serving on the altar guild is an honor and a privilege and whether I am Mary or Martha at any given time, I always feel this ministry itself is a form of prayer.

-- Peggy Curlin
Nine Commandments for Altar Guilds

- If it’s metal, polish it.
- If it’s floral, arrange it.
- If it’s cloth, iron it.
- If in doubt, wash it.
- If it’s a memorial, revere it or try to work around it.
- If it’s been done only one way for more than five years, don’t try to change it.
- If new rectors, bishops or curates get bright ideas, indulge them. They’ll soon learn better.
- If a bishop wants all the vestments and hangings changed ten minutes before the service, smile sweetly, ask him to pray for a speedy recovery from your hearing loss, and leave him to his prayers in the solitude of the sacristy.

— from St. Mary’s Church, Madisonville, Kentucky