Office of Communications

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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The Diaconal Formation Program of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey began on Saturday, September 11, 2010 with a hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace, Bishop +Michael at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Endicott NY. There are currently 14 students enrolled in the program: 12 in Diaconal Formation and two others auditing the courses. The students arrived from many different parts of the diocese, most traveling a great distance to participate. His Grace gave an inspired introductory sermon, reminding the students that in addition to learning how to be deacons, it was important that they "know Christ" -- that they would grow to love Him more, to serve Him better, and thus be effective in their diaconal vocation.

The first course -- "Israel's Origins" -- is taught by Archpriest Michael Meerson of Bethesda MD. A second course -- "Church Order and Liturgics" -- is taught by Archpriest Alexey Karlgut of Endicott NY. Sean McNulty of Saint John the Baptist Church in Rochester NY said: "This divinely inspired experience is an example of how our diocese keeps getting better and better. This program is helping to breathe new life into the diaconal ministry and life of the diocese as a whole. I was humbled to be the company of my fellow students and the exceptional instructors."

The Diaconal Formation Program is conducted in collaboration between the diocese and Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary (South Canaan, PA). All classes and instruction will take place at the Endicott Campus located at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY. The program has been created and designed specifically for the education, training, and instruction of candidates endorsed by parish rectors for potential ordination to the Holy Diaconate for ministry in the local (home) parish of origin. Students completing the two-year program and course of study will be awarded a "Certificate in Diaconal Formation" with transferable academic credit should the individual decide to enter as a full-time student at Saint Tikhon's Seminary.

While all students completing the program will have met certain requisites for ordination to the diaconate, it must be noted that this program does not guarantee anyone's ordination; many other factors and considerations are involved, and all students will be advised and counseled accordingly.

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V. Rev. Ken James Stavrevsky
Director of Communications ~ frski@rochester.rr.com ~ 585-458-5627 ~ cell 585-770-3496