

New York State Deanery

Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Orthodox Church in America

Mailing Address
543 Seneca Parkway
Rochester NY 14613



V.Rev. Alexey Karlgut, Dean 607-759-1833 ayk0@yahoo.com	V.Rev. Ken James Stavrevsky, Secretary 585-458-5627 frski@rochester.rr.com	V.Rev. Stephen Mack, Treasurer 315-252-3423 frstephen1978@yahoo.com
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Diocesan Assembly ~ July 19, 2011

Report of the Dean

3 June 2011

Your Grace Bishop Michael, Reverend Clergy and Lay Delegates,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

The past year was very active and positive in the life of New York State Deanery thanks to the vision and archpastoral ministry of Bishop Michael teamed with outstanding work, cooperation, good will, and sacrifices on the part of our priests, deacons, and laity. In just a little over a year since His Grace's consecration as our diocesan hierarch, the diocesan administrative structures have been reorganized. I am pleased to state that in my experience and observations, the leadership of the diocese -- Chancellor, Deans, Diocesan Council, Council of Presbyters, and Diocesan Spiritual Court -- is functioning efficiently with an overall goal of strengthening and growing the parishes and outreach ministries in our diocese. Toward this end, we should encourage maximum participation in the V-FOF (Vision For Our Future) presented, articulated, and approved at our last gathering in Assembly. As we now enter the second half of the year 2011, there are few months remaining to support the initiatives and fulfill the goals we envisioned in V-FOF: 1) Support and planting of missions; 2) Support of our diocesan seminarians; 3) Support and revitalization of older, struggling parishes. Sharing this *vision* and inviting participation in the *Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor's* (DDB) program with all of our parishioners, parish councils, and parish organizations is essential to success. Free-will stewardship offerings by DDBs have been encouraging to date. His Grace's generous personal donation of \$30,000.⁰⁰ to the V-FOF has enabled projects to become a reality. Thank-you to all of our DDB contributors! May our loving Lord bless you and return your generosity a hundred fold. If you have not yet joined in the support of this excellent program, please consider doing it as soon as possible. For a listing of the ever-growing number of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors, as well as projects that are funded by them, please check our diocesan website -- nynjoca.org -- which is beautifully maintained and regularly updated thanks to our own, Father Ken James Stavrevsky.

In the past nine months we had many deanery events that are listed (more or less) chronologically, not in order of importance:

- An “Open Forum” (clergy and laity) deanery discussion on the Draft OCA Strategic Plan was hosted by Saint Nicholas Church in Cohoes NY. This was preceded by a deanery clergy meeting and review of the Draft Strategic Plan with representatives of the OCA Strategic Planning Committee. Discussions and inputs were summarized in a 30 page document submitted to Strategic Planning Committee which became incorporated in the on-going revision of the plan.
- Our deanery clergy and lay representatives on the Diocesan Council participated almost monthly in meetings, assisting His Grace in implementing his vision for our diocese.
- Meetings of the Chancellor and Deans with Bishop Michael facilitated clergy transfers, filling vacancies, and resolving other administrative, canonical, and legal issues.
- Deanery clergy participated in meetings of the Council of Presbyters.
- A deanery “Family Conference and Youth Retreat” with Bishop Michael was held at Greek Peak Mountain Resort with over 160 people participating in the three-day event. The retreat was filled with religious presentations and lectures, fellowship, liturgical services, great food, and fun ... culminating with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at our newly established Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing NY.
- A Lenten deanery meeting with Bishop Michael was hosted by Saints Peter and Paul Church in Syracuse NY. The meeting began with confessions and a Pre-sanctified Liturgy. Discussions included in-depth and candid comments regarding administrative issues in OCA and the effects of the Central Church Administration Assessments on our parishes.
- Deanery faithful, clergy, and youth participated in the Altar Servers Retreat, the Choir Directors and Singers Conference, and the Diocesan Youth Lenten Retreat.
- Three regional deanery Parish Council Conferences were conducted and hosted by:
 - Saint Basil’s Church, Watervliet NY
 - Saint John the Baptist Church, Rochester NY
 - Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY

Over 150 lay leaders and rectors participated in these three outstanding and inspirational conferences led and facilitated by Father Alexander Atty (Dean, Saint Tikhon's Seminary). We thank the rectors and faithful of those parishes that graciously hosted the conferences.

As part of our deanery, Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY, hosted the Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program every Saturday throughout the academic year. Our diaconal formation students are doing great and are actively involved in service (*diaconia*) and witness (*martiria*) in their home parishes, deaneries, and the diocese.

Last year we witnessed the establishment of a new mission parish in our diocese and deanery ... the first in decades ... Holy Apostles in Lansing NY. Father Timothy Holowatch was assigned as

priest-in-charge and through the generous support of the diocese, the Endicott parish, "R" Club, and parishes in our deanery, the mission growing and thriving.

We welcomed Father John Udics for assignment to Saints Peter and Paul Church in Herkimer NY. May God grant him many healthy and blessed years in his pastoral ministry!

In an effort to revitalize Saint Innocent Mission in Oneonta NY, His Grace assigned Father Thomas Langdon as priest-in-charge. We extend a warm welcome to him, Matushka, and their three daughters.

Father Stephen Janos is retiring from Saints Peter and Paul Church in Buffalo NY, and from active priestly ministry, at the end of July. We thank Father Stephen for his faithful service to the parish, our deanery, and the diocese. May God grant him many years!

Through the selfless and sacrificial services of Father Timothy Holowatch and Deacon John Bohush we were able to assist our parishes in Buffalo, Lansing, Herkimer, and Syracuse when priests were ill, moved, or went on vacations. They also assisted in deanery parishes for hierarchical services when Bishop Michael made archpastoral visits: Herkimer, Elmira Heights, Rochester, Watervliet, Cohoes, Lansing, and others. Thank-you and God bless you -- Father Timm and Deacon John -- for your love and service to our deanery and diocese.

We had six deanery meetings and deanery events this year. I thank all the priests and deacons for making an effort to attend these gatherings that break-down walls of separation, build trust and conciliarity, and facilitate healthier and growing parishes. May God bless you for your faithful pastoral ministry!

Our thanks go out to Father Ken James Stavrevsky for his significant efforts to facilitate and improve the communications in our deanery and diocese. His work in maintaining our beautiful diocesan website, probably the best in OCA, is truly appreciated. Thank-you, Father Ken, and may God continue to bless you and your efforts!

Looking forward from today, June 3rd -- the date of the writing of this report -- we anticipate and are preparing for:

- A deanery meeting and picnic hosted by Bishop Michael on July 4th at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Herkimer NY. On the agenda for discussion is a resolution for the 16th All-America Council to be considered/finalized and, if approved, submitted to the Preconciliar Resolutions Committee by August 1st.
- The Diocesan Assembly, on July 19th, hosted by Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY.
- A Church Growth Conference (offered by the diocesan Commission on Mission and Evangelism) at Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton NY on 1-3 August. We encourage as many people as possible to attend this "hands-on" workshop that promises to be excellent and practical.

- August 1-13: “OPERATION BUFFALO.” A cooperative restoration/revitalization project to assist an older parish ... Saints Peter and Paul ... in renovating facilities through a labor of love by volunteers from throughout the diocese. Detailed information on this and other upcoming events is posted on our diocesan website.
- Diocesan Youth Day on August 18th.
- August 31 - September 1: Diocesan Priests Conference hosted by Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church in Clifton NJ.
- October 31 - November 4: All-American Council in Seattle WA

We acknowledge and thank our deanery clergy wives for their faithful support and service that often -- almost always -- goes unnoticed and unappreciated. Thank you, Matushki! May our loving Lord reward you bountifully for your faith, love, and sacrifices.

Ultimately, we thank His Grace, Bishop Michael, for his love, humility, service, and for providing an icon of a true servant leader: ***“Axios! Many years, Vladyko!”***

In our Lord, Jesus Christ,

//signed//

Father Alexey Karlgut, Dean



Father Ken James Stavrevsky, Secretary