

2011 Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors

The diocesan Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors [DDB] program was inaugurated at the beginning of 2011. As an initiative arising from the *“Vision for Our Future”* presented by His Grace, Bishop Michael, and adopted at the 2010 Diocesan Assembly, the DDB program became an incredibly vital factor toward providing needed funding in three critical areas: (1) Support for Seminarians, (2) Support for Mission Parishes, and (3) Support for existing Parishes that may be struggling. Following an initial contribution of \$30,000 by His Grace, many DDBs responded to the invitation for their participation in the program by designating the specific area of support they chose (or, in some cases, “as needed”) for their financial contributions. In 2011, the list of individual DDBs numbered 184; during the same period, 48 parishes/organizations contributed as DDBs. As a result of the generous and sacrificial support of these DDBs, financial support for the three critical areas topped \$116,000 last year!



Three DDB Appreciation Dinners were hosted by Bishop Michael to express gratitude to the 2011 DDBs, to provide them with specific details of how their support has brought forth much good fruit throughout the diocese, and to encourage them to continue as DDBs this year in their support of the diocese. The appreciation dinners were held on February 5th (New Jersey Deanery), February 12th (New York City Deanery), and February 19th (New York State Deanery). Although the diocese spans great distances of travel ~ from the southern Jersey coast to the Canadian border; from Niagara Falls to the eastern tip of Long Island ~ well over 50% of the DDBs were able to attend one of the dinners.

The unprecedented and monumental effort of **“OPERATION BUFFALO”** was one of many highlights supported by DDBs during 2011. Father Volodymyr Zablotsky (Rector, Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Buffalo NY) made a presentation at each dinner and, with words that were both deeply appreciative and inspiring, he thanked everyone for their financial support; for the physical labor of over 30 volunteers representing all three deaneries on-site in Buffalo from August 1-13, 2011; and for the prayers, the faith, and the love of DDBs everywhere. With optimism about the future, Bishop Michael remarked: *“You cannot hear the words of Father Volodymyr, and witness the results at Saints Peter and Paul Church, and not realize that we accomplished something very significant in Buffalo.”*



