

New York State Deanery
Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Orthodox Church in America

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Diocesan Assembly ~ December 11, 2012
Report of the Dean

16 November 2012

Your Grace Bishop Michael, Reverend Clergy and Lay Delegates,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Have you ever been part of a team that didn't seem to make any progress? Maybe the group had plenty of talent, resources, and opportunities ... and team members got along ... but the group just never went anywhere. If you have, there's a strong possibility that the situation was caused by lack of vision. Great vision precedes great achievement. And, every team needs compelling vision to give it direction. A team without vision is, at worst, purposeless; at best, it is subject to the personal (and sometimes selfish) agendas of its various members. As the agendas work against each other, the team's energy and drive drain away.

In contrast, a team that embraces a unified vision becomes focused, energized, and confident. It knows where it's headed and why it's going there. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, a leader of troops during World War II called a "soldier's general," wrote: *"Every single soldier must know, before he goes into battle, how the little battle he is to fight fits into the larger picture, and how the success of his fighting will influence the battle as a whole."* People on a team need to know why they're fighting. Otherwise, the team gets into trouble.

Even if the vision is clear, it cannot become a reality or be implemented without setting the goals, specific steps to work on, and a desired timeline for implementation. A vision won't do the team much good without steps to accomplish it. The value of a strategy is that it brings process to the vision. It identifies resources and mobilizes specific members of the team. People need more than information and inspiration. They need instruction in what to do to make the vision become a reality. The vision of a team must look beyond current circumstances and any obvious shortcomings of current teammates to see the potential of the team. And, a truly great vision challenges people. The great artist Michelangelo prayed, *"Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can*

accomplish.” If you can confidently measure the vision of your team according to the goals you set, and you find them all pointing in the right direction, then you’ll know that the vision is worth stretching for.

We have witnessed dramatic changes in the life of our diocese and deanery in the past two-and-a-half years due to clarity of vision, tireless work, and inspiration of our Bishop Michael. In large part, implementation of this vision is made possible by generosity of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB). We ask all of our people, organizations, and parishes to maintain and even to increase their support of this stewardship program; we thank them for being an important part of turning around our deanery and diocese, showing active support toward Bishop Michael's vision for our future.

Missions are being planted and supported, older parishes assisted and revitalized, future generations of priests and deacons are being prepared for the service in our parishes. Youth ministries are being given much needed priority. Parish councils, Sunday school teachers, and our choirs have seen conferences regularly scheduled and well attended throughout the diocese. The diocesan administration was reorganized by Bishop Michael with the assistance of the Chancellor, Deans, and Diocesan Council. The Council of Presbyters and Diocesan Spiritual Court are functioning efficiently with the overall goal of strengthening and growing the parishes and outreach ministries in our diocese. Isolation, mistrust, and lack of conciliarity are clearly issues of the past that have been replaced by cooperation, brotherhood, ever-increasing trust and mutual love which build-up the church ... a diocese gathered together with its Bishop.

During the past year the life of New York State deanery was very active and positive thanks to the vision and Archpastoral ministry of Bishop Michael; and, the outstanding work, cooperation, good will, and sacrifices of our priests, deacons, and laity.

Our deanery clergy and lay representatives participated monthly in meetings of the Diocesan Council, assisting His Grace in implementing his vision for our diocese. Meetings of the Chancellor and Deans with Bishop Michael facilitated clergy transfers, filled vacancies, and resolved other administrative and canonical issues.

The Diaconal Formation Program continues in revitalizing and growing the ministries and outreach in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. It is generously supported in large part by Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors.

In addition to our regular deanery meetings, the following events of significance took place in our deanery:

Deanery Youth and Family Conference at Greek Peak: January 13-15

Great Blessing of Waters at Cayuga Lake hosted by Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing NY

Deanery DDB Appreciation Dinner at Greek Peak Mountain Resort: February 19

Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat at St. Basil's Academy: February 24-26

Deanery meeting and Lenten Retreat in Syracuse NY: March 15

Diocesan Lenten Youth Retreat in Wayne NJ: March 30-31

Visit of Hawaiian Iveron Icon of Mother of God to Lansing NY: May 27

Deanery Parish Council Conference in Endicott NY: June 23

Deanery Picnic with Bishop Michael in Lansing NY: July 5
Deanery Choir Conference in Otego NY: July 28
St. Andrew's Summer Camp with Bishop Michael: July-August
Deanery "Matushki Get Together" Cruise at Skaneateles Lake: August 11
Diocesan Youth Day with Bishop Michael: August 16
Deanery Sunday School Teachers Conference in Endicott NY: August 18
Diocesan Clergy Conference in Wayne NJ: August 21-22
Diocesan Choir Appreciation Day: September 30
"Operation Buffalo" continued ... complete renovation of Church Hall interior
Holy Apostles Mission, Lansing NY, collected and delivered items to Hurricane Sandy victims

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

We extend our congratulations and welcome to our deanery clergy family the deacons newly ordained by Bishop Michael upon their completion of Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program:

Fr. Deacon Gregory White -- assigned to Holy Trinity, Elmira NY
Fr. Deacon Mark Bohush -- assigned to Saints Peter and Paul, Herkimer NY
Fr. Deacon Simeon Peet - assigned to Saints Peter and Paul, Endicott NY

We also welcome Father David Poling and his family as they are assigned to serve Saint Innocent Mission in Oneonta NY. May God bless their service to our deanery and diocese, and grant them many years!

Through the selfless and sacrificial services of Father Timm Holowatch and Father John Bohush, we were able to assist our parishes in Buffalo, Lansing, Herkimer, and Syracuse when priests became sick, moved, or went on vacations. Our deacons and sub-deacons assisted many deanery parishes in celebrating hierarchical services during visits by Bishop Michael: Herkimer, Elmira, Rochester, Watervliet, Cohoes, Lansing, and others. We thank them for their love and service to our deanery and diocese.

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

We ask for your continued prayers for our ailing clergy, Matushki, and laity as they are provided to all of us by His Grace through Father Ken's emails.

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

Ultimately, we thank His Grace our Bishop Michael for his love, humility, service, and in providing us with the image of a servant leader. *Many Years, Master!*

In our Lord, Jesus Christ,

//signed//
Father Alexey Karlgut
Dean

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken James Stavrevsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Father Ken James Stavrevsky
Secretary