



The Department of Youth Ministry  
33 Hewitt Avenue      Bronxville, NY 10708

Rev. Jason Vansuch, Chairperson  
Rev. James Worthington, Vice-Chairperson

**REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH MINISTRY TO THE 2012 ANNUAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY**

**Holy Assumption Orthodox Church  
Clifton, NJ  
December 11, 2012**

Your Grace, Reverend Chancellor, Brother Clergy and Faithful of our Beloved Diocese:

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!      GLORY FOREVER!

With the Blessing and Archpastoral guidance and leadership of His Grace Bishop MICHAEL, the Department of Youth Ministry has been very active this past year. Whether it has been on the Diocesan Level or on the Parish Level, the youth of our Diocese have been very active in various activities through which they not only had the opportunity to come together in prayer and Christian Fellowship but also they had the opportunity of re-kindling their friendships with one another as well as making new ones.

Below is a list of activities that the Department of Youth Ministry organized as well as participated in throughout this past year:

**January 2012**

Priest Jason Vansuch and Priest James Worthington attended and participated in the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America Committee for Youth Worker Conference at Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA. Throughout this conference, we had the opportunity of working with and meeting with other Youth Directors and Leaders from the various Canonical Orthodox Jurisdictions throughout North America. We were educated in the proper ways and guidelines to hold various youth outings, camps, etc and what proper steps should be taken to have a safe and successful youth event. We also participated in group discussions on various topics pertaining to youth work particularly but not limited to the area of education. Materials were given to all youth leaders present so that they would be able to implement them in their respective dioceses that they work in. The next Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America Committee for Youth Worker Conference is scheduled for January 23-26, 2013 in Austin, TX.

## **FEBRUARY 2, 2012**

On February 2, the Great Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple, we also celebrate World Day of Orthodox Youth. The proposal for a World Day of Orthodox Youth was made by the XIV SYNDESMOS General Assembly in June 1992, and has received the blessing of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and the Heads of the other local Orthodox Churches. The Meeting of the Lord is one of the instances in the Holy Tradition of the Church, which presents youth and childhood as an image and vessel of God's presence and of His renewing Grace. Christ the newborn child fulfils the purpose of the Law and the proclamation of the prophets. St. Simeon and St. Anna show us the way in which we can receive Him: having seen the salvation, we are sent forth in peace, and we are called to give thanks to the Lord and to speak of His coming. God's Kingdom is near, it comes to us in the Divine-human person of Christ, the newborn child, who renews and rejuvenates our life every day. This is what Orthodox Youth ministry is always called to be: an invitation to meet the Lord and be changed by this Meeting, and here indeed the youth movement identifies with the liturgical life of the Church and Her pastoral service as a whole.

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL, we celebrated the World Day of Orthodox Youth here in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. We encouraged all parishes within our Diocese to celebrate the World Day of Orthodox Youth by holding special services or activities that would bring the youth of their respective parishes together to honor and celebrate not only the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord but also the World Day of Orthodox Youth. These celebrations were held anytime throughout the month of February.

## **St. Andrew's Camp July – August 2012**

Under the capable supervision of the Camp Director, Paul McDonald (a Saint Tikhon's seminarian) -- with the assistance of many volunteers, counselors, and choir directors -- the campers enjoyed an action-packed schedule taking them from Holy Myrrhbearer's Monastery (Otego NY), to Seabreeze Amusement Park (Rochester NY), and the Syracuse Zoo! But above all, each day is grounded in the liturgical worship of the Orthodox faith. Campers took turns chanting, singing, and serving in the altar. And, as last year, the campers have been fortunate to benefit from the frequent presence of Bishop Michael, who has taken time out of his busy schedule to spend a few days at camp: to provide lessons, answer questions, and lead services with the campers and staff.

During the first week (8-14 July), campers enjoyed the ever-popular "Horse Week" and class time with Father Leonid Schmidt of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Syracuse NY. During week two (15-21 July) campers are experiencing "Music Week," and have benefitted from the pastoral presence of Father Jason Vansuch and Hieromonk Kilian (Sprecher). During week three (22-28 July), campers explored "Ecology" with Father Adam Sexton. Week four was "Teen Week" with Father James Worthington.

## **Annual Diocesan Youth Day – August 16, 2012**

The 2nd Annual Diocesan Youth Day was on 16 August as over 100 participants gathered at Saint Mary Orthodox Church, Jackson NJ. The weather was beautiful; the enthusiasm spectacular! Participants included 7 Clergy, 30 adult chaperones and 70+ youth participants representing 13 parishes in our diocese. A parish from Rahway NJ of the American Carpatho-Russian Diocese also participated. At registration each youth participant was given a green t-shirt to wear with "Orthodox Youth Day 2012" written on the front so they could easily be identified. Before we begin any type of work, we pray! So, the day began with Father Jason Vansuch (Chairperson, Department of Youth Ministry) leading prayers in celebrating a Molieben Service. Imagine hearing a choir filled with nearly 100 voices ranging from the youngest child to the oldest adult -- truly the "Future of Our Church" was present! Archpriest Stephen Evanina (Holy Assumption Church, Clifton NJ) directed the choir as all sang together. After giving thanks to God and asking His blessing upon their endeavors, breakfast was served. While everyone was enjoying the delicious continental breakfast, it was time to "Stump the Clergy!" The Clergy held a Question and Answer Session with the participants where everyone had the opportunity to spend some time with the priests, asking them questions as well as enjoying fellowship and discussion with them. Following the "Q&A" session, it was time to pack everything up and load everyone onto the buses or into their cars and head off to Six Flags Great Adventure for the rest of the day! Due to his busy schedule, Bishop Michael was not able to be present for the

beginning part of the day, but he joined up with the group later on at Six Flags. As it turned out, by the time the group entered the Park the sun was shining brightly: Glory to God for All Things! At the Park it was time for the chaperones to take their groups to wherever they wanted to go: Batman the Ride, Kinga Ka, El Toro, Green Lantern, just to mention a few of the many rides the children enjoyed while at Six Flags. Riding all of those rides can build up an appetite, so when it came time for lunch all gathered together around the "Water Fountain" to distribute a free meal voucher to the youth participants to enjoy a delicious meal. By this time, Bishop Michael arrived and, spontaneously, the large group of children ran up to him and received his blessing (offering him loving hugs in return). What a blessing to behold a flock of children gather around their Shepherd. After lunchtime it was back to more rides and thrills before heading back to Saint Mary's Church Hall for the departure home.

If you have any questions about plans for the Diocesan Department of Youth Ministry or about upcoming future events or if you are eager to personally participate in this labor of love alongside Bishop Michael, then please do not hesitate to contact one of us. We thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to hearing from you. May GOD continue to bless and guide you, your families, and the faithful of your parishes!

With Love in Christ,

Rev. Jason Vansuch  
Chairperson  
The Department of Youth Ministry  
Diocese of NY&NJ

(609) 393-1234 (home phone)  
(609) 851-3811 (cell phone)  
[jvansuch@hotmail.com](mailto:jvansuch@hotmail.com)

Rev. James Worthington  
Vice-Chairperson  
The Department of Youth Ministry  
Diocese of NY&NJ

(607) 533-1020 (home phone)  
(315) 706-6185 (cell phone)  
[adelphotheos@gmail.com](mailto:adelphotheos@gmail.com)