

Report to the Diocesan Assembly November 11, 2014
OCA Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid (CSHA)
Diana Pasca, member

Your Grace Bishop + Michael, Reverend Fathers and Parish Delegates,

The Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid promotes the involvement of clergy and laity in caring for the needs of others according to the Gospel teachings and Tradition of the Church, developing resources for ministry programs by and for people of all ages. The Department collaborates with other OCA Church Ministries, members of Orthodox jurisdictions in North America and U.S. and worldwide humanitarian organizations, while raising awareness of the needs of ‘the least of these’ and providing resources that motivate parishes to meet those needs.

Amongst those resources are the Resource Handbook, an ongoing collection of nearly three hundred articles based on effective parish and outreach ministries, and Compassion in Action, a distinctive Parish Ministry Training that can transform the care receiver, the care giver and the parish itself. In the training, the faithful become a personal presence of empathy, compassion and listening to someone who is suffering. These and many other resources are available on the Departments’ page of the OCA website.

With the Blessing and encouragement of His Grace, Bishop + Michael, I’ve been asked to be the Departments’ representative in a new initiative that CSHA members have developed. The Diocesan Ministry Network made up of one representative from each OCA diocese is an initiative to strengthen parish ministries and charitable outreach programs throughout the Church. Diocesan hierarchs and chancellors have been contacted with requests to appoint service-oriented clergy, lay men or women of any age to serve with the Diocesan Ministry Network. As liaisons, they will communicate CSHA news to the diocese and likewise provide information on their diocesan and parish programs to the department. The exchange of information can greatly facilitate networking of like programs for fresh ideas and problem solving. CSHA could then better highlight successful programs for the encouragement and growth of programs in all dioceses. A brief perusal of the latest issue of Jacob’s Well highlights our Diocesan Life with wonderful stories from Parishes old and new, large and small, caring for the needs of others.

I encourage you to contact me so we can initiate this dialogue in New York and New Jersey, and then see where this leads us in this coming year. (Contact info at bottom)

“If concrete acts of service do indeed lead us to deeper solidarity with the poor, the hungry, the sick, the dying, and the oppressed, they will always give rise to prayer. In prayer we meet Christ, and in Him all human suffering. In service we meet people, and in them the suffering Christ.” Henri Nouwen, *The Only Necessary Thing*

Respectfully submitted,
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