

NEW YORK STATE DEANERY REPORT

Your Eminence Archbishop MICHAEL and Delegates to the Diocesan Assembly,
Glory to Jesus Christ!

The past year was very active and positive in the life of the New York State Deanery, thanks to the vision and Archpastoral ministry of Archbishop Michael and outstanding work, cooperation, goodwill, and sacrifices of our priests, deacons, and laity.

In spite of challenges, the deanery continues to be very active and focused on the growth of parishes and missions through ministries, outreach, education and evangelization.

We want to offer our gratitude to numerous volunteers in our parishes, deanery, and diocese, whose selfless and often unrecognized labors makes all the difference in the life of our communities. Thank-you!

Currently, every parish and mission in NY State Deanery is being served by full-time priest or covered on a short and long term basis, when emergencies arise. While being able to fill all the pastoral needs of NY State Deanery with the help of attached priests and deacons, we must continue our efforts to recruit younger priests aggressively from seminaries, other dioceses, and jurisdictions.

An alarming number of priests in NY State Deanery parishes are dealing with health issues, illnesses, and problems; both chronic and acute:

Father John Udics
Father Ken James Stavrevsky
Father Stephen Mack
Father Jason Kappanadze
Father John Chupeck
Father Herman Schick (retired)
Father Peter Olsen
Father Igor Burdikoff (retired)

We ask for your continued prayers for their recovery and health.

MEMORY ETERNAL! We are deeply saddened to report that Deacon Mark Hoeplinger of Saint George Church in Buffalo NY fell-asleep in the Lord, suddenly and unexpectedly, on Thursday, October 8th while traveling overseas. An accomplished medical doctor and surgeon (otolaryngologist), Deacon Mark was a graduate of our Diocesan Diaconal Formation Program prior to ordination by Archbishop Michael. His life of service (diakonia) to others in the love of the Lord was noteworthy, as were his contagious enthusiasm, manifest joy, and ever-present smile. Our deepest sympathies are expressed to his Matushka (Dr.) Christine and to their family.

“AXIOS!”

Father Gregory White

On Saturday, 31 January 2015, Deacon Gregory White was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Grace, Bishop Michael, at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery Church in South Canaan PA. Father Gregory, whose home parish is in Elmira Heights NY, is a recent graduate of our Diocesan Diaconal Formation Program. May God bless and grant “many years” to Father Gregory and his wife, Matushka Katherine, as they begin this next phase of their

public ministry to the glory of God and the good-estate of His Holy Church abiding in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

“AXIOS!”

Father Michael Speck and Deacon Sean McNulty - 06/01/15

On Saturday, 16 May 2015, Father (Dr.) Michael Speck was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at his home parish, Saint Nicholas Church, in Auburn NY. The following day, Sunday, 17 May, Deacon Sean McNulty (a graduate of our diocesan Diaconal Formation Program) was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at his home parish, Saint John the Baptist Church, in Rochester NY. Father Michael and Deacon Sean are now assigned and serving in their home parishes. May our Lord grant them “Many Years” as they labor to the glory of God and the good-estate of His Holy Church.

“AXIOS!”

Father Vasili Dubee

The St. Tikhon Monastery and Seminary Community gathered together on October 8-9 to celebrate the Feast of the Founder of the St. Tikhon Monastery, Saint Patriarch Tikhon, Confessor and Patriarch of Moscow. This year's feast was even more full with the ordination of Dn. Vasili Dubee (St. Tikhon's, Class of 2009) to the priesthood. His Eminence, Mark, Archbishop of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, presided at the Hierarchical Liturgy and ordination.

Fr. Vasili was transferred to our Diocese and attached to Archbishop Michael's Chapel, pending future assignment, while serving at SS. Peter and Paul's in Endicott and the New York State Deanery.

We would like to extend a heartfelt congratulation and offer prayers for Fr. Vasili and his family as they begin this next phase of their public ministry, in our Deanery and Diocese.

Diocesan Administration reorganized by Archbishop Michael, with the assistance of Chancellor, Deans, Diocesan Council, and Council of Presbyters is functioning efficiently, with an overall goal of strengthening and growing the parishes and outreach ministries in our diocese. An unprecedented level of accountability and transparency have been instituted through the vision of His Eminence and tireless efforts of Matushka Mary Buletza Breton, CPA - our Diocesan Treasurer; and our diocesan financial reports are continually reviewed and publicly posted on our diocesan website.

Our thanks go to Fr. 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 OCA! Thank you Fr. Ken and may God continue to bless you and your efforts!

Our Deanery clergy and lay representatives participated monthly in a meetings of Diocesan Council, assisting His Eminence in implementing his vision for our diocese, as well as meetings of Council of Presbyters, Diocesan Court, and meetings of the Chancellor and Deans with Archbishop Michael, to facilitate clergy transfers, filling vacancies, and resolving other administrative, canonical, and legal issues.

In spite of challenges, the deanery continues to be very active and focused on the growth of parishes and missions through ministries, outreach, education and evangelization. Following are just some events and programs, from which all of our deanery parishes have benefited:

- **FIRST ANNUAL GIRLS RETREAT** - The First Annual Diocesan Girls Retreat was held, with the support and blessing of Bishop Michael, at Saint Basil's Academy in Garrison NY from Friday, 14

November to Sunday, 16 November 2014. Over 35 young women were present for all or part of the weekend along with approximately 20 chaperones. Participants came from each of the three diocesan deaneries (New Jersey, New York City, New York State) in addition to a contingent from Berwick PA and from the Moscow Patriarchate. Given the success of this year's inaugural event, His Grace gave his enthusiastic blessing to make this an annual retreat to occur each fall.

- Saints Peter & Paul Church in Endicott continued to host the Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program every Saturday from September through end of May. Our diocesan students (9) are doing great and are actively involved in service (diaconia) and witness (martyria) in their home parishes, deaneries, and the diocese.
- Archbishop Michael hosted a Christmas Social get-together for clergy and families of the deanery. It was a wonderful occasion for fellowship and celebration of the Nativity of our Lord with our Archpastor.
- On Saturday January 3, 2015, parishioners from NY State Deanery met "half-way" for family fun and fellowship at Palm Island Indoor Water Park (Batavia NY). The day featured fun on the waterslides, pool basketball, and lots of splashing. As children enjoyed the water fun, adults discussed ways the parishes could collaborate and support one another in the future. Coordinating the event were Fr. Jason Vansuch, Deacon Mark Hoeplinger of Blessed Memory, then Subdeacon (now Fr. Dn.) Sean McNulty, and Arthur Papanastasiou.
- During the Theophany season, the Great Blessing of Waters at Cayuga Lake was hosted by Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing NY.
- Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDBs) from throughout the New York State Deanery gathered on Sunday, 9 February, in Endicott NY for an Appreciation Dinner. During the year, DDBs contributed generously to support vital ministries; the work of the Church is being funded as never before! There are visible "fruits" of their labors and efforts as mission parishes are being established and supported, seminarians are receiving scholarships, and struggling parishes are being revitalized. We ask for your continuous generous support of DDB Program.
- Annual Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat was held at Saint Basil Academy in Garrison NY. Over 60 participants were present for all or part of the weekend. Altar servers and clergy came from each of the three deaneries -- New York City, New Jersey, New York State -- as well as from the Moscow Patriarchate and Carpatho-Russian Diocese. Archbishop Michael led the retreat together with four Priests, two Deacons, a Sub-deacon and Reader.
- A deanery meeting and Lenten Retreat with a Continuing Clergy Education Program was held in Syracuse NY.
- It was a great joy for the faithful of Saint Basil Orthodox Church in Watervliet NY and their Rector, Archpriest Peter Olsen, to host a Lenten Youth Retreat on Saturday, 14 March 2015. This annual regional event has been hosted for over 20 years and includes participation by local Orthodox parishes; in recent years it has been hosted by Saint Basil Greek Orthodox Church in Troy NY. This year the Lenten tradition returned to Saint Basil's in Watervliet.
- With the blessing Archbishop Michael nearly twenty teenagers (grades 7-12) gathered on 20-22 March 2015 for the Annual Lenten Youth Retreat at Saint Basil Academy in Garrison NY. Father Jason Vansuch (Chairman, Department of Youth Ministry) coordinated the event together with youth workers Janine Alpaugh, Juliana Federoff, Danielle Geeza, and Tania Metz. The theme was "Let My Prayer Arise: The Mystery of Prayer" with guest speaker Father Timothy Hojnicky (Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg PA). Participants arrived late into Friday evening, braving the snow for the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with old acquaintances and to make new friends.
- NY State Deanery Clergy meeting and Laity Town Hall meeting was held in Syracuse to discuss upcoming All American Council and proposed Revised Statute of The Orthodox Church in America.

- NY State Deanery Sunday School Teachers Conference in Endicott was held. Presentations were outstanding, including many practical aspects
- NY State Deanery Parish Council Conference on the subject of Church Finances was held in Watervliet, with more than 50 people in attendance (including 10 clergy).
- Large number of NY State Deanery clergy participated in Continuous Clergy Education Symposium, held at St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary, which provided outstanding presentations as well as opportunities for fellowship and discussions.
- NY State Deanery Clergy and Families Picnic was held in Lansing, hosted by His Eminence Archbishop Michael. It brought together 30-40 priests, deacons, Matushki, and children for the purpose of strengthening our bonds of clergy brotherhood in the deanery with each other, and our Archpastor.
- Youth and clergy from NY State Deanery parishes and missions were actively involved in St. Tikhon's and St. Andrew's Summer Camps (during July and first week of August), as camp directors, counselors, and campers; especially from Rochester, Endicott, Lansing, Buffalo, and few others, in substantial numbers.
- DIOCESAN YOUTH DAY 2015 - SIX FLAGS GREAT ADVENTURE - For All Diocesan Youth and Friends... from elementary to middle school, to high school, to college. Bringing together the youth of our Churches with one another-- for a day of fun and fellowship.
- ANNUAL CLERGY CONFERENCE. Priests and deacons from across the farthest reaches of the diocese -- downstate NJ (Mays Landing) to upstate NY (Buffalo) -- gathered with Archbishop Michael in Clifton NJ, at Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church, for the 2015 Diocesan Clergy Conference. Nine accredited hours of Clergy Continuing Education [CCE] were available to meet the annual requirement of twenty CCE credits established by the Orthodox Church in America for all clergy. In addition, priests and deacons enjoyed and benefited from fellowship in prayer, unity in study, spiritual renewal, and a strengthening of brotherly affection among pastoral ministers.
- Diocesan Choir Appreciation Day - "On Sunday, October 4th, I ask all the faithful of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey to join me in celebrating Church Musician Appreciation Day. On that day, which is the Sunday closest to the feast day of Saint Romanos the Melodist (October 1st), I encourage Rectors, Parish Councils, and the faithful of our parishes to offer special thanks to their choir directors, singers, composers, arrangers, and those who teach church music to our children." -Archbishop Michael
- The Second Annual Diocesan Girls Retreat for young women in grades 7-12 will take place at Saint Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York from November 13-15, 2015. Saint Basil's Academy has beautiful grounds offering dormitory style rooms, a beautiful chapel, an indoor basketball court, and an Olympic-size indoor swimming pool which will be available for use. It will be a three-day retreat. Under the guidance and direction of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, the participants will learn the importance and role of women in the life of the Church by way of "Serving Out of Love" with sessions taught by Mother Christophora, Abbess of the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City PA. Participants will also learn about the life and ministry of Blessed Matushka Olga of Alaska, with plenty of time to enjoy fellowship, education, and spiritual enrichment with one another.

In large measure, we owe our successes to selfless sacrifices and financial stewardship of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDBs), whose monetary offerings make many of those ministries and activities that benefit every one of our parishes possible. To this end, we should encourage as great a participation in VOF (Vision of Our Future) as possible among our parishioners, organizations, and parishes, since it identifies and supports three crucial areas that will make the greatest impact on the future of our parishes, deanery, and the diocese: Support and planting of Missions, Support of Diocesan seminarians - future priests; and Support and revitalization of older, struggling parishes. We thank you DDBs from the bottom of our heart!

Recent Parish Anniversaries were celebrated in NY State Deanery:

125 YEARS: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Buffalo NY

On 1-2 August 2015, Archbishop Michael made a pastoral visitation to one of the oldest parishes ... most likely the oldest ... in the diocese of New York & New Jersey, Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Buffalo NY. The faithful of both OCA Buffalo parishes (the other is Saint George Orthodox Church) as well as other local Orthodox parishes gathered for the occasion to be with His Eminence for the liturgical celebrations.

100 YEARS; Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in Cohoes NY

On the weekend of 11-12 October 2014, Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in Cohoes NY celebrated their Centennial year. Saturday morning a memorial Divine Liturgy was celebrated commemorating departed priests, parish leaders, and parishioners who had served in the church the previous 100 years. That afternoon, Father Terenti Wasielewski (parish rector) offered a history session, speaking about Lemkovyna: the place of origin for many parish founders. Stephanie Stroyen provided a pictorial time-line of the parish history. Vespers was served and a fellowship followed. On Sunday, Bishop Michael celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and the festive rejoicing continued afterward at the Ukrainian Citizen's Club of Cohoes.

100 YEARS: Dormition Orthodox Church in Binghamton NY

His Eminence Archbishop Michael led the celebration of 100th Anniversary of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church in Binghamton NY on Saturday October 10th and Sunday October 11th. Anniversary Banquet was held at the Binghamton Country Club. Joining Archbishop Michael and Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky (Rector) were nearly a dozen clergy, both from our deanery and from other jurisdictions. Celebrations were truly joyous and memorable.

5 YEARS: Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing NY

The 5th Anniversary celebration of Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing (Ithaca) NY took place on the weekend of 8-9 August 2015. Archbishop Michael led the festivities having previously celebrated the 125th Anniversary of Saints Peter & Paul Church in Buffalo NY, the oldest parish in the diocese. As a testimony to the faithful endurance of Orthodox Christians in the diocese and the blessings of the Lord, His Eminence followed the 125th Anniversary commemoration by traveling 150 miles south-east to lead the faithful of one of the youngest parishes in its anniversary celebration. Nine local clergy representing three jurisdictions as well as faithful from throughout the diocese and beyond came together to give thanks to God for the tremendous blessings that have been poured out on this young, vibrant community, under leadership of Fr. James Worthington (Rector).

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

All the parishes, missions and camps of the NY State Deanery were visited by His Eminence Archbishop Michael, on regular basis and often multiple times. We are grateful for His Eminence' Archpastoral care, love and kindness.

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Father Alexey Karlgut, Dean

New York State Deanery