

## **NEW YORK STATE DEANERY REPORT**

Your Eminence Archbishop Michael, Reverend Clergy and Lay Delegates,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

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

Despite 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.

I am pleased to state that in my experience and observations, the administration of the diocese assisted by Chancellor, Deans, Diocesan Council, Council of Presbyters, and Diocesan Spiritual Court -- 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 New York State Deanery actively shared the vision of His Eminence Archbishop Michael regarding the absolute necessity of strengthening the parishes of the Diocese and decentralizing efforts of evangelization and Christian outreach - the vital and fundamental witness, ministries, and life of the Church that are manifested most directly and dynamically in local parish communities, which are sustained, nurtured, and empowered within a diocese and not a national church.

To that end, our deanery, through series of town halls and clergy meetings, beginning in 2009 and 2010, having thoroughly reviewed diocesan and OCA budgets, concluded: "that CCA (Central Church Administration) fair share assessments levied upon the participating dioceses and, thereby, the diocesan parishes constitute a financial hardship in distressed economic circumstances and hinder the ability of a diocese to properly attend to strengthening parishes, establishing parishes, and all other financial needs and requirements toward fulfilling the vision and mission of the Church".

Prior to 2010, our diocese paid 82% of entire Diocesan Annual Revenue to OCA in CCA assessments, and 74% in 2010. Because the good-estate and building up of the Church was most directly affected by the allocation of limited resources at the parish and diocesan level, our deanery proposed and passed

Resolution on Central Church Administration Assessments (Fair Share) Reduction to 16<sup>th</sup> All American Council. As the result of our deanery resolution (that was also adopted by our Diocesan Assembly), The 16th All-American Council in Seattle (after a very lively debate on the appropriate funding level for work of the Central Administration), has decreased the per capita CCA assessment (first time ever) from the \$105 in 2012 to \$95 in 2013, \$92 in 2014 and \$90 in 2015, for a total drop of \$15 per capita. It further gave great motivation to OCA central administration to prepare and to begin the intricate transition from “head tax” to the biblical method of proportional giving, for the first time.

Our Deanery was instrumental in spearheading the effort with the Diocesan Council, the Metropolitan Council, Holy Synod and Dioceses to keep working on an equitable plan that includes all the OCA’s dioceses in sharing fairly in the funding of the OCA’s administration. Assessments have been reduced over the last four years, and the financial resolution—based on proportional giving, that was overwhelmingly passed at 18<sup>th</sup> All American Council - is the result of those efforts.

The rationale in even proposing this OCA Finance Resolution was to maintain more funding in the Dioceses/Parishes to STRENGTHEN and GROW the Church, and with transition from “head tax” to the biblical concept of proportional giving, the work will have JUST begun. It is the mission of ALL of us to renew our commitment to Christ and to the Church, and then to work at all levels, parish, deanery and the diocese, to expand and bring new members to our communities and parishes, where “in the celebration of the Eucharist we become the Body of Christ and are equipped with all that is necessary to work out our own personal salvation, in and through Christ, and to bring this salvation to the world”.

In practical terms, following numbers speak for themselves:

2010 National Assessments (CCA) for our Diocese were \$402,780.00

2016 National Assessments (CCA) for our Diocese were \$217,573.00

As National Assessments (CCA) for our Diocese decreased, our Diocesan investment in the work of Departments and Outreach Ministries has increased almost **400%**!

2010 Diocesan Departments/Ministries expenditures were \$46,538 (with year-end deficit of \$58,576)

2016 Diocesan Departments/Ministries expenditures were \$173,600.00 (with balanced budget)

**(note: all numbers are available on diocesan website for years 2010 and 2016)**

In addition, the generosity of the **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor’s (DDB) program** that was presented, articulated, and approved at our 2010 Diocesan Assembly, continues to support the initiatives and fulfill the goals Archbishop Michael envisioned in “Vision For Our Future”: 1) Support and planting of missions; 2) Support of our diocesan seminarians and theological education; 3) Support and revitalization of older, struggling parishes. Sharing this vision and inviting participation in the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor’s (DDB) program with all our parishioners, parish councils, and parish organizations is essential to success of our Diocese and Parishes.

**Thank-you to all of our DDB contributors!** May our loving Lord bless you and return your generosity a hundred-fold. If you have not yet joined in the support of this excellent program, please consider doing it as soon as possible. For a listing of the ever-growing number of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors, as well as projects that are funded by them, please check our diocesan website -- [nynjoca.org](http://nynjoca.org) -- which is beautifully maintained and regularly updated thanks to our own, Father Ken James Stavrevsky.

I would like to repeat the opening statement of the Diocesan Search Committee to Extraordinary Diocesan Assembly of New York and New Jersey on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009: “It would be perilous to ignore the fact that our Diocese has been through years characterized by failures in administrative structures, financial stewardship, with suspicions, accusations, violations of trust, and (most damaging of all) a disturbance in the mutual love, communion, and conciliarity that must be the foundation of our relationships as the Body of Christ. All of the pain and anger associated with this past must be (as we pray in final absolution) “consigned to oblivion” if we have any chance of moving forward ..., we must exhibit the requisite faith, hope, and love – and the conciliarity arising from these – or our labors will be in vain, unworthy of a blessing, and to our condemnation.”

It is clearly evident that the good order, mutual love, trust and care; outreach and ministries; mission planting and turn-around of older parishes; youth work and elder care; pastoral care and assistance; theological and continuous education of clergy, Conferences for Sunday school teachers, Parish Councils, choir directors and singers, that have been nearly non-existent in past decades, have been restored and became the largest part of our diocesan life, under stewardship of Archbishop Michael.

It is observed, that our past echoes the first part of 1 Corinthians 12:26, where Apostle Paul says: “If one member suffers, all suffer together”, however, today I am proud to state as the matter of fact, that our diocese, deanery and parishes resemble the second part of the same verse: “if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

I would like to honor and thank all men and women of our diocese, who through selfless sacrifice and yeomen’s labor of love were able to (as prayer of ordination says) heal that which was ailing and fill that which was lacking, by the Grace of God. Let us “all rejoice together”!

Our thanks go out to Father Ken James Stavrevsky for his significant efforts to facilitate and improve the communications in our deanery and diocese. His work in maintaining our beautiful diocesan website is truly appreciated. Thank-you, Father Ken, and may God continue to bless you and your efforts!

Our Deanery clergy and lay representatives participated monthly in 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.

Our deanery and diocese-wide events, retreats, conferences and workshops were many and well attended by clergy, faithful and youth of our parishes.

- Parish Council Conferences with Judge Ray Lanier reviewing the Revision of Diocesan Bylaws
- Sunday School Teachers and Parents Conference with Fr. Joseph Purpura
- Annual Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat at St. Basil’s Academy
- Annual Diocesan Girls Retreat at St. Basil’s Academy
- Annual Diocesan Choir Directors and Singers Workshop with Department of Liturgical Music
- Annual Lenten Teen Retreat
- Annual Continuing Clergy Education Symposium at St. Tikhon’s Seminary

- Annual Deanery Lenten Clergy Retreat with Archbishop Michael in Syracuse
- Annual Diocesan Youth Day in Six Flags Great Adventure Park in New Jersey
- Archbishop Michael hosted a Christmas Social get-together for clergy and families of the deanery, in Syracuse. It was a wonderful occasion for fellowship and celebration of the Nativity of our Lord with our Archpastor
- Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDBs) from throughout the New York State Deanery (over 120) gathered in Syracuse NY and Balston Spa NY, for two Appreciation Dinners, hosted by Archbishop Michael. During the year, DDBs contributed generously to support vital ministries; the work of the Church is being funded as never before! We ask for your continuous generous support of DDB Program
- 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
- 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 Wappinger Falls St. Gregory the Theologian Church, for the 2017 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
- 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
- Saints Peter & Paul Church in Endicott continued to host the Diocesan Diaconate Formation Program every Saturday from September through end of May in 2016-2017. Our diocesan students are doing great and are actively involved in service (diaconia) and witness (martyria) in their home parishes, deaneries, and the diocese. All students graduated and four of them were ordained to Holy Diaconate, during this summer

Deacon Paul Federoff, Deacon Alexander (Scott) Anderson, Deacon Ivan Bazarov and Deacon Stephan Karlgut. From all your clergy brothers in the deanery – AXIOS! May God grant you Many Years and fullness of blessings as you begin your diaconal service in our deanery and diocese!

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.

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

Father Ken James Stavrevsky, Father Stephen Mack, Father Jason Kappanadze (retired), Father John Chupeck, Father Herman Schick (retired), Father Igor Burdikoff (retired), Father Ilya Gotlinsky, and Father James Worthington.

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

We welcome Fr. Joel Brady who was ordained on behalf of Archbishop Michael by Archbishop Melchizedek and after being transferred to our diocese, was assigned to Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing. May God bless Fr. Joel and Matushka Meg as they begin this next phase of their public ministry, in our Deanery and Diocese.

Through the selfless and sacrificial services of Father Timothy Holowatch and Father Michael Speck we were able to assist our parishes in Buffalo, Watervliet, Lansing, Elmira Heights, Herkimer, and Syracuse when priests were ill, moved, or went on vacations. They also assisted in deanery parishes for hierarchical services when Archbishop Michael made Archpastoral visits: Herkimer, Elmira Heights, Syracuse, Rochester, Watervliet, Cohoes, Lansing, Oneonta and others. Thank-you and God bless you -- Father Timm and Father Michael – for your love and service to our deanery and diocese.

We are grateful for the ministry of our deanery Deacons, to whom we express our gratitude for their faithful work: Rev. Protodeacons Andrew Boisvert (Binghamton), Stephen Sweet (Rochester), and Deacons Michael Burdikoff (Ballston Lake), Mark Bohush (Syracuse), Simeon Peet (Binghamton), Sean McNulty (Rochester), Paul Federoff (Balston Spa), Alexander (Scott) Anderson (Syracuse), Ivan Bazarov (Lansing) and Stephan Karlgut (Bronxville).

We want to 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!

All the parishes, missions and camps of the NY State Deanery were visited by His Eminence, on regular basis and often multiple times, throughout this year.

Ultimately, we thank His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, for his love, humility, service, and for providing an icon of a true servant leader: “Axios! Many years, Vladyko!”

In our Lord, Jesus Christ,

//signed//

Father Alexey Karlgut, Dean  
New York State Deanery