

**NEW JERSEY DEANERY**  
**THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY**  
Report to the 2020 Diocesan Assembly

Thursday, November 5, 2020

Your Eminence, brother clergy, and lay delegates and observers to the Diocesan Assembly,  
Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Our deanery currently consists of twenty-seven parishes, missions, and institutions. This year, as has been the case the past several years, it has been a challenge to fill all these parishes with full-time priests. In some cases, we have retired priests serving on a part-time basis. We continue to pray that vocations are answered, and that this situation is rectified in the near future.

This has certainly been an unusual and challenging year for everyone, including the clergy and faithful of our deanery. Up until and through the Sunday of Orthodoxy, all was going along as normal. But from that point on, our lives change at all levels. After a wonderful gathering of over 200 souls for the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers at Holy Resurrection Church in Wayne, it became unsafe to gather not only as a diocese or a deanery, but as a parish family. Government mandates went into place that drastically limited any such gatherings to only “essential” individuals. Services were canceled, and others were allowed to be served with only skeleton crews physically present. Technology suddenly became a greater friend than before as parishes began to discover how to livestream services and keep their faithful somehow “plugged in” to the liturgical life of the Church.

Financial support of the parishes became an issue; how would the stewardship efforts of parishioners and others continue if those stewards were unable to bring their sacrificial donations with them to the Eucharistic worship? Again, technology became an ally as online giving solutions were identified and implemented by some parishes. Many parishes also saw donations come in by mail at an increased level. Whatever the method implemented, those who continued and continue to support their parishes throughout this pandemic are to be praised and congratulated.

Meetings of the deanery clergy, always conducted in-person, became Zoom events. The focus of these meetings has been primarily on keeping the deanery parishes at a reasonable level of spiritual, financial, and physical health. Discussions at the meetings have included the implementation of Diocesan directives and initiatives, and the sharing of ideas for coping with the pandemic restrictions that parishes are doing, trying, investigating, or planning.

Archbishop Michael values the importance of the health of his parishes, but also the health of his clergy. Fortunately, His Eminence was able to host the deanery clergy and their families at yet another wonderful holiday dinner at the Brownstone in Paterson on February 9. However, the clergy family picnic, usually held in the summer, had to be canceled this year.

The deanery maintains a checking account that is primarily funded by donations made at the Lenten Mission Services. The income for this year was limited to the collection taken at the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers service. However, with prior balances, the deanery was able to support a grieving family in need of financial aid and another family that required assistance to help cover unforeseen medical expenses. We pray that these funds may be replenished so that similar assistance can be extended by the deanery to those in need.

In pastoral changes, Deacon Michael Pejovic was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on Saturday, September 19, 2020. Father Michael remains attached to the Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Brick, NJ.

Since our last Diocesan Assembly, two of our deanery priests, Father Sergius Kuharsky and Father Kyril Riggs, reached the milestone ages of 90 years. Father Paul Shafran continues to be the senior living priest of our deanery at 98 years of age. Father George Hasenecz was awarded the Mitre on October 11. Several other priests received priestly awards for their service to the Church. May God grant all of them Many Years!

As a deanery, we continue to strive to serve God and witness to His Good News. We pray that He continues to guide us in our efforts, and we give thanks to Him for providing the leadership of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael who shepherds us along the journey to His Heavenly Kingdom. We look forward to the day on which we will be able to gather again as the New Jersey Deanery. In the meantime, we trust in God's providence and care for our deanery and for all His people.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Gary Joseph Breton, Dean