

NEW JERSEY DEANERY
THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY
Report to the 2021 Diocesan Assembly

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

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. It has been a challenge this year to fill all of them with full-time priests. In some cases, we have retired priests serving on a part-time basis. We pray that vocations are answered, and that this situation is rectified in the near future.

The major challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic appear to have subsided, but some continue to be a factor in parish life throughout the deanery. There is a range of precautionary practices still in effect at many parishes. Some parishes have essentially returned to “normal”. However, in most every deanery parish there are people who are not yet comfortable returning to the Divine Services and the fellowship activities. We pray for the day when the “all clear” may be sounded, and all the faithful will feel comfortable enough to return to parish life.

The frequency of meetings for our deanery clergy has been affected by Covid-19. Early on in the pandemic, we met periodically by Zoom, but even that practice fell off after a while. Most recently, we have begun to consider a schedule for upcoming in-person meetings in order to return to doing the business of the deanery.

In mid-September, Archbishop Michael hosted a Clergy Picnic for the deanery clergy and their families. To many, this gathering provided hope that the now-visible light at the end of the tunnel is not far off. A good number of clergy families attended, and the joy was palpable.

In pastoral changes, Father Matthew Brown was relieved of his duties as Rector of Holy Apostles Church in Saddlebrook, NJ. Father Jacob Ramsey, newly ordained to the Holy Priesthood, has been assigned as Acting Rector at Holy Apostles Church. Father Alexander Smida was assigned to Holy Transfiguration Chapel in Princeton as Assistant Priest. Archimandrite Joseph (Hoffman) experienced some physical challenges this year; the Church of the Holy Transfiguration is receiving assistance in conducting the Divine Services from various deanery clergy.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Gary Joseph Breton, Dean