



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

Report to the Clergy-Laity Congress

Nashville July 3 - 8, 2016

Stewardship Chairperson: Metropolitan Nicholas **Outreach & Evangelism Chairperson:** Metropolitan Isaiah

Vice Chairperson: George Matthews

Dept. Leaders: Rev. Fr. Jim Kordaris, Stewardship Outreach & Evangelism Jerry Minetos, Parish Development

NOTE: The Stewardship and the Outreach & Evangelism Committees have been combined in one Committee

Archdiocesan Council Committee Members:

Rev. Fr. Costa Pavlakos	Dr. Harry Kotsis	Gus Vratsinas	John Bouzas	Dr. Vicki Pappas
Dr. Louis Roussalis	Gus Vratsinas	Bill Vranas	Fred Chapekis	Dean Poll
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		Theofanis Economides	Nick Moraitakis	George Vourvoulis

National Stewardship & Outreach Ministries Advisory Board Members:

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Peter Condakes				

MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT

Our mission is to provide parish leadership with practical tools and training to engage active and inactive members, inquirers and those unaware of Orthodox Christianity personally in order that they learn more about the faith and ministries of the Greek Orthodox Church, leading them to become fully committed members of the Body of Christ, actively participating in and supporting the ministries of the local parish, the Metropolis and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Efforts are made to coordinate programs and initiatives with other departments of the Archdiocese and its affiliated organizations.

NATIONAL STEWARDSHIP TRAINING INITIATIVE

The National Stewardship Ministries Subcommittee on Leadership Training has created an interactive, educational program to offer parish leadership a new vision for stewardship. The program includes training of parish leadership in the principles and procedures for implementing effective parish ministries. Key components of this training include an off-site, interactive seminar, outlining a vision for the future of the parish and developing skills for consensus-building, engagement of volunteers, and development of a council of ministries. A long-term goal of this initiative is to train others to carry on this work at the metropolis level.

METROPOLIS STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

The committee voted in 2015 to choose a metropolis/district and pilot a program for a paid stewardship professional to commit 100% of his or her time to the coordination of stewardship ministry in the district/metropolis. An individual has been selected for the position which will be in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. We are in the process of hiring and training him to begin on June 1, 2016. If successful, this position could be instituted throughout the Archdiocese.

STEWARDSHIP SEMINARIAN INTERN INITIATIVE

Three Holy Cross students will begin work as summer stewardship interns in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. Each will be assigned to a parish and will work to assist the parish in enhancing its stewardship ministry and all related ministries. They will coordinate with the Department, and the Metropolis Stewardship Coordinator. The goal of this initiative is to assist the local parish, integrate the use of available resources and provide Holy Cross seminarians with invaluable parish experience and training in Stewardship & Outreach. If successful, this program could be emulated throughout the Archdiocese.

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM CONFERENCE – OCTOBER 1-3, 2016 IN PORTLAND, OREGON

The Department is working together with the San Francisco Metropolis Commission on Orthodox Missions and Evangelism (C.O. M. E.) to host a conference on Outreach & Evangelism in the United States. This will be carried out with the support of a generous grant from Leadership 100. Speakers include Fr. Theodore Dorrance, Fr. Luke Veronis, Fr. Evan Armatas and Fr. Barnabas Powell. The Portland location was chosen in order to spotlight the San Francisco Metropolis Commission for Orthodox Missions and Evangelism (C.O.M.E.) which is headquartered there. The Commission has been in existence for over twenty years, has a Director and a full time Assistant Director. Through the initiative of the Commission, the Metropolis has initiated and coordinated outreach & evangelism throughout the Metropolis, intentionally planting parishes where there is a need, and has begun a program of parishes mentoring parishes. The San Francisco Metropolis Commission is put forward as a paradigm to be emulated throughout the Archdiocese.

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM: PRACTICAL STEPS

This booklet of ideas and resources is an invaluable tool for parish outreach committees seeking to assess their current outreach ministry and to improve and expand their efforts. This booklet was revised and updated in 2015 and was distributed to all parishes of the Archdiocese.

PLANNED GIVING

The National Stewardship Ministries Subcommittee on Planned Giving provides a complete set of resources to assist parish members in their estate planning, encouraging them to remember the Church in their plans. An investment by the parish in this program could yield exponential results for the parishes while providing our members with much-needed guidance and materials for end-of-life planning from an Orthodox Christian perspective. Printing of these materials was done with the support of a generous grant from Leadership 100

Planned Giving resources include:

1. A General Outline of the Various Ways to Make a Planned Gift;
2. A Tri-Fold Brochure for general distribution in the parish;
3. A Parish Implementation Plan for a Planned Giving Program;
4. A Planned Giving Poster for Display in the Parishes;
5. Sample Documents for Making the desired Planned Gift(s);
6. An Article co-authored by parish priests of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese titled “Preparing to Say Good-Bye: Do You Have a Plan?” offering guidance from an Orthodox Christian perspective; and
7. A Living Will/End-of-Life Planning Document that is legally binding in most states (in final stages of preparation).

FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME VIDEO SERIES

The FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME Video Series will reach out proactively to the non-Orthodox Christian, non-inquirer, drawing people to Orthodox Christianity that have never heard of it before. This project will put Orthodox Christianity in the mix of modern media in an adult, contemporary and engaging presentation. Reaching the unreached — kindling the light of the faith where it has not been before — is a broad mission. The initial plan is to produce 20-25 videos, one minute or less in length and release them every two weeks over a 52-week period. The first should be released in Spring 2016. These will be distributed on the GOA YouTube channel, Facebook, the goarch.org site, and also to the parishes in whatever format is needed. These could be very useful to people visiting the church for the first time or just passing by the church building, as well as festivals and other events where they could be played on an endless loop. Production will be done in coordination with GOTELECOM. Funding for this project is provided by a generous grant from Leadership 100.

REACHING THE DISTANTLY CONNECTED: An Urgent Ministry for the Orthodox Church

This handbook for reaching the distantly connected is distilled from extensive research done by Fr. Charles Joanides, PhD, LMFT, who served the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese for 16 years as a researcher in the area of Interfaith Marriage. This volume applies Fr. Charles research on intermarried couples and the non-Orthodox spouse to the topic of reaching those distantly connected to the Orthodox Church, outlining the case for this ministry and providing a roadmap and resources for addressing this area of Outreach & Evangelism. This research and the printing of the handbook is made possible by a generous grant from Leadership 100 and will be distributed throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in late spring, early summer of 2016.

DIVINE LITURGY: A COMMENTARY & GUIDE FOR WORSHIP: FR STEVEN TSICHLIS

This small volume will be a welcome addition to the pew rack and parish literature table, providing parishioners and visitors with a greater understanding of various aspects of the Divine Liturgy. This volume should go to print in the fall and a copy

will be sent to parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Additional copies will be available for to order or download from the Orthodox Marketplace (orthodoxmarketplace.com).

INCLUSION/OUTREACH TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CHAIR: DR. VICKY PAPPAS

The Department supports parish outreach to people with disabilities, also known as Inclusion Programs. This effort includes sharing of information on appropriate language and etiquette, outlines of successful parish programs, accessibility issues and more. Dr Pappas provided an article on the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act which was featured on the goarch.org site, the GOA Facebook page, the National Philoptochos Facebook page, and distributed to the parishes through the Department's various email lists. Long-term plans include ongoing education of parish leadership in the importance and the proper manner of interacting with people with disabilities, and the documentation of existing successful parish inclusion programs in a format that encourages other parishes to initiate similar programs.

ORTHODOX NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism often receives inquiries on methods of promoting "church growth." These parish leaders are seeking to allow for church growth by making their parish a healthy and vibrant place of worship, fellowship and service to others. The Department seeks to offer various tools to assist them in this effort. One comprehensive tool came to our attention nearly ten years ago when the Director was invited to participate in "making Orthodox" a process called Natural Church Development (NCD). This program, in use for over 30 years and in over 80,000 parishes worldwide, is designed to assist parishes to objectively evaluate, assess and measure church health by focusing on eight quality characteristics of ministry. The ONCD program is quantifiable and engages church members in the process.

The program was piloted in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in two Long Island parishes. In the San Francisco Metropolis, Fr. James Retelas is now qualified as an ONCD trainer and coach. Overall, dozens of GOA parishes in at least five Metropolises across the country also have or will be implementing the program in the coming months. The Denver Metropolis adopted ONCD as their official tool for parish revitalization efforts, and we are currently training and coaching over two dozen parishes there. The Metropolises of Boston and San Francisco are systematically introducing ONCD to their parishes. With the assistance of a Leadership 100 Grant, there are plans in place to implement the program throughout the Archdiocese. It is hoped that the success of this rollout will show this program to be a viable tool for evaluating and improving parish ministry in a quantifiable way. An additional benefit of this program is the engagement of parishioners in the process through surveys, meetings and focus groups.

Clearinghouse of Liturgical Items

Through this ongoing initiative, the department works with the parishes to match up those that have with those that need. Through this program, an effort is underway to coordinate GOA Department assistance to parishes in their early days or in recovery from disaster. Recently, the Department was able to arrange for vestments to be expressed to a priest whose vestments were damaged by fire in the vestry of his church. The Clearinghouse program has connected parishes of the Archdiocese as they provide one another with various liturgical items including an Iconostasion, pews, baptismal fonts, Stavromeno cross & icon, censers, altar boy robes, choir robes, chalices, candle holders and more. For a checklist of items visit www.outreach.goarch.org. We hope to set this up in a "Craig's List" format in the near future.

ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY PARISH RESOURCES

The annual packet of resources is directed to parish leadership throughout the Archdiocese. Every effort is made to support the parish throughout the year in utilizing these resources to personally engage parishioners in the life of the parish. Brochures, posters, sample commitment card, bulletin inserts and more are provided for parish campaigns, with text and graphics included for those parishes designing their own materials based on the Archdiocesan theme. The annual resources will continue to evolve through positive innovation and application of available technologies. One addition to the resources is the QuickStart Guide which arrives in parishes early in the year to allow the parish stewardship team to begin to organize their efforts. The goal is to prepare the parish resources earlier in the year (ideally by mid-summer), to give parish stewardship teams additional time to implement their year-round campaign.

The Annual Stewardship Ministry Resources will encourage the parish stewardship team to see their efforts in terms of a year-round effort of personal contact and engagement of active and inactive parishioners as well as outreach to inquirers (potential new members). It is clear that in this aspect of parish ministry, it is especially important to see Stewardship and Outreach as two sides of the same coin, both seeking to build up membership in the Body of Christ.

PARISH WELCOME FOLDER

To assist and encourage the parishes in reaching out to new members and to inactive members who may be returning to church for a service or sacrament, the department has developed a Welcome Folder which may be personalized by each parish with local information, directories, letters and more. A sample was sent to each parish in late 2010. To-date, over 15,000 folders have been distributed for use in over 200 parishes.

BROCHURES FOR PARISH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

To welcome people to the Orthodox faith it is critical that our own faithful be educated in all aspects of the faith. To assist the parishes in educating the faithful and reaching out to inquirers, the department has developed a number of informational brochures. These may also be used by various parish study groups. These include:

House of God by Fr Tom FitzGerald explaining the symbolism of our Church (over 14,000 shipped) and **Welcome to Great and Holy Pascha** for distribution on Holy Saturday evening (over 30,000 shipped).

The Nativity: God Becomes Human to Show us the Way by Fr Tom FitzGerald

As a Grain of Wheat... Memorial Prayers in the Greek Orthodox Church

The Historical and Personal Meaning of the 40-Day Blessing

Baptism: *Uniting with Christ*, by Fr Anthony Coniaris

Holy Communion: *The Gift of Eternal Life* by Fr Alkiviadis Calivas

Our Lenten Journey a compilation from a number of contributors

The Blessing of the Waters by Fr Mark Sietsema

Seed and Soil by Fr Theodore Stylianopoulos

The Lord's Prayer by Dr. George Parsenios

The Nicene Creed by Dr. George Parsenios

Stewardship as Creation Care by Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis

VISITOR CARDS & DISPLAY

There has been an excellent response from the parishes for the parish Visitor Card Display which incorporates the visitor card on a display welcoming the visitor to the parish. A supply of 100 personalized visitor cards is included with the display.

WELCOME & STEWARDSHIP BANNERS: GENERAL / NATIVITY / GREAT LENT / COME AND SEE / CUSTOM DESIGNS

Many parishes are utilizing a series of vinyl outdoor welcome banners developed for the parishes. In addition to the various outreach banners, a stewardship banner incorporating the annual theme is offered every year. One mission-minded priest has commented that he is not sure if the banner has brought in new parishioners but it is serving to instill a missionary mindset among his parishioners.

COOPERATIVE INITIATIVES

SURVEY ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS

The department hosted the initial meeting and participated in the survey of ten parishes in each of seven jurisdictions to evaluate outreach & evangelization efforts across Orthodox Christian jurisdictions in the United States.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN ACTION

The Department is working together with the Office of Parish Development to catalog parish ministries from throughout the Archdiocese, format the information, and provide the information to parishes of the GOA.

FAMILY OUTREACH SUNDAY

Research has shown that 96% of unchurched individuals in America would attend church if invited. The Outreach Sunday program encourages active parishioners to invite inactive family members and Orthodox Christian friends for a special day of fellowship and spiritual renewal. Family Outreach Sunday was developed in cooperation with the Ladies Philoptochos Society and the Department of Marriage and Family.

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47 (NIV)