

Mother Maria of Paris Charitable Ministry
of the Diocese of the Midwest (*Provisional Name*)
Report to DMW Diocesan Council – May 24, 2019

Rev. Jonathan Lincoln

“At the Last Judgment I shall not be asked whether I was successful in my ascetic exercises, nor how many bows and prostrations I made. Instead I shall be asked did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners. That is all I shall be asked.” —St. Maria of Paris

BACKGROUND

Since my last report at a Diocesan Council meeting, I continued attempting to organize a charitable ministry to brainstorm, plan, and execute a non-traditional fundraiser idea for St. Herman House in Cleveland, Ohio. The parameters for fundraising given by Bishop PAUL were to develop a means, or multiple means, of generating funds for Orthodox charitable work *outside* of parishes’ direct monetary support. The project in question was to raise \$30,000, which was estimated to cover all the costs of purchasing and installing two greenhouses at St. Herman House’s Spruce Farm, near Warren, Ohio, which is being turned into a recovery ranch.

Fr. Drew Clemens offered to give the Cleveland Deanery’s annual Lenten charitable donations to St. Herman House for this project. He has not yet received all the parishes’ donations, but he estimates that they could add up to several thousand dollars. Although parish donations are outside His Grace’s parameters for fundraising at this time, he gave his blessing for the Cleveland Deanery to do so, as it is an annual collection for Orthodox charitable work anyways.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Shortly after the recent Clergy Convocation, Bishop PAUL got me in touch with Hierodeacon Theodore Niklasson, who is forming a foundation to support Orthodox charitable work. Fr. Theodore informed me that he would be willing to give the Diocese of the Midwest \$10,000-15,000 for charitable efforts, perhaps on an annual basis. He has also offered to consult concerning best fundraising practices based on years of experience and training in this field.

This generosity breathed new life into the possibility of forming a charitable wing of the diocese. Shortly after my meeting with Fr. Theodore, I spoke with Paul Finley, the Director of St. Herman House, who gave me an update on the work at Spruce Farm. They have already installed one greenhouse, and the total cost of one is actually closer to \$18,000-18,500. Also, he said that one additional greenhouse would be perfectly sufficient, instead of two, as we had been planning.

I spoke with V. Rev. Lawrence Russell earlier this week, who is the chair of the Diocese of the West's charity department. He gave me a good overview of how their diocesan charity is funded, which is almost entirely from tri-annual appeals. This approach is not compatible with our guidelines from Bishop PAUL, but what we can learn from the Diocese of the West is their commitment to charity being part of the diocesan budget.

THE NEXT PROJECT

If the Diocese does in fact receive \$15,000 from Fr. Theodore Niklasson's foundation, and \$3,000-4,000 from the Cleveland Deanery, then we are already at our goal of providing St. Herman House with the funds to buy and install one greenhouse.

Instead of putting all prospective funds towards one greenhouse, a wiser course of action would be to save some funds as seed money for future projects. Therefore, we will need to determine how much of our existing prospective funds we want to save for future projects. Bishop PAUL prefers that instead of fundraising for a second greenhouse, we turn our sights to another Orthodox ministry within the diocese's territory.

Three possible recipients are the following:

- ❖ FOCUS Minnesota, for a stove or warming oven. Their Mobile Clinic is not operational yet because they are still working through the credentialing/compliance process(es), so their main focus now is food security for local children. A commercial-grade stove would allow them to meet the food needs of the "homeless and highly mobile students" in their area.
- ❖ Martha and Mary Maternity House in Chicago, for operating funds. Their board is now re-constituted, and their work is moving away from having a residential home for mothers in need, while facilitating transportation, material, emotional, and spiritual needs.
- ❖ Orthodox Detroit Outreach, which is about to do much-needed remodeling work on their Community Center. This is a large project and is necessary for meeting the many needs of their neighborhood. Multiple nonprofits partner with ODO by using this space.

My suggestion would be to support FOCUS Minnesota first, as they have a very tangible need (perhaps under \$5,000), and then to give Martha and Mary Maternity House help with operating funds. How to best serve ODO will require further brainstorming and conversation, but I do think it would be good to partner with them and learn what we can about missions education.

ORGANIZATION/RESPONSIBILITIES

For the Mother Maria Charitable Ministry's new project to succeed, it will need to be driven by representatives from each deanery. Bishop PAUL has blessed an organizational model for this ministry in which people from each deanery, clergy and lay, will serve as representatives or ambassadors for their respective deaneries, with the following responsibilities:

MOTHER MARIA OF PARIS CHARITABLE MINISTRY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

- ❖ Act as a liaison between the ministry's steering committee and the deanery clergy and parishes.
- ❖ Help with brainstorming for unique fundraising opportunities, such as concerts, grants, personal donations, etc., and spearhead execution of fundraisers in their respective deaneries.
- ❖ Work together in small groups from each deanery to facilitate fundraisers.
- ❖ Bring to the steering committee ideas for projects/recipients for funding, whether from their deaneries or from others.
- ❖ Continue the recruiting process upon diocesan approval.
- ❖ **Committee members need only agree to helping with the first fundraising project and to continue to serve as willing or able.**

In the future, the ministry will rotate deaneries to be the recipients of fundraising.

My role will be the facilitator, organizer, and recruiter (at the outset) for this ministry.

✿ *The ultimate purpose of this ministry should be to engage clergy and parishioners of all walks of life with service to the underserved.* Yes, we need to seek creative means of funding outside of parishes so that they aren't over-burdened financially, but this charitable ministry needs to be fundamentally built on Orthodox Christians in the diocese being given opportunities to live out Christ's teachings in Matthew 25:14-40 according to the gifts God has given them.

GOALS/QUALITIES TO BE PRODUCED

- ❖ Awareness of local/regional needs
- ❖ Awareness of Orthodox ministries that are working to meet material needs
- ❖ Increased awareness of what parishioners have to give: time, talents, and treasure
- ❖ Greater value of outreach/almsgiving
- ❖ Engender domestic missions consciousness

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Fundraise to support Orthodox ministries within the diocese through creative, new, external methods (not parishes)
- ❖ Encourage personal contact with ministries to the poor, homeless, and underserved
- ❖ Building relationships between parishioners and individuals being served through Orthodox ministries
- ❖ Education, education, education

MOTHER MARIA OF PARIS CHARITABLE MINISTRY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

PRACTICES OF THE CHARITABLE MINISTRY

- ❖ Hold fundraisers that 1) Raise awareness about specific ministries, 2) Raise funds from non-parishioners, and 3) Involve Orthodox clergy and parishioners in the planning and execution
- ❖ Encourage diocesan clergy and laity to take part in existing opportunities for contact with and service to the poor, homeless, and underserved
- ❖ Asking Orthodox ministries what their needs are: financial, gifts-in-kind, and/or volunteers
- ❖ Establish deanery point-people and sub-groups to lead efforts in their area
- ❖ Educating deanery point-people of the purpose and goals of this charitable ministry
- ❖ Plan YES Trips and diocesan service trips to Orthodox ministries or parishes in need
- ❖ Training youth to value service to the underserved
- ❖ Facilitate leaders of Orthodox ministries to speak at parishes

A CHALLENGE

The main challenge will be to find a balance between grass-roots support for local ministries, which is already present, with diocesan/central organization. The best model, in my opinion, will be one that combines the organizational advantage of having a centralized charitable ministry structure with the grass-roots capabilities of each deanery.

Although deaneries already are showing fantastic support for their local ministries, the main advantage of having a diocesan charitable ministry is its ability to raise more funds for Orthodox ministries than one deanery could raise by itself. This will be accomplished by sharing the skills, experience, ideas, and talents of the respective deaneries.

QUESTIONS FOR THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

1. Which organization should this ministry focus on supporting next?
2. Does it appear that the proposed efforts of a diocesan charitable ministry will serve the needs of Orthodox ministries in the diocesan territory?
3. Is the vision for this charitable ministry aligned with the diocesan leadership's vision?
4. Would the Diocesan Council consider offering seed money for this ministry?
5. Is the provisional name of the ministry acceptable?

Cleveland Deanery Report

May 31, 2019

Comp Packs were put in place for two Clergy. Details below.

Fr Stephen Frase transitioned from Associate Pastor to Acting Rector of St Gregory of Nyssa - Columbus Ohio - effective Feb 1, 2019. He replaces Fr Matthew Moriak who is now serving as a full time Hospital Chaplain. Fr Matthew will continue to contribute to ministries at St Gregory's.

Fr Yaroslav Stebelsky, formerly attached to St Theodosius Cathedral, and serving for nearly a year on a 'per service' basis, became Acting Rector of SS Peter & Paul - Lakewood, Ohio - effective May 6, 2019.

\$3,802.00 was collected during Lent to help support the 'Greenhouse Building Project' of St Herman's House of Hospitality, to be constructed at their Spruce Island Farm.

Respectfully submitted.

Fr Andrew Clements
Dean

Report of Diocesan Metropolitan Council Representatives

The February 2019 Metropolitan Council (MC) meetings took place from February 13-15 at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington (Long Island) NY. The meeting was chaired by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, with His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin and His Eminence, Archbishop Irénée in attendance. Additionally, Bishop David, while not on the Standing Synod, is the Synodal Liaison for the Pension Board, and was in attendance.

Metropolitan Tikhon, in his opening remarks, focused on the ongoing chancery restructuring, which will allow His Beatitude to focus more on his responsibilities as Primate. Fr. Alexander Rentel has assumed the role of Chancellor. The job description of Treasurer was divided into two jobs: a part-time Accounting Manager, responsible for bookkeeping and accounting operations, and a part-time Treasurer, having oversight responsibility over the Accounting manager, responsible for reconciliations, producing the Treasurer's Reports, and reporting in person to the Metropolitan Council, the Holy Synod and the All-American Council. The budget will be the same, but will be distributed between the two positions. A Chancery Administrator will replace the Secretary (but will continue to be the corporate secretary under New York law), and like the Treasurer, will report to the Chancellor. A new stipend position will be created for All-American Council Manager.

A study guide has been published for His Beatitude's "*Four Pillars*" booklet, and he has begun drafting a Strategic Action Plan to address more specifically the broad issues from the "*Four Pillars*" booklet. The document is a tool for interactive involvement of all constituencies of the Church.

His Beatitude shared a section of his action plan. Items include strengthening the OCA's role in world Orthodoxy, taking a leadership role based on our Autocephaly experience, not in arrogance, but rather, sharing our experience with others. Other priorities revitalizing struggling parishes through the Department of Evangelization, and Vocations. Themes for the next few years are: 2019 – prayer and reflection in light of 4 Pillars and study guide; 2020 – 50th anniversary; 2021 – AAC: outreach and evangelism.

His Beatitude noted the appointment of a committee to study the possible relocation of the OCA Chancery. Planning has been underway for the archives project at the Chancery; unfortunately, the bids came in at \$396k, and the bequest is \$210k. **The MC voted to deny expenditure for chancery/archives repairs and improvements beyond the \$79,609 "Deferred Maintenance"** necessary to stop water leaks and to maintain a sound and dry Chancery / archives, pending consideration of a possible relocation.

His Beatitude announced that His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin will chair the planning committee for the 50th anniversary of autocephaly and the Glorification of St. Herman of Alaska. Each diocese has a week assigned to go to Alaska in 2020 – ours is the week of August 9, 2020 for the Diocese of the Midwest – we need to talk it up. There will also be a cruise. Additionally, we need to write our history since Autocephaly

His Beatitude thanked Bishop Paul and the Diocese of the Midwest for his contributions to the Metropolitan Council and for his work as Chair of the Pre-Conciliar Commission for the 19th All-American Council.

The outgoing **Secretary, Fr. Eric Tosi** presented a report on the 20th AAC, scheduled to take place in 2021. As in the past, an organization assists in the search for a venue at no cost to the OCA. There was an extraordinarily good offer where the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel needed to fill a period that had opened up on their convention calendar. **The MC voted to approve, with the blessing of the Holy Synod, Baltimore for the AAC, July 23-30, 2021.** Fr. Eric presented the draft of a Personnel File Policy, drafted by the Legal Committee. After long discussions, the motion was rejected and sent back to the Legal Committee for further discussion at the Fall 2019 MC meeting.

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky gave a report on **external affairs**, reporting that no Orthodox church except Moscow has broken with Constantinople. Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak reported that the Stewards of the OCA exceeded its fundraising goal for the first time ever, and he thanked the generous contributors who help to fund the OCA's departments.

The **Pension Board**, represented by Fr. Matthew Tate and Matushka Mary Breton presented their report to the MC (<https://bit.ly/306ZnJ4>, page 81). Three motions were presented and passed: (1) permit increase of disability benefit, (2) permit designation of beneficiary, and (3) to maintain employer contribution level, relating to employees who have not retired by age 75. See pages 5-6 of <https://bit.ly/2JabOPq> for the exact wording of the amendments. Items that the Pension Board asked to be communicated to the Dioceses and Parishes are:

- All clergy under age 60 hired by a parish are mandated to be in the pension plan
- Parishes are required to pay the 8% of salary to the Pension Plan, even if the priest is not participating
- If a priest is still working until age 80, he pays his 6% contribution and the parish pays its 8% contribution.
- After age 80, if the priest is still working, the priest doesn't pay, but the parish still pays its 8%, which goes into a pool to help all retirees.
- Lay employees working over 20 hours per week must be told of their eligibility to join the Pension Plan.
- Even if a priest is not paid by the parish, they should get a minimum contribution of \$100 from their parish to assure they get their years of credited service.

Fr. Alexander Rentel presented his first **Chancellor's Report** to the MC. He provided additional details on the restructuring plan. In addition to his ongoing work that he outlined, Fr. Alexander is keen to see that the revised Statute is in place throughout the Church at all levels; he will commission a census of Statute compliance at all levels of the Church. Following through on this, the Metropolitan Council passed a motion recommending the Chancellor undertake a survey of the governing documents of all dioceses, parishes, monasteries, institutions, offices, and organizations of the Church to determine the level of compliance with the Statute of the OCA. The Chancellor will report on this matter to the Holy Synod at their Fall 2019 session, and, if necessary, provide recommendations for possible action. It was noted that many parishes have not met the 12/31/17 deadline to update their bylaws.

Fathers Nicholas Solak and Theophan Whitfield reported orally on efforts to establish Clergy and Clergy Wives Peer Learning Groups, funded by a \$470,700 grant from the **Thriving Ministry initiative** of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. to the OCA. This is a rollout from a pilot program in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Funding is provided over five years and the program will be pan-Orthodox.

Cindy Heise delivered an oral report on the results of the clergy wives survey she has conducted for the Dept. of Pastoral Life in order to determine needed support for clergy wives and to assist them in a variety of difficulties in their lives and ministries.

Melanie Ringa presented the **Treasurer's report**, which showed an unrestricted funds deficit of \$46,114 for the year, and an overall deficit of \$3,479 for calendar 2018. She thanked the diocesan treasurers for timely remittances of proportional giving contributions and their productive participation along with diocesan chancellors in the annual chancellors / treasurers meetings. Melanie also noted that, with the appointment of the new OCA Representative in Moscow, financial difficulties including recordkeeping, accountability, shortfalls and other issues at St. Catherine's Church have now been resolved.

The OCA is looking for an **interim Youth Director**.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Graban
Fr. Alexander Garklavs
May 8, 2019