

Department of Christian Education
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

To: Members of the Diocesan Council

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

The Department of Christian Education (DCE) for the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania is pleased to inform you of our proposed mission statement. We also proposed a variety of changes for your consideration. The clarity to see the need for these changes came about during the development of the mission statement for our department. We make these timely announcements for your review and to cultivate your participation in the education of the people of our Diocese.

Our Mission statement: "To promote the education of Orthodoxy to all throughout the Diocese". This statement gives direction for our Department, and was derived from the expectations placed on the department by virtue of the title, "Department of Christian Education" and by tasks the department has taken on. We welcome your input on our Mission Statement!

Further discussion occurred on accomplishing the task of meeting the direction given through the mission statement. This discussion incorporated an analysis of our assets and the resources necessary to begin this task. Within the asset group, we have money provided by the Diocese, volunteers as department members and many other volunteers supporting the various events. In the past, we were blessed with the approval to utilize the facilities of St. Tikhon's Seminary for most of our retreats. Several times retreats were held at parishes within the diocese.

Our department is fortunate to have diocesan approval to exist as an entity. The Diocesan budget, under the title 'Religious Education and Youth', included \$2,500 for the year 2006 and \$5,000 for the year 2007. The department is staffed fully by volunteers, no paid employees, with the exception of occasional honorariums given to retreat speakers. Supplies and meal expenses for the Women's Retreat and the Teen Retreat come from fees collected during registration. Any excess of income is donated to St. Tikhon's Seminary for use of their facilities. As a department, we do not have any checking or savings accounts since any expenses for reimbursement are forwarded to the Diocese.

The diocese determines the department members, although no Diocesan Clergy, Hierarch or Diocesan Council member is a member of the DCE. Even many current members neglect to attend the 3 or 4 meetings held each year. Accountability to the Diocese is vastly informal yet the responsibility is immeasurable. Overall, the Women's retreat and Teen retreat are very well received. However, due to the change of location and the cost for the retreat, the registration was the lowest in twelve years. The retreat provides the teens with the opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth.

The durability of this department has shown to be lasting. After defining the mission statement, we felt we could not attain this mission to its fullest capacity given the resources currently in place for our department. We desire to promote the education of Orthodoxy to all in our Diocese. However, reality has set in for our department. Due to our limited budget and few dedicated volunteers, we feel the need to focus our efforts on those retreats to which we have previously been committed. We will continue to sponsor both the Teen and Women's Retreat.

The promotion of Church School education of Orthodoxy to our diocese will be left to others, and we applaud all current activities. Parish Church School programs continue to provide education to their parishioners. Vacation Bible School (VBS) programs continue to grow in numbers. Several parish organizations sponsor lectures locally. The Rector's sermons, private counseling and the regular cycle of Church services provide the most glorious of education of Orthodoxy.

Admittedly, we believe our purpose, as the DCE, is to assist you in your efforts in serving our Diocese. The reality is, we cannot help promote all education of Orthodoxy to all in our diocese. Items, such as the development of VBS and Church School resources is out of our reach. In our meetings, we generate ideas, but without backing from the Diocesan parishes, they quietly fade away. We are saying this to you, the one who can make the Department of Christian Education's mission a success.

Department of Christian Education

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Diocese of Philadelphia & Eastern Pennsylvania

MISSION STATEMENT

- ❖ **To offer education to ALL Christians sharing the Orthodox Faith**
- ❖ **To educate ALL Christians in the Orthodox Faith**
- ❖ **To provide the opportunity to further Orthodox Christian Education to individuals of all ages**
- ❖ **To promote Christian Education for individuals of all ages throughout the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern PA**
- ❖ To plan, organize, and implement Christian education through involvement of Diocesan Church representation.
- ❖ To anticipate the educational goals of ALL Orthodox Christians and to respond to their needs assessment
- ❖ To determine the Diocesan educational needs and respond to them through active participation of both the parishes and individuals
- ❖ To positively respond to the identified educational needs of the Diocese.
- ❖ To be the educators of choice for the Diocese
- ❖ To solicit input from ALL age groups to determine and meet the Diocesan educational needs