

Chancellor's Report to the 49th Diocesan Assembly
Archpriest John Kowalczyk

“And we know that all things work together, for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom.8:28)

One of the most opportune times for a Church to grow is when it goes through change. There are many things that may bring change. When handled properly, the challenges that are brought about by changes can turn into opportunities for growth. One of the most difficult and at the same time joyful events for our diocese occurred on November 12th, in Parma, Ohio, with the election of Archbishop Tikhon to the high office of Metropolitan and Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Our loss is gain for the entire Church.

For over half a decade, Metropolitan Tikhon has had the awesome responsibility and weight in shepherding and guiding the priests and the parishes in the ecclesial work of our diocese. As the chancellor of our diocese, I would like to thank his Beatitude, during the tenure of tremendous leadership provided during a transition and difficult time for our diocese. It was his prayerful spirit, steady hand, softness, embracing smile and humility that was able to turn the diocesan ship and allow it to begin to sail and face uncharted waters with unwavering faith. It is by divine providence that our Lord Jesus Christ has now placed our Archpastor Metropolitan Tikhon with the heavy cross of the primatial office also during difficult and insolent times for the Orthodox Church in America.

At an immediate meeting following the election, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the O.C.A. appointed Bishop Melchisedek of Western Pennsylvania as *locum tenens* of our diocese and Bishop Mark as the Administrator. St. Paul reminds us *“And we know that all things work together, for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Rom.8:28)* On Tuesday, November 20th the transition meeting with Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Melchisedek and Bishop Mark and Diocesan Staff took place. Both Bishops Melchisedek and Mark were present at our first Diocesan Council Meeting in Berwick to reassure us and help us during this time of transition, adjustment in leadership and governance. I would like thank, His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek, and his Grace, Bishop Mark, for their prayerful guidance, wisdom, sagacity, and for providing a renewed compass of leadership as we begin the search process, leading to the election of a new diocesan bishop.

His Grace, Bishop Mark as the Administrator, has not missed a beat in his liturgical visitations to local parishes, having weekly meetings with our administration, providing counseling to our clergy family and revamping our diocesan web-page. We thank him for his speedy reply to the letters received and for his tireless efforts and coordination in informing and asking for blessings provided by the *locum tenens* of our diocese.

It is truly reassuring to know that growth can occur during times of change. At this Assembly let us take advantage of the opportunity to grow amid change. The recent events of our Church taught us a lesson, i.e. change will occur whether we want it or not so it is better to develop a plan for it. *God has blessed us with the leadership of two bishops who have a combined goal of wanting to growing our churches.* We have to be

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visionary people who want to be led and are looking to the future. In this diocesan assembly, let us spiritually observe study and listen to the inner voice of God speaking to our hearts, calling us to be responsible stewards of our faith.

Let us persevere and not be quick to judge. Remember that every good work of the church that sows the seed will not return empty (Isa. 55:11). Persevering in the work of the Lord may not instantly yield results (1 Cor. 3:6-7). Let us not lose sight of the goal before us and be patient.

Dealing with change is not easy. Sometimes we choose change, and sometimes, (particular with us) change chooses us. Either way, it is rarely without its challenges. At this Assembly let us pray for clarity to understand the things we need to do and the serenity to know that some things have to be left up to God. When a church goes through change, it can be a great time to prioritize. A Diocesan Assembly is an opportunity to assess our strengths and weaknesses. Most importantly change can be a challenge to embrace a new opportunity. *To sit back and do the same thing over and over and expect different results is a recipe for disaster.* Let's rise to the task of building up the church and our diocese. Let's roll up our spiritual sleeves and do the work of the Church. In this Assembly we pray that we all will have the courage to make decisions which will aid in the development of our parishes and the spiritual and physical growth of our diocese.

The Diocesan Council

The Diocesan Council members are Bishop Melchisedek, Bishop Mark, Chancellor Fr. John Kowalczyk, Treasurer Fr. Martin Browne, Deans, Rev. Nicholas Solak of Wilkes-Barre Deanery, V. Rev. Michael Hatrak of Frackville Deanery, Rev. James Weremedic of Philadelphia Deanery, Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative V. Rev. S. David Mahaffey, Rev. John Soucek (Wilkes-Barre), Rev. Timothy Hojnicky (Frackville), Rev. Victor Gorodenchuk (Philadelphia), Lay representatives John Buckeye (Wilkes-Barre), Elsie Herman (Frackville), Mark Linnehan, (at Large), Doug Yates (Philadelphia), Metropolitan Council Lay Representative David Yeosock.

Since the last Diocesan Assembly, the Council has met three times, February 9th, August 30th, and November 29th. Each meeting heard reports from the Bishop, Chancellor, and Treasurer. Issues of Diocesan interest and policy were discussed as relates to local and National issues. Recommendations and resolutions were made and acted upon by the appropriate diocesan authorities and communicated to clergy and lay leadership in the parishes as necessary. The substance of the Council's work is reflected in the reports of its members to the Assembly.

We are grateful to the elected diocesan council members and for the hard work provided for the past three years. We are blessed to have diocesan council members who bring to the table, their unique gifts and talents in building up the "Body of Christ." In our election today, let us use wisdom and prudence in the selection process to provide new council members who will continue to work especially in this special time of transition in our diocese.

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Policies, Standards and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct (PSP) This subject was discussed at length and communicated to the Deans of our Diocese for implementation. This document was approved by the Holy Synod of Bishop of the Orthodox Church in America in 2003 and became effective immediately within each diocese and institution of the OCA. Each diocese is required to forward a yearly report of compliance with the PSP, and this report is to include the confirmation of each parish's compliance.

Diocesan Vocations Department

With the continuing shortage of clergy for assignment in our diocese the need to develop the office of vocations in our Church is crucial to maintain the future stability of our diocese. We need to encourage and develop vocations. With the blessing and guidance of Archbishop Tikhon, I was appointed in my expanding role as Chancellor to develop and explore this office and utilize all the media available to us and help coordinate the annual vocations encounter held in our Seminaries and with interested candidates from our diocese. The Rev. Nicholas Solak has volunteered to be a part of this department. Plans have already been made to interview seminarians in both our seminaries who have an interest in exploring the vast missionary field of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania.

The Diocesan Census

Enclosed as an appendix to my report is the Diocesan Census results for this year for the (37) parishes in our diocese. We have a combined paying membership of 2,805 adults showing a drop of 117 adults from last year. We thank everyone for their participation in completing this task.

Enclosed are an appendix to my report "**Official Clergy Moves –January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012**" and another appendix "**2012 Diocesan Calendar.**"

We are also very grateful to Matushka Sandy Kopestonsky, our Administrative Assistant, for the very careful entry of the appendix's provided.

Official Clergy Moves
January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012

- January 3 Release of Rev. David Cowan from All Saints Church, Olyphant, and Diocese of Eastern PA to Bishop Michael
- May 14 Release of V. Rev. Dennis Swencki from St. John's Church, Dundaff and from Diocese of Eastern PA to Metropolitan Jonah and St. Tikhon's Seminary
- September 13 Release of V. Rev. Theodore Heckman from St. Mark's Church, Wrightstown, and granted retirement.
- October 1 Reception of Rev. Stephen Miller from Diocese of NY and NJ and assigned to St. Nicholas Church, Coatesville
- October 1 Release of Rev. Adam Sexton from St. John the Baptist Church, Nanticoke (attached to Holy Trinity Church, Wilkes-Barre)
- October 25 Release of Archimandrite Michael Thier from St. Vladimir's Church, Lopez, and attached to St. John the Baptist Church, Edwardsville. He is assigned to serve at Holy Trinity Church, McAdoo, until further notice.
- November 12 Release of Rev. Raymond Martin Browne from St. John the Baptist Church, Edwardsville, to St. Mark Church, Wrightstown
- November 12 Election of Archbishop Tikhon to office of Metropolitan
- November 12 Bishop Melchisedek appointed as Bishop locum tenens of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Bishop Mark appointed as Administrator of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
- December 31 Blessing for retirement granted to Archimandrite Michael Thier

We are grateful to the monastic clergy from St. Tikhon's Monastery, the retired clergy, and the seminarian clergy who have so willingly served as needed in our parishes during this past year.

2012 DIOCESAN CALENDAR

JANUARY

Sunday, January 1	<i>Circumcision of Our Lord; New Year's Day</i>
Monday & Tuesday, Jan 2 and 3	Funeral and Burial of Fr. Michael Romanchak
Thursday, January 5	Complines, Litia and Meal, Jermyn
Friday, January 6	<i>Theophany</i>
Sunday, January 15	Novogodny Ball, Philadelphia
Tuesday & Wed., January 17-18	Funeral and Burial, Mat. Joanna Pianovich
Thursday, January 19	Christian Unity, Dinner
Saturday, January 21	Revitalization Meeting, Edwardsville
Sunday, January 22	St. Michael, Mount Carmel (Annual Meeting)
Monday, January 23	March for Life, Washington, D.C.
Tuesday & Wed., Jan 24 & 25	Funeral and Burial, Mat. Eleanor Krell
Sunday, January 29	Schmemmann Lecture, St. Vladimir's Seminary
Monday, January 30	Seminary Leadership Conference, St. Vladimir's

FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 2	<i>Meeting of the Lord</i>
Saturday, February 4	Teen Retreat
Thursday, February 9	Diocesan Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 14	ATS Site Visit
Thursday, February 16	Diocesan Council Meeting
Monday, February 20	Lesser Synod Meeting
Tuesday, February 2	Lesser Synod & Metropolitan Council Meeting
February 27-March 2	<i>First Week of Lent</i>

MARCH

Sunday, March 4	<i>Sunday of Orthodoxy</i> – Divine Liturgy, Holy Ascension Church, Frackville Nanticoke Fire Relief Meeting, Nanticoke Mission Service: St. Michael's, St. Clair
Tuesday, March 5-6	Clergy Retreat, Holy Protection Monastery White Haven
Sunday, March 11	<i>St. Gregory of Palamas Sunday</i> Divine Liturgy – Holy Trinity, Pottstown Mission Vespers: SS Peter & Paul, Minersville
Thursday, March 15	Meeting with Wilkes-Barre Dean, Fr. Kovalak
Sunday, March 18	<i>Adoration of the Cross Sunday</i> Liturgy: St. Michael, Wilmington Mission Service: Holy Trinity, McAdoo
Wednesday, March 21	Presanctified Liturgy: St. Michael, Jermyn
Thursday, March 22	Seminary Faculty Meeting

Sunday, March 25

ANNUNCIATION

Liturgy & Mission Service: Holy Annunciation, Berwick

Monday, March 26

FOCUS Appalachia Trip Meeting, Berwick
Seminary Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 27

Meeting with Frackville Dean, Fr. Hatrak

APRIL

Sunday, April 1

St. Mary of Egypt

Liturgy: St. Vladimir, Lopez

Mission Service: All Saints, Olyphant

Tuesday, April 3

Meeting with Philadelphia Dean, Fr. Mahaffey

Wednesday, April 4

Presanctified Liturgy: Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre

Thursday, April 5

Seminary Faculty Meeting

Sunday, April 8

Palm Sunday

Liturgy: Holy Resurrection, Wilkes-Barre

Mission Matins: St. Tikhon's Monastery

Monday, April 9-14

Holy Week – preparation & blessing of Holy

Chrism with Metropolitan Jonah and clergy

Sunday, April 15

PASCHA

Saturday, April 21

60th Birthday celebration: Fr. John Kowalczyk

Sunday, April 22

St. Thomas Sunday

Liturgy: St. Tikhon's Monastery

Tuesday, April 24

Board Meeting with St. John's, Nanticoke

Thursday, April 26

Seminary Board of Trustees Meeting

Friday, April 27

Seminary Board of Trustees Meeting

MAY

Friday, May 4-5

Consecration of Bishop –Elect Alexander Toledo, Ohio

Sunday, May 6-11

Holy Synod of Bishops Meeting

Saturday, May 12

Vespers, Holy Apostles, Mechanicsburg

Sunday, May 13

Bylaws meeting: Holy Apostles, Mechanicsburg

Saturday, May 19

Divine Liturgy: Holy Apostles, Mechanicsburg

Tuesday, May 22

Attended SVOTS Graduation, Crestwood, NY

Thursday, May 24

Seminary Faculty Meeting

Ascension Day: Liturgy at Holy Trinity,

Stroudsburg

Friday, May 25

Seminary Board Meeting/Reception at Center

Saturday, May 26

Seminary Commencement

Monday, May 28

Memorial Day Pilgrimage/Reception for serving clergy

JUNE

Sunday, June 3
Thursday, June 7
Sunday, June 10
Sunday, June 24

Monday, June 25-26
Friday, June 29

Holy Pentecost

Wilkes-Barre Deanery Meeting, Pittston
Divine Liturgy: St. John the Baptist, Dundaff
Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Divine
Liturgy at St. John the Baptist, Nanticoke
Seminary Board Retreat, Washington, DC
SS Peter & Paul

JULY

Sunday, July 1
Week of July 1-7
Thursday & Friday, July 5-6
July 8-23

Divine Liturgy, SS Peter and Paul, Uniondale
St. Tikhon's Summer Camp
Lesser Synod Meeting, Syosset
Vacation

AUGUST

Monday, August 6

Monday, August 13
Wednesday, August 15

Thursday, August 16

Monday, August 20
Thursday & Fri, August 23-24
Saturday, August 25

Saturday & Sunday, August 25-26
Thursday, August 30

Transfiguration of our Lord; Ordination of
Deacon Marty Watt to Holy Priesthood; Elevation
of Fr. Michael Thier to Archimandrite, St.
Tikhon's Monastery Church
Special Meeting of Holy Synod, Detroit, MI
Dormition of the Theotokos: St. Michael's
Church, Jermyn
Wilkes-Barre Deanery Altar Servers Picnic
Holy Trinity Church, Wilkes-Barre
Liturgical Life Committee Meeting, Bethlehem
Seminary Board Meeting
35th Anniversary of Holy Myrrhbearers
Monastery (Binghamton, NY)
Archangel Michael Church, Wilmington, DE
Diocesan Council Meeting, Central PA Food
Bank, 3908 Corey Road, Harrisburg

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 1
Thursday, September 6
Saturday, September 8
Sunday, September 9
Monday-Wed, Sep 10-12
Friday, September 14
Sunday, September 16
Thursday, September 20
Sunday, September 23

Church New year

Seminary Alumni Picnic, St. Tikhon's
Nativity of the Theotokos
Divine Liturgy, Coaldale
Assembly of Bishops Meeting, Chicago
Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Divine Liturgy, St. Nicholas, Coatesville
Clergy Continuing Education, Bethlehem
Divine Liturgy, St. John the Baptist,
Edwardsville

Tues-Thurs, Sept 25-27
Thurs-Friday, Sep 27-28
Saturday, September 29
Sunday, September 30

Metropolitan Council Meeting, Syosset, NY
Seminary Retreat with Faculty, Villanova
Vespers, Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg
Divine Liturgy, Christ the Saviour, Harrisburg
Agia Sophia First Anniversary Moleben

OCTOBER

Monday, October 1
Saturday, October 6
Tues-Thurs, October 9-11
Thursday, October 18

Sunday, October 24
Thurs-Fri., October 25-26

Protection of the Theotokos
Orthodox Ed. Day, St. Vladimir's Seminary
Fall Session of Holy Synod, Syosset
Clergy Continuing Education, Stroudsburg
Wilkes-Barre Deanery Meeting, Stroudsburg
Liturgy, Holy Cross Church, Williamsport
Seminary Board Meeting, Villanova

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 4

Thursday, November 8
Saturday-Sunday, November 10-11
Thursday, November 15
Monday-Tues Nov. 12-13

Tuesday, November 20

Liturgy, St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem
Ordination to diaconate of Geoffrey LoBalbo
Archangel Michael, Divine Liturgy, St. Tikhon's
Vespers, Divine Liturgy, Bucknell University
Nativity Fast Begins
Special AAC Meeting, Parma, OH
ELECTION OF METROPOLITAN TIKHON
Meeting with Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop
Melchisedek and Bishop Mark and Diocesan Staff

BISHOP MARK'S SCHEDULE

Sunday, November 25
Thursday, November 29

Liturgy, St. Michael's Church, Old Forge
Clergy Continuing Education, Berwick
Diocesan Council Meeting, Berwick

DECEMBER

Sunday, December 2
Sunday, December 9
Monday-Tuesday, Dec 10-11

Sunday, December 16
Thursday, December 27
Saturday, Sunday Dec 29-30

Liturgy, St. Herman's Church, Shillington
Divine Liturgy, St. Nicholas Church, Philadelphia
Clergy Retreat, Holy Protection Monastery
White Haven
Divine Liturgy, Stroudsburg
St. Stephen's Day Liturgy, Bishop Melchisedek
Vespers and Liturgy, Holy Apostles Mission,
Mechanicsburg

JANUARY 2013

Saturday, January 19

Diocesan Assembly, St. Nicholas Church,
Bethlehem