



DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia • Orthodox Church in America

St. Alexis Toth Brotherhood

Overview

In 2024, at the request of His Eminence Archbishop Mark, Father Aleksey Paranyuk, Father Mark Kozak, Father Michael Demko, Father Vjekoslav Jovicic and Deacon Peter Skoog were tasked with the establishment of a diocesan wide men's group. Based on readily available data, single males are looking to join the Orthodox Church in record numbers. The purpose of the men's group was to encourage, support, and help integrate this male population into God's church.

Summary

Over the course of the second quarter of 2024 several Zoom calls were held with the members of the men's group steering committee. At the first meeting the group decided on adopting St. Alexis Toth, a confessor and defender of Orthodoxy in America, as its patron. Additional discussion included 1) meeting frequency, 2) meeting locations, 3) meeting content and 4) communication. It was decided that we would meet quarterly trying to rotate the meeting locations so that we met in a different deanery church each quarter. Meeting content might be a lecture, group discussion or simply fellowship followed by a light meal or snack and ending with vespers at the host parish. After some brainstorming it was decided that the group might be best served by opening membership up to all adult men in the diocese. The rationale was that seekers, catechumens, and newly chrismated individuals may be interested in networking or seek mentorship within the group; getting guidance from individuals who were chrismated years ago or those who were born, raised and remained active in the church. The steering committee has compiled an email list with over 70 names and distributes a monthly e-newsletter. Two gatherings were held (Bethlehem and Mechanicsburg) and plans are being considered for a meeting in the first quarter of 2025.

Respectively submitted,

Deacon Peter Skoog