



The Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia

October 13, 2021

Dear Esteemed Members of our Parish Councils,

Christ is in our midst! As many of our parish councils are preparing their budgets for 2022, I am writing to remind you to review the priest's compensation package to insure the parish is properly caring for the clergy (and their families) that cares for you. This year we have all been keenly aware of the increased price of housing, gasoline, groceries, etc. The Cost of Living increase only allows for our clergy to afford this year what they could afford last year. The Cost of Living increase for 2022 is 5.9% ([https://www.ssa.gov/cola/#:~:text=Cost%2Dof%2DLiving%20Adjustment%20\(COLA\)%20Information%20for%202021,increase%201.3%20percent%20in%28](https://www.ssa.gov/cola/#:~:text=Cost%2Dof%2DLiving%20Adjustment%20(COLA)%20Information%20for%202021,increase%201.3%20percent%20in%28)). Therefore, as the Social Security Administration is our guideline, every priest should minimally receive an automatic 5.9% increase. *We also discovered that the Median Income figures were from dated sources and not reflective of the incremental Cost of Living Increases for several years, so we have revised the format of the spreadsheet for greater accuracy. All parishes should use the Median Income for their area for 2022 as the minimum for new clergy.*

Also attached is the Clergy Compensation Guidelines and Median Income for Cities and Counties of the Diocese. As you wish for your own family members with advanced degrees to be compensated for their education, knowledge, talents and experience, please do so for your priest.

No priest should be below the Median Income for your locality of where the majority of your parishioners live. Also, keep in mind his years of service as well as merit increases. We have quality priests in our Diocese and we want to keep them. There are many places in the United States where the Median Income is significantly higher, which makes it difficult for us to attract new priests to the Diocese, especially if our parishes are not compensating clergy adequately. Please do not embarrass or humiliate your father in Christ, by him having to ask for what should be freely and lovingly given without hesitation.

Finally, as a reminder, the OCA Pension Board now requires each parish to contribute 10% on the priest's stipend as well as the housing allowance or the value of the housing provided to the OCA Pension Plan. Likewise, the parish is to compute the Social Security based on the same. The clergy are required to contribute to the pension plan and Social Security based upon the same figures as well.

Thank you for insuring your priest and his family may live with dignity and placed on equal footing with those he serves.

Your Unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+ Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

CC: Council Chairs and Treasurers of the Diocese
Clergy of the Diocese