



# Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

P.O. Box 1769

Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania 16066-1769

Website: [www.ocadwpa.org](http://www.ocadwpa.org)

Diocesan Hierarch  
Most Rev. MELCHISEDEK  
Telephone: 724-776-5555

Diocesan Chancellor  
VRev. William J. Evansky  
Telephone: 724-266-5009

## Annual Report of the Chancellor

27 February 2021

*Glory to Jesus Christ!*

I begin my *ninth annual report* by reviewing the six broad areas of responsibility given me in my role as Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and W PA. (Please note that the position of chancellor remains a part-time position - all this diocesan work is in addition to my responsibilities as full-time parish priest at the Holy Ghost Church in Ambridge.)

1. The ruling bishop assigns areas of responsibilities and scope of decision-making, but, in general, the ruling hierarch relies on his chancellor as a trusted assistant in the day-to-day administration of the diocese and holds him accountable in assigned areas.
2. The chancellor supports and/or guides the work of the various departments, projects, and committees.
3. The chancellor assists in the development and accomplishment of the diocesan goals, including such areas as budget and financial management.
4. The chancellor guides and/or supervises the work of the other members of the diocesan administration.
5. The chancellor serves as a voting member of the Archdiocesan Council and is responsible for planning the Council's meetings and later for implementation of the Council's decisions in cooperation with other members of the diocesan administration, committee chairs, etc.
6. The chancellor represents the ruling hierarch in religious and spiritual activities and acts with the blessing of the hierarch in his absence in dealing authoritatively with clergy/laity of the diocese as well as inter-Orthodox relationships and relationships with other religious bodies and laity organizations.

Here is a review of some selected tasks/activities done as chancellor since our 2019 Assembly occurred:

- ~ Frequent contact with ruling hierarch concerning diocesan administration
- ~ Meetings of Christian Associates of W PA Board of Trustees with the archbishop or as his voting substitute diocesan representative
- ~ Preparations for Archdiocesan Council meetings (i.e., agenda/ compilation of needed reports/ meeting notifications, etc.)
- ~ Meetings with investment firms BPU and FNB concerning diocesan investment accounts
- ~ Coordination of the hierarch's Archpastoral visitations, meetings calendar, and transportation needs
- ~ Frequent meetings/ phone calls/ emails with the deans
- ~ Meetings with local parishes concerning pastoral vacancies, assessment questions, etc.
- ~ Frequent communications with OCA Chancery staff and administrations of other Orthodox jurisdictions and O.C.A. dioceses concerning common administrative matters

- ~ Coordinated funeral services at St. John the Baptist Church (Canonsburg) and Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Ellwood City) with OCA Chancellor Archpriest Alexander Rentel and Mother Christophora on behalf of Metropolitan TIKHON and Archbishop MELCHISEDEK for the departed servant of God +His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS during October 2020 (*Memory Eternal!*)
- ~ Coordinated the funeral service at St. John the Baptist Church (Canonsburg) with Eastern Dean Fr. Mark Meholick and Priest John Kotalik for the departed servant of God +Archpriest John Horosky in November 2020 (*Memory Eternal!*)
- ~ Numerous meetings/ emails/ phone calls with clergy and laity concerning problems, requests for assistance, transfers, conflicts, etc. in diocesan parishes
- ~ Frequent meetings & communication with Building & Grounds Chair Dn. Seraphim Truckley
- ~ Numerous conversations (phone/emails/meetings) with Joseph Kormos concerning Parish Development Program + group emails to diocesan clergy and laity about the program's goals
- ~ Frequent updates concerning the diocese to the clergy email list as well as to Archdiocesan Council members and parish councils
- ~ Attended the 2020 All-Parish (virtual) Forum chaired by Joseph Kormos
- ~ Meetings, phone calls, and emails with Deacon Alexander Cadman, Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy Coordinator, + contacts with local priests & laity concerning policy implementation
- ~ Worked with webmaster Kristie Mertz to update the diocesan web site
- ~ Regular chancery administrative duties (done at least once a week at the chancery office and at my Ambridge parish office during the remainder of each week) – working with Administrative Assistant Omelan Mycyk and Archdiocesan Treasurer Alexi Parshook frequently
- ~ Provided personal car transportation for the archbishop when other modes weren't available
- ~ Beginning August 1, 2020, became "Acting Administrator" of the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (Allison Park) – assisted liturgically by retired diocesan clergy
- ~ Coordinated retreat with Archpriest Thomas Soroka as presenter
- ~ Coordinated (2) retreats with Archpriest Stephen Voytovich as presenter each time (Another diocesan retreat with Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, scheduled for December 2020, was postponed due to the COVID situation locally)
- ~ Attended Archdiocesan Youth Committee's youth bowling event – Neville Island
- ~ Budget preparation process coordinated with archbishop, treasurer, and budget committee
- ~ Concelebrated at a Divine Liturgy in Black Lick in honor of Archbishop JOB'S 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of repose (*Memory Eternal!*)
- ~ Coordinated the initiation of new Legacy Parish Assistance Program (LPAP) within the diocese

As an overview of the Archdiocese - we currently have 42 parishes configured this way: Eastern Deanery (16 parishes); Northwest Deanery (10 parishes); Southwest Deanery (15 parishes); St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (no deanery membership). This total number is one less than reported at the last Assembly with the closing (and required dismantling) of the Boswell church (Eastern Deanery) in April 2020. Thirty-eight of those parishes are considered "active" at some level with full-time priests, part-time priests, or services being periodically conducted by visiting priests or deacons. Four of the 42 parishes are considered "inactive" spiritually (and financially) since they are currently not having parish services or activities - Duquesne/ Masontown/ Moundville/ Patton). As directed by the hierarchy, I supervise, with the assistance of the local dean and the diocesan treasurer, the process of dealing with the future of these parish properties/assets in an orderly manner – along with the "thorny" issue of parish-owned cemeteries. Some statistical perspective might prove useful: twelve of those 42 parishes listed (approximately 28% of the total number of parishes) are without an officially assigned priest (Allison Park, Amsterdam (Wolf Run), Blairsville (Black Lick), Duquesne, Lyndora, Masontown,

Monessen, Monongahela, Moundsville, Philipsburg, Steubenville, and West Brownsville) although there is always the possibility appointments/transfers may decrease that number. These twelve parishes are serviced by the chancellor, local dean, retired diocesan priests, non-OCA priests, diocesan deacons, or local reader service.

There are currently 42 priests officially under the omophorion of Archbishop MELCHISEDEK – 28 on “active” service; fourteen officially “retired.” (A special welcome to Fr. Ignatius Hunter to our Archdiocese; he assumed the responsibilities as Acting Rector of the Holy Trinity (State College) parish February 1, 2020.) There are 14 archdiocesan deacons attached by the hierarchy to the various parishes within our boundaries. Total number of clergy is therefore 56. The most recent parish census membership for the diocese is “1,889” – this compares to the previous figure of “1,989” and “1,887” for the year prior to that. (This current figure is fairly accurate, but not totally accurate, since a hand-full of parishes have yet to return the 2020 parish information form despite repeated notifications.)

The area dean, working in tandem with the chancellor, becomes responsible for parishes spiritually and administratively on behalf of the bishop when no priest is assigned, assisted by other priests and deacons as the local dean and/or chancellor assign. The deans work closely with me concerning the scheduling of clergy to service these vacant parishes. The large number of vacancies spread far apart geographically causes much difficulty, but we strive to service these parishes consistently and equitably. Fr. Mark Meholick is Dean of the Eastern Deanery while Fr. Andrew P. Nelko is Dean of the Southwest Deanery. In addition to my duties as Chancellor, I also function as Dean of the Northwest Deanery - with Fr. Thomas Soroka as Associate Dean. I offer my sincere THANKS to the deans - - they WONDERFULLY accomplish difficult and critical administrative jobs for the Body of Christ to function here!

Items of Note:

~ Although I TRULY wish I didn't need to type it – “COVID” necessarily becomes the “word of the year” in this report - - unfortunately! I didn't include “COVID” in my list of tasks/activities in this report because it, above all else, has required “hour upon hour upon hour...” of my attention as we attempted to navigate as best as possible this extraordinary global, national, diocesan, and local situation. As I have stated – I guess I must have missed “Successful Pandemic Administration 101” when working on my master's degree in administration at WVU or in my seminary classes because it seemed that EVERY day was “ground-breaking” with no easily understandable, “how-to-handle” instructions. We have attempted to avoid the extremes of overreacting or underreacting; we have tried to produce balanced instructions that invariably have not pleased some clergy or laity. It is surely understandable that the stress of this situation will have caused “heated” passions since at times it seemed, unfortunately, that we have had two competing sets of values.

I am truly grateful for the members of the archdiocese – clergy and laity – who have tried their best to deal with this problem in an honest, collegial, AND Christian manner when communicating with me. I beg you to put Christian love into every word spoken or thought typed as we hopefully see this situation become mitigated in the future – God willing!

~ This Archdiocesan Assembly will need to discuss the diocesan funding method. Even though we completed the third and final fiscal year using the revised methodology as approved by a previous Archdiocesan Assembly, the fiscal ramifications of COVID make it nearly impossible to evaluate needed changes. We also won't know the long-term financial effects for a while. Archdiocesan Treasurer Alexis Parshook will discuss this subject with you today in her treasurer's report, but it seems logical to *temporarily* continue this financial policy.

~ "All was not lost" concerning progress in the Archdiocese during 2020 despite the pandemic situation. After several years of discussion with the archbishop and Archdiocesan Council, we began a pilot program for what we are calling the "Legacy Parish Assistance Program (LPAP)." This new initiative, working in tandem with the Parish Development Program, is designed to promote revitalization in an older diocesan parish that has, for whatever set of reasons, tended to regress over the years but has approached the diocesan administration with a heart-felt desire to reverse that pattern and seek the Lord's blessing to grow. LPAP is a cooperative effort requiring nine specific criteria to be met over a three-to-five-year period by the parish while the diocese provides financial assistance to sustain a full-time, local rector – financial assistance that the parish matches. The diocesan support also decreases each year as the local support increases through a newly-established or enhanced stewardship program.

These criteria include such things as an annual plan of outreach, establishment of an organized education program, production of an annual budget, regular reports and meetings for LPAP progress with the diocesan representatives, etc. (Please contact me – I'll share the entire document with you.) The goal is to use a portion of the archdiocesan investment money as allocated in the annual budget to provide more "legacy" parishes an opportunity to consider LPAP in the future as we "tweak" the program with the pilot program. The LPAP philosophy is simple - the diocese can help a local parish grow, but it is the commitment undertaken jointly by the parish laity and rector that will make it happen in the long run.

### Conclusion

I offer my sincere THANKS to all who have helped "lessen my burden" as Chancellor during this MOST stressful of years! Please feel free to contact me at any time during the year if you have questions or comments about the administration of the Archdiocese – I will do my utmost to answer those questions in a forthright manner. May the Lord bless us with His strength to persevere in this God-protected diocese!

Yours in Christ,



Archpriest William J. Evansky  
Chancellor  
Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and  
Western Pennsylvania  
Orthodox Church in America