



# 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

13 November 2021

*Glory to Jesus Christ!*

I begin my *tenth 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
- ~ Preparations for Archdiocesan Council meetings (i.e., agenda/ compilation of needed reports/ meeting notifications, etc.)
- ~ Meetings with investment firms concerning diocesan investment accounts
- ~ Coordination of the hierarch's Archpastoral visitations, meetings calendar, and transportation needs
- ~ Frequent communications with the deans
- ~ Frequent communications with OCA Chancery staff and administrations of other Orthodox jurisdictions and O.C.A. dioceses concerning common administrative matters
- ~ 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 (The deacon has announced his resignation from this key position – we THANK him for his wonderful efforts! We will need to appoint a new person quickly for this position.)
- ~ 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 group email list
- ~ Attended the 2021 All-Parish (virtual) Forum chaired by Joseph Kormos
- ~ Communications with Archpriest 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. (Ended this special assignment 8/15/21 with the appointment of Archpriest John Mikita as the new Cathedral Dean.)
- ~ Budget preparation process coordinated with archbishop, treasurer, and budget committee
- ~ Monitored the status of the one-year-old Legacy Parish Assistance Program (LPAP)
- ~ Organized in-person clergy gathering in the Belle Vernon parish
- ~ Organized Ordination Liturgy of (now) Archpriest Alexander Cadman in Canonsburg
- ~ Participated in on-line conference meeting of the various OCA diocesan chancellors along with OCA Chancellor Archpriest Alexander Rentel
- ~ Attended in-person joint meetings of the OCA Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council, and the various OCA diocesan chancellors in Cleveland, Ohio
- ~ Represented the archbishop at a meeting concerning a proposed Pittsburgh Saint Constantine School

As an overview of the Archdiocese: we currently have officially 40 parishes configured into three geographical deaneries - Eastern Deanery (16 parishes); Northwest Deanery (11 parishes); Southwest Deanery (13 parishes). This total number is two less than previously reported with the closing and sale of the church and properties in Masontown, PA, and Moundsville, WV. As per directive of our hierarchy, the net proceeds from those sales (after legal fees) were either invested in the Archbishop Benjamin Scholarship Fund to assist diocesan seminarians or kept locally if there was a parish cemetery directly owned by the now-closed parish. None of the proceeds was used for “general operating expenses” of the diocese. Thirty-eight of the 40 parishes are considered “active” (at some level!) with full-time priests, part-time priests, or services being periodically conducted by visiting priests or deacons. Two of the 40 parishes are considered “inactive” spiritually and financially since they are currently not having parish services or activities – Duquesne and 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 disposal of these parish properties/assets in an orderly manner – along with the perplexing issue of parish-owned cemeteries. Some statistical perspective might prove useful: nine of our 40 parishes listed are without an officially assigned priest (Amsterdam (Wolf Run), Blairsville (Black Lick), Duquesne, Lyndora, Monessen, Monongahela, Philipsburg, Steubenville, and West Brownsville) although there are always the possibility appointments/transfers may decrease that number. These nine parishes are serviced by the chancellor, local dean, retired diocesan priests, non-OCA priests, diocesan deacons, or local reader service.

There are currently 43 priests officially under the omophorion of Archbishop MELCHISEDEK – 30 on “active” service; thirteen officially “retired.” A special welcome to Archpriest John Mikita (back) to our Archdiocese; he assumed the responsibilities of Dean of the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, August 15, 2021. We congratulate (now) Archpriest Alexander Cadman who was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in the Canonsburg parish on September 4, 2021, after fifteen years of faithful service as a deacon. Fr. Alexander is currently attached to the Holy Altar at the St. Nicholas Church, DuBois, PA. We also welcome Deacon John Skowron to the ranks of our diocesan clergy; he was ordained at the St. Nicholas Church, McKees Rocks, on June 6, 2021, where he is also attached. There are 14 archdiocesan deacons attached by the hierarch to the various parishes within our boundaries. Total number of OCA/Archdiocese of PGH and W PA clergy is therefore “57.” As I reported at the June 26, 2021, Archdiocesan Assembly, 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.

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 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 are diligent in their important administrative roles.

#### Items of Note:

1. His Eminence expects each of the diocesan parishes to enact a **6% cost-of-living adjustment** for our parish priests effective January 1, 2022. This is higher than the increases of recent years but is consistent with the recently announced 5.9% Social Security benefits increase for 2022. We have worked diligently the past few years to raise the base salaries of the diocesan clergy after years of “falling behind” compared to other OCA and non-OCA dioceses, it is important that we don’t fall behind again, making it hard to attract (and keep!) qualified clergy in the Archdiocese.

2. Reminder concerning **substitute clergy honoraria** in the Archdiocese – priests celebrating Sunday Liturgies should receive no less than \$150 plus round-trip vehicle mileage of \$.56 per mile (as per I.R.S. rate) from the parish utilizing his services. Overnight lodging and miscellaneous expenses as they arise would, of course, be discussed and agreed upon in advance. Deacons substituting on Sundays in our parishes should receive no less than \$100 plus round-trip mileage as above. Honoraria for other weekday services or special services can be discussed separately should they arise. Please contact your local Dean, or me, should questions arise about these stipends.

3. Upcoming event: **Diocesan Advent Retreat** in the Canonsburg parish on December 11. Matushka Valerie Zahirsky has graciously agreed to lead this event. More info soon!

4. We also plan to hold **two clergy gatherings in 2022** similar to the very successful gathering recently held at the Belle Vernon for the priests and deacons. More information will be available as 2022 begins.

5. I hope that circumstances will allow a reactivation of our **diocesan youth activities** in 2022. I will be meeting with the Archdiocesan Youth Committee in the coming months. Volunteers are needed to join this planning group - - please contact me if interested.

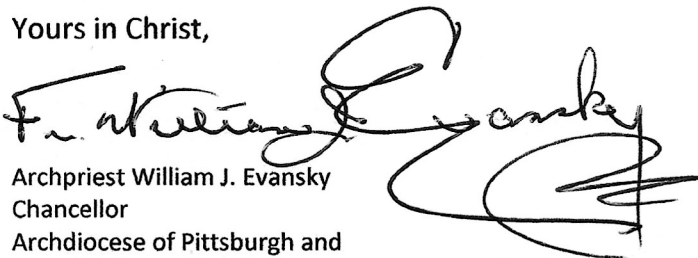
6. One of the most frustrating administrative conundrums that constantly “nag” at me (and the diocesan administrative staff) is the issue of **parish/clergy compliance** with established protocols in a timely manner. Based on my discussions with the other OCA diocesan chancellors recently, I am not alone in dealing with this issue. We seem to often find it difficult to meet deadlines concerning important matters including completion of annual parish assessment forms, the annual parish information form (especially the section dealing with the sexual abuse prevention policy guidelines), the submission of required annual meeting documents, etc. – despite reasonably established deadlines and frequent reminders. I am working on some ideas to present to the archbishop to help alleviate these problems in a positive, rather than punitive, way. Please “stay tuned” for these changes in the coming months to be implemented with the blessing of the ruling hierarch. (P.S. – My THANKS to the many priests and parishes who DO fulfill their responsibilities concerning this topic without being reminded - - you ARE “my joy!”)

7. All parishes are reminded to budget properly for **ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL EXPENSES** for your parish priest and laity delegate to attend this important gathering. It will take place in Baltimore, MD, July 18-22, 2022. It is IMPORTANT that our Archdiocese be well represented at this OCA national gathering. Each diocese of the OCA has received an invoice for the “fair share” to fund this event; each parish will also accordingly receive an invoice from our Archdiocese for their portion – if it has not already arrived in the mail locally.

### Conclusion

I thank His Eminence for the opportunity to continue my service in this important administrative post to him and the Archdiocese. I thank all who work with me throughout the year in various capacities – chancery, parishes, or personally – you ARE appreciated by me, even if it is NOT always stated! I ask for your forgiveness if I have knowingly or unknowingly offended or disappointed you in any way – things CAN get “complicated” at times! May we all remember this during the coming year: *“Let us not just talk about SORROWS; let us radiate our JOY at being Orthodox Christians!”* May our Lord’s grace be upon us in the coming year – we have MUCH work to accomplish *together!*

Yours in Christ,



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