

REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN (Part One)

Archdiocesan Council Meeting

Via Zoom

August 24, 2024

1. *Introduction.* I am presenting my written report to the Archdiocesan Council in advance of our meeting so that everyone has the opportunity to read it beforehand. I will not repeat this material verbally on Saturday but will, at that time, introduce an overview of my broader priorities for the Archdiocese. Although we should have time for some initial discussion, my expectation is that the Council representatives will take my priorities back to their respective communities for prayerful reflection in preparation for further discussion at the Archdiocesan Assembly in September.
2. *Travel and Activities.* Since our February Council meeting, I have continued to maintain a full schedule of pastoral visits and activities throughout the Orthodox Church in America, within the Archdiocese of Washington, and occasionally abroad. As I have done in the past, I will be preparing a written log of those activities which, while not ready in time for the Council, will be shared with you prior to the Assembly. Here, I will restrict myself to a high-level overview of each of the categories in which I have been active.
3. *The Orthodox Church in America.* With the ongoing relocation of the Chancery to the greater DC area, the activity of the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America continues to proceed in a productive way. The Spring meetings of both the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod were held in Springfield and the Fall meetings will also take place there. I often work from my office at the Springfield Chancery where I hold meetings, both in person and via zoom, with various committees and commissions of the Church such as the Office of Pastoral Life, the Pension Board, and the Preconciliar Commission.
4. *Stavropegial Institutions.* I try to maintain a schedule of regular visits to my stavropegial institutions which consist of two seminaries (Saint Vladimir's and Saint Tikhon's) and three monasteries (Saint Tikhon's, Holy Myrrhbearers, and New Skete). I regularly hold interviews with seminarians and their wives as the final step in the ordination process. I participate in meetings of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committees, and individual meetings with administration, faculty, and staff of both seminaries, and in May, presided at their respective commencement exercises. I can highlight the following activity over the past few months:
 - a. I was at Saint Tikhon's Monastery for the entirety of Holy Week through Pascha this year (a change from my practice of remaining in the Archdiocese of Washington during that time). The reason for this was the consecration of holy chrism which takes place every seven years or so. It was a blessed event with the participation of many of our bishops as well as priests and deacons from parishes throughout the Orthodox Church in America.
 - b. This year Saint Tikhon's Seminary was granted ten years of accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). This is the highest number of years of formal accreditation that can be given and is a remarkable achievement.

- c. Saint Vladimir's Seminary is experiencing a period of transition with the retirement of Fr. Chad Hatfield and the appointment of Dr. Alex Tudorie, the current Academic Dean, as Interim President. I am chairing the President Search Committee and the life of the Seminary continues even during this period of transition.
5. *External Affairs.* For the First Week of Great Lent this year, which I normally spend at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, I decided to travel to the monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Essex, England. This proved to be a wonderful experience of the life of that monastery, which maintains the spiritual heritage of Saint Silouan and Saint Sophrony of the Holy Mountain. Later in June, I travelled to Ukraine, Romania, and Constantinople, as was detailed on the website and social media outlets of the Orthodox Church in America. The primary goals of this visit were to offer a tangible expression of the prayerful support of the Orthodox Church in America for Metropolitan Onufry and for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as well as to express our prayerful support for all Ukrainians who are suffering during the war. I further travelled with my delegation to Romania and Constantinople, primarily in order to share with those Churches the impressions of my visit to Ukraine.
6. *Travel to other dioceses.* As part of my responsibilities as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, I travel to other dioceses at the invitation of their bishop for various events or celebrations. Since February, I have made the following visits:
 - a. On June 25-26, I travelled to Chicago for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the return of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God. If you recall, this icon was brought to America by Archbishop John (Garklavs) where it was safeguarded at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago until its return to the monastery of Tikvin in Russia, which took place 20 years ago.
 - b. From July 4-6, I attended Saint Tikhon's Summer Camp which is organized by the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. In particular, I was able to visit with the large delegation of children from the Archdiocese of Washington who were able to attend. The offering of such an opportunity is an exciting area of development in our Archdiocese and one which we hope to develop more over the years.
 - c. On July 27-29, I participated in a portion of the Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) which took place in Mogadore, Ohio.
7. *Travel within the Archdiocese.* Within the Archdiocese of Washington, I continue to make pastoral visits to our parishes and missions, either serving or simply presiding. I remain grateful for the opportunity to visit my communities, especially those that are closest to me. I am especially encouraged by the gradual expansion of our liturgical life in some significant ways. In particular, I am grateful to Juliana Woodill for her leadership of the Archdiocesan Choir, and to all the participants from our parishes (and from other dioceses and jurisdictions) for providing an inspiring forum for liturgical singing. The fruits of this effort are visible in the ways the choir has provided opportunities for community building as well as in the specific events that have been organized, such as the Vigil for the feast of the Annunciation, the Archdiocesan Presanctified Liturgy, and the Bright Saturday services.

8. *Personal.* As I do regularly every year, I spent almost two weeks at my ancestral home in the French Alps. On both ends of that trip, I spent time in Columbus, Ohio, with my parents who relocated there last year. Columbus is also the home of my brother and sister and their families and I also travelled there in June for the wedding of my niece. I continue to hike 3-4 miles a day several times a week.
9. *The Life of the Archdiocese.* In the six months since our February Council meeting, the life of the Archdiocese has continued through the good work of our clergy and the leadership of our 11 parishes and missions.
 - a. I am grateful for the active collaboration of our archdiocesan officers: our chancellor, Fr John Vitko; our secretary, Fr. Deacon James Magruder; and our treasurer, Matt Matyufs.
 - b. At our Council meeting, we will have an initial presentation of our finances and the 2025 budget and I am grateful to the work of the finance committee which is chaired by Cooper Pappas, and includes Deacon John Jubinski, Greg Honshul, and Matt Matyufs as members. I met recently with the finance committee and this proved to further refine my priorities with the financial realities of the archdiocese. As I mentioned above, I will speak more about those priorities and realities at our upcoming meetings.
 - c. A related component of the support for my priorities is the work of the DDB and I am thankful to Greg Honshul, the chair, for his tremendous efforts in guiding the work of this important organ of our Archdiocese. He will present to us a revised Charter for the DDB which we will discuss and consider for adoption at the Assembly.
 - d. I am grateful to our diocesan representatives to the Metropolitan Council, Deacon Matthew Prentice and Greg Honshul, from whom we will hear a report as well.
 - e. Please continue to pray for the health of Fr Paul Harrilchak who is still facing an extended period of physical therapy.
 - f. Within the clergy families of our Archdiocese, we offer our condolences to Fr Joseph Oleynik on the repose of Matushka Anysia (known to all as Annice) who was also the daughter of Matushka Dunia Hubiak. Memory eternal.
10. Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to all the members of the council for your work on behalf of the archdiocese. I look forward to our continued discussions on Saturday and beyond that at our Assembly in September.