

**REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN (Part Two)**  
**ARCHDIOCESAN PRIORITIES**  
Archdiocesan Council Meeting  
Via Zoom  
August 24, 2024

1. *Introduction.* I welcome all of you to this virtual meeting of the Archdiocesan Council. You have received my written report consisting of a narrative overview of my travel and activities since our February meeting. As I have in the past, I will also be preparing a comprehensive log that will detail all of my travel and activities since our last Assembly. I will share that with the members of this Council and also with the delegates to the upcoming Assembly in September.
2. My intention today is to provide an overview of some broad and some more specific priorities that I have for the Archdiocese of Washington. While I welcome the council's initial feedback, it is my expectation that this overview will serve as an introduction to further deliberations at the Assembly. To facilitate that, I ask that you take these broad and specific priorities back to your respective communities, prayerfully reflect on and discuss them over the next few weeks, and engage your representatives to come prepared to further discuss them at the Assembly. I will provide you with a copy of these remarks in written form.
3. So what are my priorities and my suggestions for implementing them?
4. On the highest level, I have already presented these in my booklet *Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church*. I remind you that the four pillars refer to 1) the spiritual life, 2) stewardship, 3) relations with others, and 4) outreach and evangelism. Each pillar is further subdivided into four subsections for a total of 16 areas that I presented as priorities for the Orthodox Church in America in 2018. These four pillars were the fruit of several years of dialogue and discussion within the Church and they still stand as my comprehensive priorities for the Church.
5. We will have an opportunity to further the Church-wide discussion of these comprehensive priorities at the All-American Council in Phoenix next year which will have the theme of "Gathered Together by Christ." In preparation for this, I have recently issued a letter in which I call on our parishes, missions, and institutions to offer reflections on the particular moment in time in which the Orthodox Church in America finds itself: where we have been, where are we now, where are we going. The Preconciliar Commission has also prepared a study guide for parishes and institutions to guide their internal process of self-reflection, through which they are invited to submit at the indicated email address. All of the submissions from parishes and institutions will be compiled (by a special committee) into a larger document that will be publicly posted for further review and discussion sometime at the beginning of 2025. This call for reflection is not a mandate but an invitation. Nevertheless, I encourage all our parishes and missions to review my letter and the study guide which are available on the website of the Orthodox Church in America, and to consider undergoing this process in your community.

6. Whether or not you wish to contribute an actual reflection for the All-American Council, I believe that it would be useful for our parishes and missions to undergo a parallel process of self-reflection and assessment over the coming year. In that light, my overarching priority is to strengthen the life of the Archdiocese in terms of our preaching of the Gospel, the expansion of our pastoral ministry and liturgical life, and our charitable outreach. These are some of the spiritual foundations of our life as the Church about which there are financial and practical realities. On that most basic level, my priority as the diocesan bishop is to help strengthen the financial position of all of our parishes and missions so that they can flourish and thrive in every way possible. Practically speaking, this means that I would like to see each of our communities: a) maintain an active liturgical life with a strong sense of community and healthy programs for outreach to the local community and beyond; b) can support a full-time priest in compliance with the compensation guidelines of the Holy Synod; c) participate fully in the Pension Plan of the Orthodox Church in America; d) support and maintain a church temple and, if possible, other infrastructure like a social hall. Beyond the local parish/mission, I would like to continue to work towards the fostering of a real sense of family and collaboration between our communities. We have made a lot of progress in this area but more could be done to foster archdiocesan-wide collaboration and community. One way of doing this would be to hold more events where we can gather both liturgically and socially as a diocese. I know we had spoken of doing a 2-day assembly, which I would personally like to see, but I don't think we are quite ready to do that this year. So I will present a proposal about this at the Assembly as well as expand a little further on my priorities for us as an Archdiocese.
7. More recently, recognizing that it would be quite ambitious to try to implement all 16 areas of the Four Pillars, I proposed what I called "Four Modest Pillars" for the Archdiocese of Washington. These modest pillars are: 1) liturgical excellence, 2) musical excellence, 3) vocations and clergy health, and 4) outreach to others. I am maintaining these as broad priorities for our Archdiocese because they are areas in which we have begun, in a very concrete manner to be active by slowly holding liturgical services at which the entire Archdiocese can gather for worship as a community, by developing the ministry of the Archdiocesan choir, by holding training sessions for deacons, subdeacon, readers, and choir directors, and by providing assistance – internally to our own clergy and parishes and externally to worthy causes such as the Diocese of Alaska.
8. Later in our meeting, we will hear a presentation from Greg Honshul, the chair of our Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB). The DDB has been very successful in securing funding for projects and causes that are not funded by our rather lean budget. Recognizing this growth, we have engaged in a process of refining the charter for the DDB, taking into consideration its evolution over the past several years. I believe the DDB is in a very strong position to serve as a great source of financial support for the long-term work of the Archdiocese. The DDB is multi-faceted in that it provides funding for clergy/parish emergencies (at my sole discretion), for short-term (1-3 years) projects and start-ups, and broader matters (like the Fr Michael Koblosh vocations fund). You have received a copy of the draft revision of the charter, which Greg will speak about today. It is my hope that the Council will provide feedback on this charter revision so that it can then be presented at the Assembly for final approval. One key question is how the DDB

might serve to provide more long-term support to the worthy projects that will help the Archdiocese and our communities to grow.

9. So now we come to the most concrete level of my priorities, which is the 2025 budget. This is where the proverbial rubber hits the road: what can we do right now with the budget that we adopt? From the broader levels of priorities, we come to some very specific priorities. I have discussed these with the Finance Committee and they will speak more on this in their report. Here, I will say that I carefully considered the discussions which we held at last year's Assembly on the budget. One of the issues at hand was the need to clarify the distinction between the emergency funds of the DDB and the ADoW budget. The proposed solution was to rename the ADoW emergency fund as the "Metropolitan's Initiative Fund". These particular funds are limited and non-replenishing but I felt that it was important to utilize at least a portion of these funds for some actual programs in the Archdiocese.
  - a. **Archdiocesan Choir.** I am grateful to Juliana Woodill for her leadership of the Archdiocesan Choir and all who have participated in this worthwhile endeavor. The Choir has shown itself to be a great success not only in elevating the level of liturgical and musical life in the Archdiocese but also in creating an opportunity for great community-building. The choir has been in part supported by the DDB and in part self-supported. I believe that it is important for us as a diocese to continue our support of the choir and to indicate this concretely through a line item on the budget.
  - b. **Youth Programs.** We will hear more directly today from Jake Toroney about the success of the summer camp program. I visited the summer camp for three days and can attest to its success. This is something that we should build upon and, as such, I am proposing that the budget reflect a line item for youth activities.
  - c. **Clergy Continuing Education.** Clergy continuing education is an important part of the health of our clergy and, as a consequence, the health of our parishes. Although it is the primary responsibility of the parish to provide opportunities for their clergy to receive continuing education (for which the Holy Synod has mandated 20 hours per year), it is important for us as a diocese to be prepared to supplement any contributions made by the parishes.
10. I look forward to a fruitful meeting today and for the continuation of our discussions at the Assembly in September.