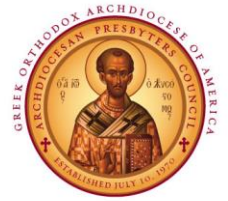




ARCHDIOCESAN PRESBYTERS COUNCIL

“BROTHERS WHO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER”

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APC SPRING 2017 MEETING SUMMARY FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL METROPOLIS CLERGY SYNDESMOI

2016-2018

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(May 8, 2017) The APC met April 24-26, 2017, on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross in Brookline, MA. This brief summary highlights the major issues addressed.

Meeting Participants and Location

In accordance with the standard APC two-year meeting schedule, the first Spring meeting of the term is to be held on the HCHC campus to continue to build and bind the essential relationship between clergy of the Archdiocese and the administration, staff and students of school. Those goals were certainly fulfilled during these meetings. Representatives from each Metropolis and the Direct Archdiocesan District participated. Also present were His Grace Bishop Andonios, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, and representatives of various affiliated ministries: the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres (NSP), the Retired Clergy Association (RCA), the Archdiocese Benefits Committee (ABC), the HC/HC Alumni Association (AA) and Hellenic College/Holy Cross (HCHC).

Meeting Theme and Goals

The theme for the meetings was “Building Brotherhood” and was based on 1 Thess. 5.11, “Encourage one another and build one another up.” Each of the presentations built upon that theme, which was an extension of the overall Vision of the APC: “Brothers who love and serve one another.”

President’s Report

Father John Touloumes, APC President, noted in his opening that the theme for the meetings was chosen to remind us that as brothers we need to stand by one another with love, prayers, encouragement and mutual support. It is at the heart of everything we do as an APC and should be reflected through the representatives to the local level, where relationships among brothers should be promoted and encouraged. Our role as leaders should be based on the model of servant leadership offered by Jesus washing the Disciples’ feet in John 13.15-17, we are called as clergy to also serve one another.

When efforts that benefit the clergy are initiated by other ministries, departments or institutions, it is to the benefit of all for the APC to work synergistically with them. The APC has, therefore, partnered with a number of important ministries and programs over the past year, including the Clergy Initiative for Financial Literacy and the Clergy Couple Care Ministry and Continuing Education (see below for details). We have also been active in working with the Information Technologies department and local Metropolises to update the “ALL_CL” national clergy email list used for all official Archdiocesan clergy communications.

A wonderful opportunity was recently extended to strengthen the relationship of the APC with the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Endowment Fund. Father John was invited to speak on behalf of all the clergy of the Archdiocese at the Leadership 100 annual conference in February to express our deep appreciation for the many ways Leadership supports our ministries, including the APC National Clergy Retreat, the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Retreat and many day-to-day ministry tools.

“THE SOUL OF A PRIEST OUGHT TO BLAZE LIKE A LIGHT ILLUMINATING THE WORLD.” ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (350-407 AD)

Chancellor's Report: His Grace Bishop Andonios reported on the progress of the construction of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center. He reported that a committee has been established to assist in the evaluation of candidates for ordination. His Grace also noted that more efforts are needed assisting clergy who are no longer able to serve in active ordained ministry can be assisted in transitioning to post-ministry life.

Hellenic College Holy Cross: Taking advantage of the meeting location on the HCHC campus, the representatives heard presentations and engaged in dialogues with various components of the school: Father Christopher Metropulos (HCHC President), Dr. Demetrios Katos (Dean, Hellenic College), Dr. James Skedros (Dean, Holy Cross), Kosta Alexis (Vice-President, Institutional Advancement), Helen Carlos (HCHC Board), Admissions (Fr. Gregory Floor), Deacon Gary Alexander (Continuing Education), Dr. Ann Bezzerides (Director, OVM), Elyse Buffenbarger (Director, Telos Project) and Father Michael Monos (Director, Holy Cross Orthodox Press). All these interactions were oriented toward educating the APC representatives – and through them all the clergy of the Archdiocese – on developments, projects and needs of the school and working towards an understanding of how we as clergy can continue to build our relationship with this essential Archdiocesan institution. The APC reps also hosted two valuable forums of interaction directly with the students of the school. First was a panel discussion about life and the overall experience at the school with four students: Alexandra Drechsler and Theofanis Rausch (Hellenic College) and Demetri Constantine and Seraphim Ramos (Holy Cross). Second was a well-attended special ice cream social and informal evening discussion forum with seminarians and wives to allow the APC representatives to share insights and experiences about the life and ministry of the priesthood and have the students ask questions about clergy life. The theme, “Building Brotherhood Matters,” sparked excellent discussion and many positive comments were received.

The Clergy Financial Literacy Initiative: Father Perry Kallis (Center for Family Care) and Chris Daifotis (Benefits Committee) presented information on this new program, officially endorsed and supported by the APC at its Fall 2016 meeting. It is coordinated by Father Costas Sitaras, funded by a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment and being launched in 2017. Over the next three years, it will provide \$500 thousand for clergy financial education, including enrolling in Dave Ramsey’s “Financial Peace University” and receiving financial counseling at no cost. It will also provide \$500 thousand for clergy family debt relief, including education loans, medical bills, credit card debt and other financial burdens experienced by clergy families. Information is being prepared for distribution to all clergy families about how to qualify and participate in this initiative. It will also be presented at the upcoming National Clergy Retreat in the Fall.

Clergy Couple Care Ministry: Presvytera Kerry Pappas of the Center for Family Care presented this new ministry, which will provide multifaceted resources to clergy and seminarian couples to help cultivate healthy, holy self-care and vibrant marriage grounded and growing in Christ. An initial meeting was held in January in Tarpon Springs to design the scope of this ministry, with nearly three dozen priests and presvyteres participating.

Clergy Peer Learning Groups Ministry: Father Alexander Goussetis, new Director of the Center for Family Care, offered information on this valuable new clergy growth and support small-group ministry, now being test-piloted and prepared for national launch. Its goals are to strengthen and sustain excellence in pastoral leaders, promote peer learning, sustain clergy in every season of ministry, provide a sacred space for mutual care, support and accountability and to engage in theological reflection on pastoral identity and parish ministry.

Continuing Education: Deacon Gary Alexander, HCHC Director of Strategic Initiatives, Ventures and Partnerships, presented, along with Father Bill Gikas of the APC, an update on the new Continuing Education offerings for clergy being developed by the school. Plans are to make the initial offerings available in the Fall of 2017.

The APC National Clergy Retreat: An enthusiastic team of 25 brother clergy is working to offer the best APC National Clergy Retreat ever, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Leesburg, Virginia. With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the main speaker will be Father Zacharias of the Saint John the Baptist Monastery in Essex, England. Registration opens May 1 and information is available on the APC website, apc.goarch.org.