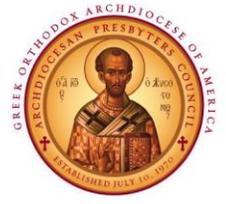




ARCHDIOCESAN PRESBYTERS COUNCIL

“BROTHERS WHO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER”

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APC SPRING 2018 MEETING SUMMARY FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL METROPOLIS CLERGY SYNDESMOI

(May 22, 2018) The APC met on April 16-18, 2018, at St. Mark Church in Boca Raton, Florida. This brief summary highlights the major issues addressed.

The APC Vision and Mission Statements

Our Vision: “Brothers who love and serve one another.”

Our Mission: “The mission of the Archdiocese Presbyters Council is to serve the clergy by edifying and supporting our priests in the ministry through spiritual growth, educational development and personal wellness. This mission is accomplished through retreats, liturgical life, continuing education, brother-to-brother outreach, ministry development and benevolence.”

Representatives

The APC representatives gathered for the last of the four biannual meetings of the 2016-2018 term with the following Metropolises in attendance: Atlanta, Direct Archdiocesan District, Boston, Chicago, Denver, New Jersey, Pittsburgh and San Francisco. Also present were representatives from the following APC affiliated ministries: the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres (NSP), the Retired Clergy Association (RCA), the Archdiocese Benefits Committee (ABC) and Hellenic College/Holy Cross (HCHC).

Theme

The theme for the meetings, “Cemented Through This One Bond: The Desire to Help One Another,” was drawn from St. John Chrysostom’s Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew. That theme was applied to all aspects of the meetings as a reflection of the vision and mission of the APC. As such, prior to the start of the meetings, the representatives gathered in St. Mark Church and offered a Paraclesis Service to the Theotokos, during which the names of all the clergy of the Archdiocese were offered in prayer. This was a spiritual offering to all the brother clergy to “help one another” through the sacred bond of prayer and fellowship in our lives and shared ministries.

The Ministry of the Priest and the Work of the APC

Fr. John Touloumes opened the meetings with reflections and thanks to the APC representatives for the past four years of cooperation and co-ministry during his term as APC President. He drew upon the wisdom of our APC 2017 National Clergy Retreat speaker, Archimandrite Zacharias of Essex, in reminding us that ultimately all we do as priests, whether through the APC, in our parishes or anywhere, should be challenged by this thought: “Every person who comes into contact with a priest of God should not leave without some sense of the world above, of the grace of salvation, which comforts and illumines his precious soul” (from the book, “The Engraving of Christ in Man’s Heart”).

Affiliated Ministries Reports

ABC: Fr. Costas Pavlakos, ABC chairman, offered an update on the work of the Benefits Committee. Great concern was expressed over the amount owed to the Pension Fund by the Archdiocese. As requested by Fr. Costas, the APC approved a resolution calling upon the Archdiocese to include a line-item in the budget of at least \$1 million per year until all

amounts due are paid and the pension is fully funded. **HCHC:** Fr. Christopher Metropulos, President of HCHC, offered information on new programs, partnerships and developments in the life of the school. He encouraged us to keep up to date by reading the school's monthly Presidential Newsletter, available online. The proposed student union building project has been cancelled due to the death of the primary donor. Finances at the school are very tight.

NSP: Presvytera Pauline Pavlakos, the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres President, and Presvytera Nicole Keares, the Vice-President, appeared via Zoom video to report on the operations of the APC/NSP Benevolent Fund, which has distributed over \$20,000 in "gifts of love" to assist clergy and clergy families in times of need or crisis. The NSP 2019 National Retreat will be held October 11-14 near Boca Raton. The presvyteres are also working with the Boston Clergy-Laity Committee to set up the clergy family workshops during Clergy-Laity in July. We are all thankful to Leadership 100 for their assistance in funding these workshops.

The Desire to Help One Another Through...

- **Clergy Peer Learning Groups:** An informative and interactive session was conducted by Fr. Nicholas Solak of the OCA Eastern Diocese on Clergy Peer Learning Groups. This ministry was started through a grant from the Lilly Endowment. Fr. Nicholas headed the first effort of this learning, sharing and growing clergy ministry for the OCA and has expanded it to include other jurisdictions, including representatives of the GOA (Frs. John Touloumes, Alex Goussetis, Harry Pappas and Presvytera Kerry Pappas). The GOA Center for Family Care has now included this in its official list of ministries and is seeking to expand it. The APC representatives passed a resolution expressing support for this ministry and requesting the CFC to undertake the training of facilitators in 2018 so these groups can be established throughout the country as quickly as possible.
- **Sabbaticals:** Fathers Lou Christopulos and Jerry Hall joined via Zoom video to speak with the reps about clergy sabbaticals. These are provided for in the Archdiocese UPR, but the practicalities are sometimes hard to arrange. Both brothers explained how they planned, used and financed their sabbaticals and how their parishes were able to sustain active ministries in their absences. A particularly bright spot was the availability of funding for clergy sabbaticals by the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program. Information is available on their website at www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal/apply/national-program.
- **Clergy Financial Literacy Program:** Fr. Al Demos addressed the reps via Zoom video on the Clergy Financial Literacy Program of the Archdiocese, which was established last year at the Center for Family Care through the efforts of Fr. Costa Sitaras to assist clergy with financial relief and to provide financial education and planning tools for both clergy and parishes. This program, which is free for our clergy, includes the Dave Ramsey "Financial Peace University" program and financial planning through "Peter the Planner." Contact Fr. Al at demos41@gmail.com for information on how to apply.

The APC 2017 and 2019 National Clergy Retreats

Fathers John Touloumes and Lou Noplos provided information on the 2017 and 2019 APC National Clergy Retreats. A detailed report of statistics and feedback from the 2017 attendees provided through the online survey was presented. A record 199 clergy registered for the 2017 Retreat in Leesburg, Virginia, although 13 cancellations resulted in a net attendance of 186. Father John thanked the Retreat Team of over 20 brothers who assisted in planning and running the Retreat. Many helpful comments were received through the online post-retreat survey and, as always, every comment, positive or otherwise, will be taken seriously as the planning for the 2019 Retreat continues. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios has approved the location and dates for the 2019 Retreat to be San Antonio, Texas, from October 28-31, and His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah has offered a gracious invitation into the Metropolis of Denver to hold the event. Information will be available at Clergy-Laity in July.

Other Matters Addressed

- **Clergy Years of Service Award:** It was noted that since the former practice of honoring priests for 25 years of service by elevating them to the office of Protopresbyter is no longer observed, there is no official recognition for clergy anniversaries at the Archdiocese level. A motion was approved to fund a Clergy Years of Service Award to be offered at the Clergy-Laity APC/RCA National Clergy Breakfast in July, with recognitions of 10, 25 and 50 years of service.
- **Resolutions approved:** In addition to those already mentioned in this report, resolutions were approved on the following topics: 1) Congratulations from the APC to the RCA on their 30th year as an organization; 2) APC and national clergy support for our beloved Hellenic College Holy Cross; 3) APC appreciation to Leadership 100 for its gracious support for clergy and their ministries; 4) A request to the Holy Eparchial Synod for an updating and expansion of the Archdiocese Pastoral Guidelines (last updated in 1985) and an offer to assist in this endeavor.