

# Curriculum Vitae

V. Rev. S. David Mahaffey, Jr.  
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## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

July – Present – Acting Dean, Philadelphia Deanery, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, OCA

January, 2006-Present Rector, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Pottstown, Pennsylvania [note: as of 8/8/2009, I have received a letter of release from my duties as Rector of Holy Trinity in Pottstown and have been appointed Acting Rector of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, PA effective September 30, 2009]

August, 1993-January, 2006 assigned to St Michael's parish, Old Forge, Pennsylvania

July 31, 1993 Ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Conemaugh, PA

1981 Ordained to Holy Diaconate, April 12, serving in Parishes and assisting His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill within the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

1968-1975 Served as a lay minister, for the United Methodist Church, Mahaffey-Glenn Campbell Charge, conducting services and delivering homilies to the parishes of the UMC.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

3/2009-Present

Adjunct Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy, Alvernia University, Melrose Park Campus, Philadelphia, PA.

2005-Present Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy, Doctrine, Church History, Comparative Theology and Modern Belief at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

2003-04 Graduate Assistant, Theology Department, University of Scranton

1981 - Parish Education Coordinator at various Parishes where attached. Spokesman in teen and adult education at retreats and lecture series in both Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Diocese of Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Developed educational software in game format for use at the parish and regional levels.

## **EDUCATION**

2005 University of Scranton  
M. A. in Theology Program

- 1999-2003 University of Scranton  
Dual Majors, B. A. (Theology) and B. A. (Philosophy), *magna cum laude*  
Concentration in Ancient, Continental and Modern Philosophy, especially Plato & Aristotle, and Heidegger and Kant, as well as the philosophy of religion and scholastic authors such as Aquinas and Anselm. Excelled in performance in all classes.
- 1992-1997 M. Div., St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, *cum laude*
- 1975-1980 Late Vocations Program, Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania
- 1970-1972 Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Punxsutawney Campus (no degree).

## **AWARDS**

- 2003 *Frank O'Hara Award for Academic Excellence*  
One student from each college (The Panuska College of Professional Studies; The Kania School of Management; Dexter Hanley College; The College of Arts and Sciences) at the University of Scranton is honored with this award in each graduating class.
- Excellence in Philosophy Award*  
Granted to one student each year from the entire undergraduate class, all schools, who has excelled in the study of philosophy during matriculation at the University of Scranton.
- Nominated and accepted for membership in: *Alpha Sigma Nu* – National Jesuit Honors Society, (Secretary of local chapter 2002-03 academic year); *Alpha Sigma Lambda* – honor society for adult learners; *Phi Sigma Tau* – honor society for Philosophy majors; *Theta Alpha Kappa* – honor society for Theology majors; *National Society of Collegiate Scholars* – University of Scranton Charter Member
- Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities 2002-2003*
- 2003 *Presidential Honors*; awarded by the President of the University of Scranton, Fr. Joseph McShane during his tenure at the university
- 2001 *University of Scranton Presidential Honors*
- 2000 *University of Scranton Presidential Honors*
- 1970 *Quill & Scroll* – for photographic and journalistic work on high school yearbook

## **PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE**

- 1970-1989 Benjamin Coal Co., La Jose, PA – various positions including: Maintenance man on draglines and other heavy equipment; warehouse clerk; heavy equipment operator on loaders, rock trucks, bull dozer, rock drill, and rock hoe; explosives

assistant; Lube truck operator; heavy equipment mechanic. [laid off due to bankruptcy]

1989-1990 Fred Diehl Motors, Clearfield, PA - Automotive sales associate

1990-1991 Master Chrysler Plymouth, Clearfield, PA – Sales Manager

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Born: May 25, 1952 in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Baptized: December 14, 1952 at Mahaffey Methodist Church, Mahaffey, Pennsylvania

Married: May 5, 1973 to Karen Meterko at Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, Urey, Glen Campbell, PA

Chrismated: November 16, 1975 into the Orthodox Catholic Faith, at SS. Peter & Paul, Urey

Children: Nikolas (1980), Sterry Michael (1982), Seth (1985) and Kyra (1987)

Widowed: August 8, 2007

Organizations: Treasurer, *St. Tikhon's Alumni Association*; Secretary, *Alpha Sigma Nu Alumni*, NEPA Chapter (charter member and Secretary); (former) Secretary, *Clergy Brotherhood of NEPA*; Staff, *Your Diocese Alive in Christ Magazine*; Auditor, *Orthodox Church in America*, and *Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania*; Bishop's Task Force on Missions and Evangelization, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

### **REFERENCES:**

V. Rev. Michael Dahulich, Dean  
St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary  
P O Box 130 Monastery Road  
South Canaan, PA 18459  
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Dr. Crina Gschwandtner  
St. Thomas Hall,  
University of Scranton, Philosophy Dept.  
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R512 N Main St  
Old Forge, PA 19818  
570-313-0310

## Conversion Process

Prior to my becoming an Orthodox Christian, I was very active in the United Methodist Church, Central Pennsylvania Diocese. I was president of the Youth Fellowship while in high school, served as Sunday School Superintendent, filled in for the pastor during his summer vacation (from the age of 15). Upon graduation from Purchase Line High School, I was offered a Lay Pastor's License by the United Methodist Church, but I refused to accept it. At the time I did not know why I would do such a thing, as it seemed my whole life to that point was directing me to a position in the ministry of the Methodist Church.

While dating my wife, she invited me to attend her church (Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Urey), and I did so. It was during this time, while I was matriculating at the Punxsutawney Campus of the University of Pennsylvania, that I was probably the most agnostic of my entire life. I was no longer sure who God was, but I was intent on finding Him. From the very first time I entered that little country church, I knew there was something very different about worshipping God from anything I had previously experienced. It literally frightened me and could scarcely remain in the church during the Liturgy. I was afraid to go back, and yet I was drawn by something that I could not put into words. Whenever possible, I returned to that church to ponder the deep spiritual meaning of the services and behold the Divine Majesty that was present in the way they prayed and sang and worshipped God.

Eventually, Matushka and I decided to marry and we became engaged. There was no doubt about where to be married, the Orthodox Church was going to be the place; and even if I did not fully understand why at that time, I knew it was where I wanted to be married. The priest there at the time, Fr. Dan Rentel, was very open and friendly to me, even though I was not Orthodox and it had a profound effect on my future life in the Church.

After our marriage, Matushka and I tried our best to please both our parents. Every Sunday morning, we would rise early enough to attend services at the Mahaffey Methodist Church with my family, and then travel to Urey to attend services in the Orthodox Church. By this time, Fr. Raphael Rozdilski, of blessed memory, was the Rector at Urey. He was a patient man who spent many long hours and late nights explaining the Orthodox Faith to me. He answered my Protestant arguments from Scripture quite well and never belittled me or criticized me for what must have been uninformed or even ignorant questions. Finally, he offered to take me to a Memorial Day Pilgrimage at St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan in 1975.

It was that experience that convinced me to finally become Orthodox. I had never seen so many bishops, priests, deacons and faithful gathered in one place. Up to that point, my only experience of Orthodoxy was the little parishes that dot the landscape of central Pennsylvania. On the way home all I could speak of was my desire to become Orthodox. My Matushka was very hesitant about my decision, she knew my parents would not accept my choice and feared they would blame her for my conversion. The truth is, God used her to lead me to Holy Orthodoxy, but it was the Holy Spirit that convinced me it was the right faith.

From then on, Fr. Raphael not only encouraged me in the faith, but he also started me on a path to seminary. I was tonsured a Reader by then Bishop Theodosius of Pittsburgh, made a Sub-deacon by then Bishop Kyril, and attended the Late Vocation classes of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, becoming ordained to the Holy Deaconate on April 12, 1981. For the next twelve years, I served in various parishes in Western Pennsylvania, sometimes with a priest, or assisting the bishop, or alone serving an Obednitsa at the bishop's direction.

My success in secular matters allowed me to provide well enough for my growing family. Even when the coal company I worked for went under, God helped me to find another way to provide for my family. Although I was becoming more and more successful, in the worldly sense, I still did not feel fulfilled. I did not know exactly what it was, I had always seen myself as remaining a deacon until I was near retirement, then becoming a priest and serving some small parish that could not afford to pay a priest; at least, that is what I thought I would do. God, however, had other plans.

One March Sunday evening, returning from a Mission Vespers Service in Ganister, Pennsylvania (which wasn't actually a vespers service, but we sang the Akathist Hymn, "Glory to God for All Things), my wife asked me if I ever considered completing my education at a seminary and becoming a priest. It was like that doors of heaven itself opened and an angel of the Lord spoke, I could barely answer her, "Yes, I did." It was then that I realized what was missing in my life; it wasn't what I wanted to do for myself, but what God wanted from me. My wife's words were the assurance I needed. The very next week we began plans to sell our house and make application to the seminary at St. Tikhons. I must mention here that Fr. Pavel Soucek, of blessed memory, assigned to St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Irvona at that time, was very influential in helping me at this time, writing a letter of recommendation for me, since Urey was vacant then.

While I went off to St. Tikhon's Seminary, my wife with our four little children, aged 3 to 9, moved in with her parents, who kept her and them that first year of seminary. We saw each other on weekends whenever possible, and received much loving assistance from the various parishes in the Altoona Deanery. It was their assistance and prayers that helped us get through a very difficult year.

The next year, I was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Eminence, Archbishop Kyril, and was assigned to St. Michael's Parish in Old Forge, Pennsylvania. This allowed me to finish my seminary training, and I then requested to be released to Eastern Pennsylvania and stay in Old Forge for my children's benefit and so I could further my studies.

## **Ministry and Life**

During the next fourteen years, I served the Orthodox Church in various capacities, as a Parish Priest, various committee assignments from education to missions, writing for the diocese magazine, serving as an auditor and teaching at St. Tikhon's Seminary. All of these experiences have helped me to grow in faith and spiritual fulfillment, to become no just a "better" priest, but a better person in general. I have grown in ways I did not know I could grow, not because I have done anything, but because of the people God has sent as messengers along the way. Each and every one of them, from parishioners to priests, teachers to technicians, they have all shown me something, given me something, that helped to make me a better person.

Most importantly, they have all helped to prepare me to deal with something I never thought I would have to deal with, the loss of my dear and loving wife. Of all the difficulties I have had to endure, there is nothing that can compare to it. Even the most difficult experiences with my children, or the roughest treatment from an uncaring parishioner, and anything in between, all pale in comparison to the loss of a wife.

But because I have been given wonderful children, a good parish family and caring brothers, I have been able to continue in a much better way than I would have thought possible. It is this Holy Orthodox Church that now is my strength and my consolation. It is where I go for peace, for love, for support and for guidance. If I have not learned anything else, I have learned that the Church truly is our Mother.

## Thoughts on Episcopacy

Perhaps the most significant comment on the episcopacy, after the words of St. Paul of course, come from St. Ignatius of Antioch. “Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever is done will be safe and valid.” We understand from this the importance of the bishop and his role in the life of the church. Nothing should be done without his knowledge, consent or blessing.

As a parish priest, I have always been diligent in my consultation with my bishop concerning anything that I found questionable. I do not believe in the popular principle, “It is easier to ask forgiveness than permission.” This has made more than one parishioner question why their priest has done a particular act or made a decision for a baptism wedding or funeral. It has not always made me popular with some people because I followed the bishop’s decision, but it has allowed me to remain a faithful priest of Holy Orthodoxy. Throughout my priesthood, there is nothing that goes on in my parish that would be any different if the bishop were present or absent.

Having been raised in a Christianity where following the beliefs of the church were “optional”, I truly appreciate a faith that is grounded in the principal of conciliarity. It is one of those aspects of Holy Orthodoxy that I truly hold dear. It is not a forced conformity, as in the Roman Catholic Churches, nor is it pharisaical, where the letter of the law cannot bend at all. Rather, it is a living law, the law of love, applied, as needed, by its leaders, the bishops, to prevent heresy, guide the faithful and support the truth.

This conciliar attitude is not based on any one person’s ideas or beliefs, but it is founded on the Canons and Traditions of Holy Orthodoxy. It is a true “Rudder” of the Church, under the hand of a skilled navigator; it is tilled to guide the Church through the difficult waters of life to reach a safe harbor. The words of St. Paul to Timothy come to mind, as we say at each Divine Liturgy, “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the world of truth.***” (2 Tim. 2.15) Fulfilling this passage of Holy Scripture is only possible in a Church where its leaders, the bishops, act in a spirit of conciliarity, with full knowledge of Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition, the Sacred Canons and within the context of the life experience of the Church as it exists in a modern world. Truly, we are that Rock that the gates of hell shall not prevail against.

With love in Christ,

Archpriest S. David Mahaffey, Jr.