

**Commission on Mission and Evangelism Diocesan Assembly Report 2022**  
**Diocese of New York and New Jersey**  
**Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, DMin - Director**

*“Whenever our parishes – these cells of the Church – really shine with the virtues, the dynamism, the faith of true Christianity, they also perform the mission. This mission – because it is the mission of the Church, and not of an individual, or of a human agency – can take many forms and be performed by a variety of ministries, all equally legitimate.”*

*Protopresbyter John Meyendorff<sup>1</sup>*

**Introduction**

It is with great appreciation to the Diocese that the Commission on Missions and Evangelism was able to hold its first Annual Evangelism School from August 8 to 10, 2022 at St. Gregory the Theologian Orthodox Church in Wappingers Falls, NY. The School was fully funded by the Diocese and was open to one clergy and one layperson from each deanery as well as one clergy and one layperson recommended by His Eminence. A total of 10 people were able to attend along with some additional invited participants and guests. The School was an intense three-day program with invited speakers, lectures, roundtable discussions and open forums. The School will be annual event as we rotate through parishes and missions in the Diocese.

Why was this important? In order to foster the spirit of mission and evangelism, people need to be taught the basic principles as well as be able to hear of the success stories from around the Church. But more importantly, the participants need to be able take what they learned and apply in their own local circumstance. As more parishes are able to put into practice their renewed understanding of evangelism, then they will be able to renew that spirit of dynamism of the Faith in their context. This School was an important step in building the future of the parishes and the Diocese.

**Work of the Commission**

As Director, I continue to interact with the four missions on a weekly basis. Some have gone through transitions to new clergy and to new locations. I keep His Eminence Archbishop Michael, the Chancellor, Mitered Archpriest Joseph Lickwar and the two Deans with missions, Archpriest Gary Breton and Archpriest Alexey Karlgut informed and include them in various communications. Some have attended the online meetings and the in-person meetings. I was able to do an on-site visit and discussion with Holy Apostles Mission in Lansing, NY. I will not recount the details of each of the four missions in the Diocese as you can read about them in their own reports.

1. We continue the monthly online forms that each mission submits for the previous month’s activities. These forms are compiled and evaluated in a quarterly report sent to His Eminence, the Chancellor and the Deans. Each quarterly report highlights specific items that may be of interest or concern. His Eminence reviews these with the Chancellor and Deans at periodic meetings.
2. There are quarterly meetings (via Zoom) with the mission clergy in which each share details of their ministry with one another as well as discussing challenges and issues that are of mutual

benefit to the life of the missions. These are recorded and a summary is sent to His Eminence. His Eminence, the Chancellor and Deans are invited to attend these meetings and some of whom have participated on an ongoing basis.

3. We were able to have an in-person meeting of mission clergy at St. Gregory the Theologian Orthodox Church on September 10, 2022. The goal of these meetings is to have an annual gathering and to be able to concentrate on specific topics in-depth and have a detailed discussion. This year's topic was on critical areas on concentration for a mission priest when he arrives in a mission. We will be discussing next year's topic and setting a date for the early next summer.
4. The quarterly newsletter on missions and evangelism entitled "Koinonia" continues to be published and disseminated to the Diocese. The newsletter contain articles on a particular theme as well as reflections and a review of missionary activities of the Diocese. All parishes and clergy in the Diocese receive the electronic newsletter. This year's theme was on leadership and the impact on a mission.
5. We continue to look for various liturgical items and vestments which can be distributed to the missions. If you have any items that are in good condition, please contact Fr. Eric. We are still planning to establish a mission fund for the Diocese to assist with the needs of the current missions, plan future missions and support the work of the CME in activities such as training. If you are interested in contributing or participating in this, please contact Fr. Eric.
6. I will also beginning the discussion with His Eminence and the Deans on identifying potential and intentional mission and evangelism opportunities. This will focus the Diocese and the parishes on not only the potential around them but also allow us all to look outside of our parochial responsibilities and see a larger community that surrounds each and every parish.

## Conclusion

*“Today, there are more words and books and fewer living examples.”*

*Elder Paisios of Mount Athos*<sup>2</sup>

I am very thankful to everyone who continues to work in the parishes and in the Diocese for the furtherance of missions and evangelism. The Diocese is fully committed to this through the support and funding of the various projects and programs. We, as a Diocese and as parishes, must constantly provide a witness to the world of our beloved Orthodox Church. Many parishes across the country are experiencing an influx of catechumens who are seeking the truth of God and His Church and such programs are vital to ensure good and proper training for the parishes of the Diocese. The work that we do together to advance the Church must be in the forefront of our efforts in order to open the doors for seekers. We, as individuals and communities need to be the living examples of Faith, reaching out in truth and love and providing a dynamism for our mission to North America and this Diocese.

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<sup>1</sup> John Meyendorff, *Witness to the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1987), 180.

<sup>2</sup> Elder Paisios, *Spiritual Counsels with Pain and Love for Contemporary Man* (Souroti, Greece, 2019), p. 33-34.