2020 Activities Report¹

for

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America

Respectfully submitted by

Metropolitan Gregory
Secretary

&

Nicholas Anton
Director of Operations

¹ As of September 25, 2020
Committee Revival

- After meeting twice in 2018 and just once in 2019, the Executive Committee has been meeting weekly, with 19 meetings to date, in 2020.

- 9 out of the 14 Committees have started to work productively in 2020, up from just 4 in 2019 and 2018.²

² Canonical Regional Planning has completed monumental work over the past ten years and will take hiatus until called upon for further development. The Committee for Pastoral Practice completed an initial assessment in 2013 and will resume its work in late 2020/ early 2021. The committees for Church and Society, Liturgy, and Monastic Communities are slated to become active in late 2020/ early 2021.
• The secretariat has resumed monthly meetings on the third Thursday and has added new members.

Activities

• Established a **COVID-19 Task Force** to provide medical and legal analysis in order to assist the bishops during the darkest hours of the pandemic;

• Created the **COVID-19 Pandemic Resource Center** with comprehensive resources and information to assist our parishes, dioceses and jurisdictions through the difficulties caused by the pandemic;
- Published **ten new resources** to assist jurisdictions and parishes through the COVID-19 Pandemic;

- Created and delivered the **COVID-19 Parish Re-Opening Toolkit** to assist parish communities as they began the process of re-opening our churches;

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**Pertinent Government Orders**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and rapidly changes in unpredictable ways, so do the corresponding regulations in each state and county. At this time, we recommend consulting with local legal counsel and referring directly to your local governments’ websites and resources for updated information.

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**Additional Resources**

- Guidelines & Considerations for Safer Orthodox Church Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Risk Reducing Measures Specific to Orthodox Christian Services
- CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces
- Guidelines & Considerations for Pastoral Home Visitations During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Federal Guidelines for Opening Up America Again
• Established a **Mental Health Task Force**, and networks have been created around thematic areas such as homelessness;

• Established a working group to create new agency dubbed **Orthodox Volunteer Corps** to assist the renewed support efforts for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), and other humanitarian organizations while providing opportunities for young adults to respond to Christ’s call to serve;

• Hired a **Director of Operations** to help the Secretary of the Assembly run the day-to-day operations;

**Communications and Multi-media**

• Produced six videos on different aspects of mental health for mental health awareness month;

• Developed a Directory of Orthodox Christian Mental Health Professionals;

• Together with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, co-organized the “Love They Neighbor” miniseries to highlight Orthodox Christian humanitarian organizations;
- Setup a YouTube Channel and produced two videos celebrating Pascha;

- Increased Facebook presence and influence while creating and growing an Instagram account. Both accounts are in the process of becoming verified.
- Increased website traffic, and a marketing/communications team is in formation to help redesign and restructure of the website as well as other communications protocols;

- Increased number of statements and press releases from 12 in 2018 and 15 in 2019 to 23 to date in 2020 and did an interview on Ancient Faith Radio:
Looking to the Future

- Strategic Plan will guide committee, programmatic, and development work over the next five years;

- The Secretariat is forming a Development Team to assist in fundraising and growth;

- A reimagined structure for relationships between the Assembly and Agencies, Commissions, Affiliated Ministries and Associations will bring about better cooperation and accountability;

- A new research app and reformed research oversight committee will yield quality data to help decision making on a levels;

- The creation of a One Church Initiative will help bring together parishes and jurisdictions on the local level through the enhancement of clergy brothers, engagement of laity, and education of youth and young adults. It will be carried out through a coordinated effort of the various committees – most especially the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning, the Committee for Clergy Matters, the Committee for Agencies and Commissions, Affiliated Ministries and Associations – as well as ad hoc task forces and working groups;
A new website design will draw visitors to our most popular offerings including directories, resources, and partnerships;

New agencies focused on youth and young adults – such as Orthodox Volunteer Corps and a Youth Ministry Agency – will set the next generation on the path toward Orthodox Christian Unity in the USA.