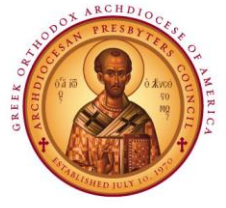




ARCHDIOCESAN PRESBYTERS COUNCIL

“BROTHERS WHO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER”

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

(November 13, 2017) The APC met on October 30 and 31 at the Lansdowne Resort in Leesburg, Virginia, at the site of the APC 2017 National Clergy Retreat. 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 third of the four biannual meetings of the 2016-2018 term, along with His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zelon and representatives from their 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).

Theme

The theme for the meetings, “Doing Good for the Church, Her People and Our Brothers,” was drawn from 2 Thess. 3:13: “As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good” That theme applied to all aspects of the meetings and the ministry of the APC and focused on ways we can use our gifts, talents and time to be forces for good in the life our Church, our people and especially our brothers. As such, the first part of the minute was spent in silent prayer in concord with Saint Paul’s admonition, “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men” (1 Tim. 2.1).

The Ministry and Work of the APC

APC President Fr. John Touloumes acknowledged progress in various areas that fulfill the mission of the APC, including: 1) Cooperation with the Archdiocese Benefits Committee on issues of health care and retirement security; 2) Working with the Center for Family Care, HCHC and other resources in the areas of Clergy Pastoral/Personal/Family Crisis Response; 3) Partnering with HCHC to further progress on development of a Continuing Educating program for clergy; 4) Supporting parishes and brothers in emergencies as clergy on first responder/crisis response teams; 5) Growing the Church in America through the gifts and ministry tools developed by various brother clergy around the Archdiocese; and 6) Continued emphasis on priestly spiritual and personal growth through the biennial National Clergy Retreat.

The APC 2017 National Clergy Retreat

The Fall APC meetings took place on day before and on the morning of the start of the APC 2017 National Clergy Retreat. The Retreat was the largest-ever in the history of the Archdiocese, with 186 in attendance from 35 states around the country, including 58 brothers who had never attended a National Clergy Retreat. The Retreat opened with a dinner in honor of 50 years of episcopal ministry of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, at which the APC presented His Eminence with a custom-created engolpion depicting Jesus Christ at the Good Shepherd. It was followed by a Divine Liturgy the next morning, with the officers of the APC serving and both His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos at the throne. The presentations for the Retreat were offered by Archimandrite Zacharias of the Patriarchal Stavropegic Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Essex, England. Fr. Zacharias offered three deeply insightful and inspiring sessions which addressed the theme of the Retreat, “Fathers. Brothers. Men of God.” The third session was fully dedicated to questions and answers with Father Zacharias and was actively participated in by those in attendance. “Engagement” sessions provided the opportunity for the retreat participants to engage in peer-led discussions that followed the sessions. The Retreat also featured “Adventures” to local attractions, a professionally-led fitness program, a new “M Games” interactive and entertaining competition event and plenty of time for personal sharing and fellowship with brother clergy. The APC expresses its deep appreciation for the support of Leadership 100, without which such well-attended and high-quality retreats would not be possible.

Continuing Education

The APC continues to work closely with HCHC President Fr. Christopher Metropulos and his staff to facilitate and support the development of a Continuing Education program for the clergy of the Archdiocese. APC New Jersey Representative and Treasurer Fr. Bill Gikas has been representing the APC in this effort and has been studying various program models to see what would work to meet our needs. Fr. Christopher indicated a proposal is being prepared for presentation to the Holy Eparchial Synod, which would need to approve of any official program.

“Doing Good” for Our Church, Her People and Our Brothers

In keeping with the theme of the meetings, the APC representatives held a number of discussion sessions regarding important issues impacting the life of the Church. Powerful and personal discussions took place on what we as clergy can offer to “do good” for our Church and her people in these challenging times of crisis and uncertainty in the life of the Archdiocese. We were reminded of the need for us as church leaders to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4.3), but to also speak the “truth in love” (Eph. 4.15) when leading our communities and not to rely on rumors and unverified news. We also offered a good deal of attention and discussion on how to “do good” for our brother clergy who are in various stages of trouble, crisis or burnout. This is one of the key elements of the APC vision, “Brothers who love and serve one another.” The APC reps were encouraged to continue to promote this vision and calling in the clergy of their Metropolises so that no brother is left alone and without a brother to turn to, even in times of self-inflicted troubles.

Archdiocese Benefits Committee

ABC Chairman Father Costas Pavlakos reported that the Archdiocese still owes the Pension Fund \$449,586 of past due monthly contributions for Archdiocese employees. We continue to attempt to collect this from the Archdiocese. Also, Pension Fund statements have been delayed due to the switch to Mercer as our pension management company but they will be mailed soon.

APC/NSP Benevolent Fund

The APC and NSP jointly administer the APC/NSP Benevolent Fund, whose purpose is to provide confidential short-term financial assistance for clergy and clergy families in need. Requests for assistance may be made confidentially to the Presidents or Vice-Presidents of either the APC or NSP. As of the APC Fall 2017 meeting, over \$24,000 in assistance has been provided this year.