

Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly

St. Nicholas Ranch
February 25-26, 2013

“WHATEVER GOD DOES ENDURES FOREVER” ECCLESIASTES.

In the keynote address, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos focused on the theme of the assembly, “Weaving a Tapestry of Faith”. Metropolitan Gerasimos emphasized that the bonds – the tapestry – that forms the foundation of our faith begins with our family as they are our first experience in a community of learning and a demonstration of unity.

Extending to our parishes, we must also weave a tapestry with regard to the ministries offered, keeping in mind the diverse ages and needs of our faithful.

We must be welcoming to visitors, inclusive to all, and be careful to not become an exclusive ethnic club based on finances or political affiliations. This theme of inclusion became one of the highlighted topics throughout the day.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATION

The Archdiocese has started a process to analyze the state of our Church and to develop a mission, vision and plan that will guide us into the future. The Strategic Task Force presentation, led by Bill Marianes became the sole focus of day one of the conference. The Strategic Task Force, comprised of clergy and lay members, brought recommendations to the meeting in order to discuss and adopt these goals. A spirited discussion followed the presentation. The Strategic Task Force will use our suggestions as they come up with specific plans that will be rolled out to each parish.

The meeting participants were asked to go back to the parish and communicate the vision of this meeting so that the parish can understand our shared goals. It is important that all Orthodox Christians understand that it is our duty to be good stewards of the church by sharing our resources; our time, our talents and treasures. The church is dynamic and life-giving and the Holy Spirit is present. Our work as Orthodox Christians is to bring people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the life of the church. This distinct mission sets us apart from all other organizations. God’s work perfects our work. Our engagement brings out the love of God. As we accept the Lord’s promise that He will be with us always and His work endures forever.

We live in exponential times. The advances in technology have influenced how people communicate and relate to one another. While radio took 38 years to reach 50 million users, Facebook reached 100 million users in just 9 months. Facebook now has over 1.01 billion users. If Facebook were a country it would be the 3rd largest in the world. Twitter receives 500 million tweets per day.

We live in exponential times. YouTube started in December 2005 and it currently tracks 4 billion hours viewed each month. More video content was uploaded

to YouTube in the last 2 months that was broadcast by the 3 major networks in the last 62 years.

We live in exponential times. It is critical that the church use technology and social media to share the gospel, enrich the spiritual lives of parishioners and continue to grow the church. It is equally critical that all of us participate in this ministry by engaging in the social media outreach.

The grim reality is that the church membership in America is on the decline. In particular Americans between the ages of 18-29 do not affiliate with a particular religious group. While individual charitable donations rose by 4% in 2011, donations to churches dropped by 1.7%. People are giving a lower percentage of income to churches since the year 2000 than they did during the Great Depression.

Though Greeks are the 3rd most affluent group in America, their donation level is well below the national average. The average donation in America is \$880.00 per year while Greek Orthodox Christians give an average of \$218.00. Most churches survive because of the profits of their Greek Festivals. The most alarming fact is that the Greek Festivals are mostly cultural events and are often not used as an opportunity for religious outreach. Are we sharing the beauty of the Orthodox Church or are we running a successful Greek restaurant disguised as a church?

In the last few decades, statistics show that the churches that are growing continue to grow and those that are declining continue to decline. There is an overall decline in church attendance of 1.05% since 2010. Every major religion is simultaneously losing and gaining adherents. People are searching and are not necessarily aligned to a specific denomination or church. Many churches are in decline, while the ones that are growing

include: the Catholic Church, Mormons, Assemblies of God, Jehovah Witnesses, Church of God and Seventh-Day Adventists.

The Greek Orthodox Church shows a decline in baptisms, Chrismations, weddings and church attendance and increase in funerals.

What does the future hold? **The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today.**

Our process start by discovering our shared mission statement which is:

- Proclaim the Gospel of Christ
- Teach & spread the Orthodox Christian Faith
- Energize, cultivate & guide the life of the Church in the United States of America according to the Orthodox Christian Faith and Tradition

The Greek Orthodox Church in America:

- Sanctifies the faithful through divine worship, especially the Holy Eucharist and other Sacraments.
- Builds the spiritual and ethical life of the faithful in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, Sacred Tradition, the doctrines and canons of the Ecumenical and local Councils, the canons of the Holy Apostles and the Fathers of the Church and of all the other Councils recognized by the Orthodox Church

The Archdioceses serves:

- As a beacon, carrier and witness of the message of Christ
- Ministers to all people in the United States through:
 - Divine worship
 - Preaching
 - Teaching
 - Being the embodiment of the Orthodox Faith

To proceed we must be aware of our strengths and weaknesses and take action to diminish our weaknesses and enhance and build upon our strengths

INTERNAL FACTORS

Strengths and Weaknesses

- (a) Strengths include characteristics of our Metropolis that give us advantages. This can include things we do well.
- (b) Weaknesses include characteristics that place our Metropolis at a disadvantage. This can include problems we face that we must overcome.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Opportunities and Threats

External factors may include socio-cultural changes, macroeconomic matters, technological change, laws, as well as changes in our environment, etc.

- (a) Opportunities include external chances to improve our performance in our environment.
- (b) Threats include external elements in our environment that could cause trouble for our Metropolis.

STRENGTHS

Programs/Ministries

- Youth Programs
- Established Institutions (Ranch, Monasteries, Camps)
- Clergy Programs (retreats, wellness, clergy couples)
- Philoptochos (outreach)

Talent

- Clergy (youthful, well-educated, progressive)
- Laity (intelligent, leaders, tech-savvy)
- Metropolitan (servant leader, visible, hard working)
- Synergies between clergy, laity and Metropolitan
- Music / Choir – sophisticated

Finance

- Endowment for Seminarians
- Self-sustaining programs (Ranch, Monasteries, FDF)
- Clergy compensation is at Archdiocese scale
- Wealth of laity (across many industries)

Other

- West coast attitude (in our case Island Attitude)
- Pan-Orthodox cooperation
- Strong tradition of Orthodoxy in the West
- Largely assimilated parishioners
- Strong Hellenic culture (FDF, Hellenic studies)

WEAKNESSES

Programs/Ministries

- **Youth ministries (both under 18 and 18-30 who are not totally connected to their faith)**
- Inadequate resources (both human and financial)
- Gaps in programs that are needed
- Inadequate communications (between Metropolis and parish and among parishes)
- No method to measure spiritual development (from top down)

Talent

- Inadequate resources (both human and financial)
- Lack of spiritual development
- Significantly understaffed clergy and undeveloped lay leaders
- Inadequate continuing clergy education and ongoing development and continuous learning opportunities
- Inconsistent lay leadership and education
- Disengagement from, & nominal attitude toward, the sacramental life leads to vulnerability (e.g., marriage)

Finance

- Inadequate finances for staff and ministries
- Lack of effective Christian stewardship

Other

- Size and shape of the Metropolis
- **Clinging to Greek language and culture**
 - liturgical challenge;
 - communications challenge;
 - other cultural acceptance challenge

OPPORTUNITIES

Programs/Ministries

- Movement toward Orthodox unity and recognition of the value of the vast number of diverse Orthodox experiences and institutions (beyond GOA) to facilitate better communication and cooperation and from which we can learn both faith and ministries
- Large number of College/universities (better communications)
- Public school deficiencies (possible parochial school opportunities)
- **Partnering with others (Pan-Orthodox, governmental or international agencies/groups)**
- Large number of un-churched

Talent

- Hispanic influx (seeking to join a church)
- **Large number of Asians (seeking to join a church)**
- Intermarriage
- College kids
- **Serious Christians seeking a deeper faith experience**
- Senior living facilities
- Many economically disadvantaged

Finance

- Many affluent persons
- Movement of people within Metropolis for tax and other financial reasons
- Charitable foundations looking for donors
- We have the “right product” in the form of our great faith/religion
- Technology
- Large region with lots of resources
- Large numbers of socially dislocated individuals
- Large numbers of religiously estranged

THREATS

Programs/Ministries

- **Exclusive club perception**
- Competition from other activities (sports, extra-curricular that interfere with any church services)
- Other religions who are perceived to “do things better”
- **Changing demographics (interfaith marriage)**
- **Language and cultural impediments**
- Alternative role/cultural models for youth
- Secularization of society
- **Finance**
- Economic threats due to economic circumstances
- Lack of resources for programs
- Competition due to proliferation of other non-profits
- Perceptions that we are wealthy
- Secularization and humanism
- Religious polarization politically
- Demographics
- Moral failures of other churches that affect us

OUR SWEEPING VISION:

We will grow the Orthodox Christian Church in the Western United States through Christ-centered:

- Stewardship
- Worship
- Education
- Evangelism
- Philanthropic outreach

Strategy is a roadmap of how to implement the vision and achieve the organization’s goals. It keeps the organization going in the right direction. Strategic Goals Strategic Goals are only as effective as the process of achieving them.

We will use the “SMART” goal process (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) to ensure our Strategic Goals are achieved. Strategic Goals Specific: Is the goal specific enough for clarity so that everyone will understand it?

Measurable: Is there a way to measure the success of the goal?

Attainable: Is the goal truly attainable by us within a reasonable time?

Realistic: Is the goal realistically written?

Timely: Is there a timeline associated to the goal to ensure completion and accountability?

STRATEGIC TASK FORCES

VISION TASK FORCES

1. Education
2. Liturgical Life
3. Missions and Evangelism
4. Philanthropic Outreach
5. Stewardship
6. Youth
7. Specialized Ministries – Wellness

OPERATIONAL TASK FORCES

1. Communications
2. Finances
3. Metropolis Organization and Development
4. Parish Organization and Development Preliminary Draft

STRATEGIC SMART GOALS OF THE 11 STRATEGIC TASK FORCES

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The following 38 Strategic Goals are preliminary drafts/works in progress and are not final. They are subject to input and revision from Clergy Laity

Assembly participants and the Strategic Planning Task Force Teams and Committee.

2. All deadlines and dates are from the date the final Strategic Plan is finally approved and adopted.

Education Objective #1

Within 1 year, we will implement a Clergy Development / Continuing Education Program in which all Clergy will receive, at least quarterly,

relevant and inspirational in-service training programs to enhance their effectiveness and professional development skills.

Education Objective #2

Within 1 year, we will implement a Parish Council Development Network to enhance the skills of our Parish Council members by providing (in conjunction Parish Organization and Development Task Force

- training (and certification) for all new Parish Council members; and
- on-going education programs, Parish Council resources, best practices, relevant materials and information.

Education Objective #3

Within 2 years, we will develop and implement a consistent core curriculum for:

- (a) Church School (pre-school–12th grade) (including stewardship and web-based teacher certification);
- (b) Godparents and Parish Council Catechetical certification; and

- (c) Adult education (to increase core knowledge of the Orthodox faith and stewardship responsibilities) that will reach all Parishioners within 5 years.

Liturgical Life Objective #1

Within 6 months, we will provide comprehensive Deaconate guidelines for qualifying potential Deacons; and
Within 3 years, we will ordain at least one Deacon to serve in each Parish of 250+ stewards.

Liturgical Life Objective #2

Within 1 year, we implement a “Liturgical Renewal Program and Resource Center” to more actively engage our Parishioners and Clergy in Liturgical Life through a “Parish Renewal Task Force” we will establish in each Parish; and

Within 2 years we will regularly provide Liturgical Renewal Seminars and Teaching Liturgies in Parishes

Missions/Evangelism Objective #1

Within 1-2 years, we will establish a Missions and Evangelism Ministry in each Parish that will:

- (a) plan and execute Parish and regional area outreach events;
- (b) energize a Welcoming Committee to improve outreach and growth;
- (c) create an OCMC Ambassador program; and
- (d) increase church membership

Missions/Evangelism Objective #2

We will establish at least 5 new Parishes within the next 10 years.

Missions/Evangelism Objective #3

Within 1 year, we will establish a Parish Mentoring Process and Team to help those Parishes needing mentoring; and
Within 3 years, every Parish needing mentoring will be assigned the appropriate Clergy and Lay Mentors who will help the Parish.

Philanthropic Outreach Objective #1

Within 9 months, we will finalize an effective Service Learning Training model to equip Parishes with the processes and tools to effectively conduct philanthropic outreach.

Philanthropic Outreach Objective #2

Within 6 months, we will create a Philanthropic Outreach Information Exchange to expand the number of Parishioners participating in Parish and Philoptochos philanthropic ministries and facilitate the exchange of philanthropic ministries information.

Philanthropic Outreach Objective #3

Within 2 years, each Parish will implement at least one signature Outreach ministry.

Stewardship Objective #1

Within 3 years, each Parish will implement the “Igniting the Flame of True Orthodox Stewardship Program.”

Stewardship Objective #2

Within 18 months, each Parish will hand select and train Stewardship Ambassador Teams of servant leaders (who are actively engaged in Parish life, leading by example and giving sacrificially) to personally visit with all Parishioners.

Stewardship Objective #3

Within 2.5 years, Ambassadors in each Parish will visit with every member and nonmember to engage them more fully in the life and ministries of the Parish.

Stewardship Objective #4

Within 3 years, through the personal Ambassador visits, each Parishioner will:

- (a) better understand the mission and vision of the Parish;
- (b) complete a Stewardship Commitment; and
- (c) commit to actively engage in at least one more ministry.

Youth Objective #1

Within 1 year, we will complete young adult focus groups (college and working age) and evaluate other successful Christian youth programs; and

Within 2 years, we will increase participation in a larger number of most effective young adult ministry programs.

Youth Objective #2

Within 1 year, we will create vibrant Twitter, Facebook and other mobile social media ministries to reach our youth; and

Within 2 years, we will initiate a quarterly, multi-location Youth Skype Series with engaging speakers and interesting topics.

Youth Objective #3

Within 1 year, we will successfully implement ‘Moms and Tots’ programs (also Dads & Tots) in at least 8 Parishes; and

Within 2 years, we will successfully implement ‘Moms and Tots’ programs (also Dads & Tots) in at least 50% of our Parishes.

Youth Objective #4

Within 9 months, we will launch a Metropolis Youth Website that better addresses the needs of youth and youth workers; and

Within 1.5 years, we will provide a comprehensive information resource for youth related activities and better youth leader training in our Metropolis.

Youth Objective #5

Within 1 year, we will complete the first annual Youth Participation Survey for Parish youth and youth ministry leaders that measures participation in, and effectiveness of, all Parish youth programs; and Annually, we will publish a Parish Youth Participation Scorecard from the annual survey data.

Wellness Objective #1

Within 1-2 years, every couple getting married in a Parish must complete the PREPARE program prior to their wedding.¹

Wellness Objective #2

Within 1-2 years, all Parishes (or groups of neighboring Parishes) will annually offer an ENRICH Group Program for married couples.²

Wellness Objective #3

Within 18-24 months, all Parishes (or groups of neighboring Parishes) will implement a sustainable Parish Nurse Ministry.³

Wellness Objective #4

Within 4 years, we will implement DivorceCare support groups regionally throughout the Metropolis.⁴

Wellness Objective #5

Within 3 years, we will implement a sustainable Clergy Wellness Ministry throughout the Metropolis including:

- (a) Annual Metropolis-wide clergy couples' wellness retreat
- (b) Clergy small groups (3-6) which meet monthly for fellowship, support, accountability, professional development, Bible study, etc.
- (c) Regular Metropolitan Parish visitation schedule, and
- (d) Series of clergy wellness webinars/presentations (e.g., spiritual health, diet and exercise, legal issues for clergy, avoiding burnout, financial planning, etc.).

Communications Objective #1

Within 9 months, we will develop and communicate the Metropolis message and value proposition (including our Vision, Core Values and Strategic Goals) using all available media, Parish and personal contacts.

Communications Objective #2

Within 1 year, we will create a strategic communications plan and identify resource needs to better communicate the Metropolis' message and information by exploiting the enhanced use of technology (e.g., webcasts, podcasts, social networking, on-line sermons, live-streaming, web-based educational programs).

Communications Objective #3

Within 1 year, we will create a Western States Pan-Orthodox communications and technology working group to implement joint programs, particularly on social and life issues, and improve how we communicate with each other; and

Within 1 year, we will implement quarterly Pan-Orthodox clergy retreats and meetings.

¹ PREPARE is a constantly updated premarital program that successfully prepares couples for marriage. It deals with contemporary issues and includes versions for older couples and couples who marry spouses with children from a previous marriage.

² The ENRICH program consists of 10-12 weekly sessions designed to deepen couples' communication, conflict resolution and growth.

³ These are certified registered nurses trained in working in faith communities to address health and faith issues of members and neighbors. These nurses network with other medical area specialists and health agencies to address Parishioner needs.

⁴ DivorceCare is a program that ministers to divorced and separated Parishioners. DivorceCare for Kids (DC4K) assists children affected by divorce. An Orthodox version of these programs will be developed

Communications Objective #4

Within 9 months, we will regularly communicate throughout the Metropolis our operational, ministry, and financial results, and post on the Metropolis website all key documents, reports and other information, as well as a unified Metropolis calendar.

Finance Objective #1

Within 1 year, we will assist the Parishes in developing best practices standardized financial reporting for Parish and Metropolis use.

Finance Objective #2

Within 9 months, we will provide a framework to provide Metropolis assistance to help Parishes develop a plan to fully fund all Parish ministries and obligations and improve the Parish's financial condition and relationship with the Metropolis.

Finance Objective #3

Within 3 years, we will establish a Metropolis Endowment with a minimum corpus of \$5 Million.

Metropolis Organization and Development Objective #1

Within 1 year, we will implement a plan to enhance and expand Metropolis staffing, including:

- (a) Vicars;
- (b) Filling of Parish vacancies;
- (c) Additional Metropolis Office Staff; and
- (e) Regional Youth Directors (and involvement of youth in Planning).

Metropolis Organization and Development Objective #2

Within 2 years, we will establish a Metropolis Council of Ministries that works effectively with a Council of Ministries established in each Parish.

Metropolis Organization and Development Objective #3

Within 1 year, we will develop a Metropolis female leadership development plan.

Parish Organization and Development Objective #1

Within 15 months, we will provide the framework, tools and support for a Parish-level Strategic Planning Process.

Parish Organization and Development Objective #2

Within 1 year, we will establish a process to foster greater Inter-Parish Cooperation to improve Parish Council effectiveness and sharing best-in-class practices and processes via quarterly exchanges, social networking, conference calls, and websites (in conjunction Education Task Force Objective #2).

Parish Organization and Development Objective #3

Within 1 year, we will develop model sets of Parish Leader roles, responsibilities and expectations for Parish Council, Ministry Leaders and a Priest's administrative duties.

Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly

St. Nicholas Ranch
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2012 Assembly Minutes

- Minutes approved (unanimous)

Metropolis Council Report (in binder)

Financial Report Balance Sheet Review

Profit and Loss Highlights

- Donations -below budget. Council is looking to change this in 2013
- Philoptochos loan has been "on hold" Metropolis did not have funds to make payments in 2012
- Registry fees -divorces down
- Travel -increase from 2011
- Travel in 2012 includes weekly travel for Kristen Bruskas to Metropolis
- Travel other includes staff & accompanying travel
- Youth Ministries -\$34,000 from grants
- Net Income: \$192,178

Full participation of parishes in Assessment results in \$679,000 from Archdiocese to Metropolis. This requires full participation from all parishes in Archdiocese Assessment.

Metropolis Budget Review

- Youth & Young Adult -grant from Leadership 100
- Strategic Planning (new expense)
- Development & Fundraising -Pascha appeal, etc.
- Patriarchal Synod (partial year of Metropolitan's representation in C/ople)

Rental Income

House at Ranch burned (suspected arson). As such, income is not forthcoming until repairs can be made, with assistance from Archdiocese insurance

Metropolis Budget -2013

Metropolis Ministries

In order to meet all expenses and ensure full Metropolis Assessment, an additional \$500 per parish needs to be raised in 2014. This will cover increasing expenses at St. Nicholas Ranch and help the facility to begin operating 'in the black'

Question on equity of additional \$500 to Metropolis

Metropolitan's response

Objection to term 'assessment' perhaps 'offering' instead?

Expenses are increasing throughout Metropolis institutions -Diocese house and St Nicholas Ranch included

Motion passed

In 2014 budget, designate \$500 per parish as separate expense as separate expense designated for Ranch only

Development/fundraising

Production of brochures, etc.

Philoptochos Loan -payment on loan mentioned above

Payroll -has been no increase in over 5 years

Questions - Unrestricted donations -this is an 'anticipated' figure.

Answer - Council will be working toward this goal

Budget passed (unanimously)

Met's message-

Focus not on money but ministries -establishment and maintenance of the 'good work' of the Metropolis

Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Recommendation for Youth Director for each parish, even part-time if people see the progress, they will support.

Review of Metropolis Youth Ministries

- Oratorical Festival
- FDF
- Summer Camps -7 summer camps throughout Metropolis
 - At Ranch -St Nicholas Ranch Summer Camp;
 - Greek Village Immersion Camp
 - All Saints -Northwest
 - Oakland Cathedral
 - St Sophia, Los Angeles
 - Portland, OR
 - All Saints, Arizona

Youth & Young Adult Website - www.gosfyouth.org

Video was shown, produced by the Archdiocese, regarding the 75th anniversary (the same previously presented at SS Constantine & Helen by HC/HC Board member Helen Carlos)

The Strategic Plan Presentation is available at:

<http://sanfran.goarch.org/assets/cla/cla-2013-strategic-planning-presentation.pdf>