October 26, 2015

Great Martyr St. Demetrios the Myrrh-Streaming

To the Reverend Fathers, the pastors and interim pastors for the parishes of the Holy and God-Protected Metropolis of Pittsburgh,

With the blessings of His Eminence I write to you today to communicate a few pieces of important information for the coming months:

1. Beginning with the recently completed Church year, His Eminence wishes to receive from each parish proistamenos and interim pastor an Annual Parish Report. This report is to be between 2 and 5 pages (size should be proportionate to size and activity of parish; note: no longer than 5 pages), summarizing the activities, life, and changes, affecting the community during the year. Information should cover aspects of the parish’s health on the macro level (i.e. sacraments, increase or decrease in stewardship members or monies, enrollment in the parish’s schools, attendance in the services, etc.), as well as any examples of new initiatives or activities, major changes in the parish community or nearby city/town that affected the Church, and so forth.

The reports should cover the span of an ecclesiastical year (i.e. September 1 – August 31). The 2014-2015 Annual Parish Report should be submitted to the Metropolis no later than December 31, 2015. The 2015-2016 Annual Parish Report (i.e. for the ecclesiastical year that has just begun) will be submitted next year by October 31.

2. Please reply to this letter (via fax, email, or hard-copy) with a few pieces of information that will help us with our planning for the coming years:
   a. When was your parish founded? Be as complete as possible (i.e. if you know only the year, give that; if you know the date of chartering by the state, Archdiocese, or both, give that information also).
   b. How long has your parish been in its current building?
   c. Has your Church been consecrated? (If unsure, say so.)

3. By way of reminder: Raffles of any kind (be they regular raffles, so-called “Chinese Auctions,” etc.) are prohibited in this Metropolis for all parishes, parish organizations, and Philoptochos Chapters. There are no exceptions to this policy. His Eminence has stated on more than one occasion that any and all “blessings” or “exceptions” granted by his predecessor for this or any other practice are null and void – the current Metropolitan of
Pittsburgh must bless any deviations from the norm on issues related to the Liturgy, governance, and life of the parish.

A letter written with His Eminence’s blessing is attached regarding this matter.

4. Included with this letter is the Ratification Packet for the election of Parish Council members. Please complete it following your elections. **NOTE: The affirmation of office signature sheet must not be completed until after you have received your ratification from His Eminence.**

5. The 3rd Annual St. Photios Awards Banquet will take place May 7, 2016 at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square. Each parish is entitled to up to two (2) awardees from its membership. **Do not nominate Archons and/or Archdiocesan St. Paul Awardees.** Awardees can be young or old, male or female. The nomination process at the parish should include the Parish Council and Philoptochos at the very least. Final nominations must be submitted via the parish proistamenos or interim pastor. Please begin the process of finding your awardees now! Once the names have been submitted to the Metropolis, please begin informing your parishioners so they can circle the date and ensure a great turnout for their awardees.

6. Our annual Priests, Presidents, and Treasurers Meeting will take place Saturday, January 9, 2016 at St. Spyridon Church in Monessen, PA. **This year’s gathering will not be restricted to those three types of participants, but will be open to anyone in parish leadership:** Council Members, Stewardship Committees, Youth Advisors, etc. More information is forthcoming.

7. Our next Metropolis Syndesmos Meeting will take place Saturday, February 6, 2016, as part of the St. Photios Feastday Celebration, hosted this year by St. Nicholas Cathedral in Pittsburgh. Please mark your calendars to attend.

8. **Especially for parishes planning Centennial Celebrations and banquets of other varieties:**
   a. You are highly encouraged to draw on the experiences and techniques of other parishes that have hosted successful events in the near past. Please contact me for more information.
   b. If you wish to invite the Archbishop, please contact my office more than one year in advance. The invitation must come through His Eminence.
   c. The senior-most clergyman (whether it is the Archbishop, our Metropolitan, or another hierarch) should be the last person to speak as part of any banquet or program. They should also be informed well in advance regarding the number of times they will be asked / expected to speak.

I thank you very much for your attention to these matters, and invite you to contact me with any questions. Wishing you a blessed day,

Your servant in His vineyard,

+ Fr. George S. Callos
Chancellor