

SAINT TIKHON
ARCHDIOCESAN
STEWARDS



"ORTHODOX PEOPLE!..
YOU MUST DEVOTE
YOURSELVES TO THE
ORTHODOX FAITH NOT IN
WORD OR TONGUE ONLY,
BUT IN DEED AND IN
TRUTH." 1903



Bless Master.

Fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Glory forever!

In the course of one year, so much has change in the operations and administration of the Archdiocese of Canada. Throughout this, I have seen STAS acting as a vital element supporting the work of Christ's Church in our diocese.

The STAS operations group (Dn. Matthew Francis, Subdn. Jeremy Scratch, and Subdn. Jesse Issac, and myself) have worked to make STAS a much more efficient and effective operation through: finding better ways at communicating our message, raising membership and funds, and working to find the best balance between our reporting obligations to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) our financial institution, and the stewards of the diocese.

Bank of Nova Scotia

At the previous Archdiocesan council meeting in Edmonton last spring, a meeting was held between members of the Archdiocesan council and the Alberta Treasury Board (ATB) to clarify a number of ongoing and unresolved issues regarding the disclosure of information for the generation of tax receipts. (ATB not only was evasive in dealing with our requests, but dismissive of our reporting obligations to the CRA.)

A decision was made to see what arrangement STAS could make with the Archdiocesan financial institution (Bank of Nova Scotia). Not only was the level of customer service stellar, they were able to accommodate our needs with out restrictive or heavy fees.

Scotia Bank provided STAS a separate account (as requested by the Archdiocesan auditing committee) that met our reporting needs. Allowing access to the operations group provided for: inputting a new members, decreasing or increasing a steward's contribution, and monitoring of the account (as in identifying a steward who's contribution was NSF). Please note: most of these options were unavailable to us with the ATB.

It was decided by the Archdiocesan Executive Committee, (ADEC) to move the account and end the relationship with the ATB. Much of this work was carried out by Subdn. Jeremy Scratch, who negotiated with the Scotia Bank (lead by Nikita Lopoukine) and clarified STAS's needs. As well Subdn. Jeremy handled the grunt work of transferring information. May the Lord Bless his work!

STAS Appeals

The STAS operations group will have issued its second direct appeal (first this year) to the clergy and members of the Archdiocese by the Council meeting in Montreal this October. As well a letter will have been sent out to current STAS stewards currently contributing \$30 or less asking them to consider increasing their contribution to the Archdiocese through STAS. Both mail appeals are so important at keeping the issues and ongoing needs of the Archdiocese in the forefront of the members of our diocese. It is our hope that these appeals in conjunction with our parish presentations will lead to our goal of growing STAS 30% by the end of next year.

Parish Presentations

STAS made a long over due presentation at St. Peter the Aleut parish in Calgary this spring along with a number of other informal presentations with the launch of the STAS appeal campaign in April. The STAS operations group came to a decision that directed presentations at larger parishes and metropolitan centers would be more effective at this stage in the development of STAS. In the future, it might be necessary for the Archdiocesan council to offset the cost of any travel to deanery, and or metropolitan centers (like Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Saskatoon, and Calgary) to ensure the message of STAS is clearly presented*.

Commitment

Within the last few months there has been a number of questions and comments about STAS's commitment to the administration of the Archdiocese (support of the Episcopal secretary), and not other pressing issues like clergy debt load. The support of the administration versus the support of seminarians, and or missions, is not an either-or situation. The proper support of seminarians and missions should come from the administration of a diocese, whose parishes financially commit to the diocese through the offering of their first fruits.

STAS will continue its focus on supporting the administration of the Archdiocese until it is properly supported by its parishes. STAS might help along the way but it will not fix the lack of support from some parishes of this diocese that refuse to give.

As STAS grows, we hope to be able to dedicate ourselves to the support of these more "inspiring" issues. Not as simply a "bureaucracy" but rather as joints and sinews that articulate the work of the Holy Spirit within this the Church, the body of Christ. May the Lord bless this work!

Challenge

As we move towards the end of the year, we would like to see a few things from the clergy and faithful of this diocese.

Last summer at the Archdiocesan Assembly, Fr. Michael Oleksa, Acting Chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska, gave an impressive presentation on knowing our history our stories, as a way of understanding our culture as Orthodox Christians in North America. STAS believes that the retelling of these experiences is crucial to the growth of the Archdiocese.

The telling of our stories (and we have a lot!) is a bit daunting. Where do you start? I believe the best place to start is in articles, interviews and even photos from around our home parishes. What I would like to see is these stories and photos published in the STAS Steward as an ongoing part of the Messenger.

We all know about Archbishop Arseny (our blessed and saintly intercessor), and more information about his life is being researched and clarified, especially about his more troubled years. But do we know about Subdeacon Borris Mazikins Nik Demkiw, Peter Vorobej, Annatasia Holden, Dora Franchuk, Alexander Kaminsky, and Katherine Mintenko, and many other who worked so tirelessly in this diocese. Each of these men and women made a difference in the establishment of what we have today. Every one of our parishes and communities have men and women like these both departed and alive, who showed us the way of Christ's love in their love of the Church.

The other challenge for our Clergy is that of asking simple questions and starting conversations. Conversations with a goal of financial well-being within the Archdiocese. Questions like

“Does our parish support the Archdiocese?”

“Does it support the diocese as directed by the Gospel?”

“What does seminary cost?”

“Who is paying for seminary?”

“Have we had a STAS presentation at our parish?”

“How can I help?”

“Can you help?”

These questions witness that our Archdiocese needs help. Although much of that responsibility should come from our parishes, each of us Deans, Clergy and lay representatives can make a difference. "For the price of a coffee a day", the faithful of this diocese can collectively help support a vision of an administration that can directly deal with the issues critical to the growth of the Church in Canada.

May those conversations lead to the answer, "Yes I can help! Where do I start?"

By the prayers of Sts. Tikhon and Arseny, and all the saints known and unknown that have laboured in this diocese.

Dn. Gregory Scratch.

Chair of the St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards.

*As an example if the Archdiocesan Council approved a \$700. plane ticket to a metropolitan center, like Montreal, and that resulted in six new members, contributing \$60/month that would be a net profit of \$3,620/year.

