

DIOCESAN CHANCELLOR'S REPORT
Rev. Raymond Martin Browne

As this is my first report as Chancellor it must be limited to the last quarter of 2015 as I began my tenure on September 1st. At the outset I would like to thank His Eminence for his trust in appointing me to this position of great responsibility, as well as thanking the members of the Diocesan Council for their encouragement and support as I begin this office. I would also like to thank Fr. John Kowalczyk for his many years of service to the diocese as Secretary/Treasurer and Chancellor. It was my honor to serve with him in the diocesan administration during my tenure as Diocesan Treasurer and I benefitted from his support, encouragement and friendship in that position. I look forward to his continued support as I continue in the administration. Fr. John served with dedication during a time of major transition in the life of the diocese and the Orthodox Church in America. But he did not serve alone. In all of his endeavors he has been most ably assisted by Matushka Kathy who was the *de facto* Treasurer as well as the administrator of the Diocesan Health Insurance, tasks she accomplished with great competence and equally great humility and without her much would not have been done while much more would not have been done as well. The Kowalczyks are example of so many senior clergy couples who have devoted themselves to their ministries, in the parishes where they serve and in the fulfillment of diocesan and church wide ministries in education, outreach and professional development. Not only their work, but their example have and continue to enrich the life of the Church in Eastern Pennsylvania.

I would also like to welcome Fr. Ignatius Gauvain to the diocesan administration as Treasurer, a position for which he seems uniquely suited, having brought to the task a series of skills that have significantly improved the operation of the Treasury in terms of transparency and accountability. In this time of transition in funding the work of the Church he has proven quite adept at entering into the discussion and implementing the decisions of the Finance Committee.

As the Chancellor my primary responsibility is administrative, assisting the archbishop in coordinating the various departments and offices in the diocese, starting with the deans. During the past four months I have been in regular contact with the deans, either at the behest of the archbishop or at their initiative, in the discussion of guidelines and policies, consultations on pastoral questions, ongoing development of continuing education, particularly the H.O.P.E. program. Additionally I assisted His Eminence in facilitating the transition to Church Mutual as our diocesan insurer, along with developing guidelines to assist rectors, parish councils and Church School directors with compliance with the Church and Pennsylvania Commonwealth requirements for those working with youth as well as general sexual misconduct issues. The feedback on this from the clergy has been for greater clarity and simplicity in directives. That is our administrative goal also. How clear and simple is possible is a challenge but one we wish to meet as well as we can given the highly fluid, multi-level, and complex series of requirements, expectations, criteria of evaluation. There is no wish to confuse or overwhelm. The operative principle so far has been providing immediate information, as that is our initial responsibility. As we go into 2016 it is my intention to provide as

clear and simple a series of guidelines as are possible. Constructive criticism is always welcome, along with feedback on approaches that parishes have taken that have enabled them to put these policies into practice. Such information can be shared with me or with the deans, or both, so that we can offer concrete suggestions on how to do this important task as well as we can.

The other major issue in the administrative life of the diocese this year has been the work of the Finance Committee, a team of volunteers from throughout the diocese who have labored with great diligence and competence to show us a way forward for the diocese in the light of the Finance Resolution approved at the All American Council in Atlanta. Fr. Ignatius has been a regular presence in these deliberations, though I have not, usually because of schedule conflicts. However I did facilitate and attend a meeting between Melanie Ringa and the majority of the members of the committee which was hosted by St. Nicholas Church in Bethlehem. That was a fruitful meeting for both sides, but each can offer their own perspective in their presentations/reports.

Physically I have been at the Diocesan Center monthly since my appointment but most of my work is done via telephone, email and in one-on-one meetings with Archbishop Mark as I have sought to assist him in transport to Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore for consultations and check ups related to his blepharospasm. These journeys provide plenty of time to discuss and decide a variety of issues, including, at this stage, developing a way of working together that benefits both of us in the fulfillment of our respective responsibilities. Personally I am grateful to those others who have assisted him in getting him to and from these appointments. And I am grateful to him for his tireless dedication, his patience and his desire to most effectively serve the people of our diocese.

It is my hope to serve as needed, where needed according to our Diocesan By-Laws and at the direction of the archbishop, primarily as administrative coordinator and point man where directed. The immediate local supervision of pastoral/administrative life rests in the deaneries and with the deans, the programmatic responsibilities of the offices belong to those offices and those tasked with the responsibility of directing them, under the direction and subject to the approval of the Diocesan hierarch. If I seem invisible, it is not by accident.

This year we welcomed Fr. John Edward to the diocese who is serving St. Michael's in Mount Carmel, and we welcomed back to the diocese Fr. Barnabas Fravel who is now serving at St. Michael's in Wilmington, Delaware. I wish to thank the retired but still active clergy who have made themselves available to serve where needed throughout the diocese.

In closing I ask all of you for your prayers and your patience and forbearance as I undertake these new responsibilities. I offer whatever assistance I can to assist you in your ministry recognizing the truth of the Apostle's directive to bear one another's burdens.