



December 12, 2019

Your Eminence, Very Reverend Fathers, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ!  
Master Bless!  
Fathers Bless!

### Overview

2019 was a year of maintenance and preparing for the future regarding the Office of Communications. Much behind the scenes work was done, and preparations for an exciting update were the theme of the year.

### [www.doepa.org](http://www.doepa.org)

The Diocesan website took a dip in numbers this year, the first time during my tenure that this has happened. The early portion of the year (January through May) drew similar traffic to that of 2018 - slightly lower in all cases. However, with the beginning of summer months traffic was considerably lower than the previous year. This trend continued on throughout the remainder of the year, with December numbers incomplete at the time of writing this report.

This sounds ominous, but one must understand that the traffic has more than doubled in the past 5 years. A personal goal was to hit 20,000 visitors in a month, it may take a bit to approach that number again. The website is updated at least weekly, but during busy times it may be updated daily. The policy of bumping all news stories for one day in the case of a notable death or important story was continued. If a very notable event occurs, the featured story will reflect this event only for a period of one day. That is - all other news items will stop appearing on the main web page for a day to give the notable event its' due. The news items will reappear after the one-day period.

News items are posted as they are received. If many items are received at the same time the Office tries to post the events in the order they occurred. ALL news items are staggered to appear on different days during the week. This keeps the website fresh. ALL news items remain in the rotating news feed for a period of three weeks. There is an algorithm that will bump items out of the rotation if there are too many (common around major feasts).

Announcements for upcoming events remain posted until ONE DAY AFTER the event. We have the option to set the date the announcement will "disappear," out of courtesy to the parishes, we leave the announcement appear during the day of the event, for procrastinators. Afterwards, everything gets archived.

The policy regarding food sales and the like has been repeatedly spelled out to the Diocese. The policy is that no announcements, stories or promotional material will be posted on the Diocesan website for any strictly fundraiser type activity - food sales, festivals, etc. Anything that needs to be promoted should be done on your own parish website, Facebook page, and whatever other media the parish chooses to



publicize these events. Upcoming events will be for Liturgical events, service, fellowship, speakers and concerts only. THIS IS NOT A NEW POLICY, and it will be carefully followed.

Once again it is respectfully requested that parishes send the LARGEST, highest quality photos they can. Truly, some cell phones now capture images to rival the most expensive cameras on the market. Please take the time and make the effort to get a reasonably good photo. If there is a group involved, please get a group shot. PLEASE DO NOT EDIT, CROP or get “ARTSY” with photos (no Instagram effects, coloration, odd cropping.) We have striven to develop a “brand” for the website, meaning it has a certain look and feel. Think of it as your community newspaper and submit accordingly. Again, the OCA requirements are being followed here. Blurry photos will not be posted on the website as it takes away from the professional appearance of our website and publication. Furthermore, a writeup of at LEAST the information who, what, where, and when is required. With potentially 35 parishes submitting info, it is not feasible for the Communications Department to research and write each news item.

DOES YOUR PARISH HAVE TEENS OR YOUNG ADULTS? Ask them to be the “parish photographer” or news person. They will know what to do! And you give them a purpose!

Submissions increased to 216 total - exactly 2 more than 2018. We need you to share your good news to continue our growth. Do not think that your parish website or Facebook page is the only place to share - also send news to the Diocesan Communications Department to share with our thousands of viewers. You may also post on the Diocesan Facebook page.

Parishes submitting news items this year:

Berwick  
Bethlehem  
Catasauqua  
Coaldale  
Edwardsville  
Frackville  
Glen Mills  
Harrisburg  
Jermyn  
McAdoo  
Mechanicsburg  
Minersville  
Mount Carmel  
Oberlin (*Not Diocesan Parish - Pan Orthodox*)  
Old Forge  
Olyphant (Saint Nicholas)  
Philadelphia (Holy Assumption & St. Stephens)  
Pottstown  
Stroudsburg  
Uniondale  
Wilkes-Barre (Holy Resurrection Cathedral and Holy Trinity)  
Williamsport

This year 5 new parishes sent in 10 news stories and announcements. However, 5 parishes who submitted at least one story in 2018 disappeared. Additionally, many of the above parishes submitted one story and were never heard from again. It is important to realize that publicizing your parish is a major part of “sustaining the mission.” It is a way to let the public know what you are up to and show that you are

active and do good works. It is imperative that your parish makes publicity and specifically the internet a key part of your parish life.

It must be mentioned again that video is an area that needs to be better incorporated. His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON uses video to address the OCA very regularly. We have the capability to add video galleries, it is not used at all, and should be made a priority.

### Facebook/Social Media

The Diocesan Facebook page continues to be a mystery. The Communications Department does not utilize the Facebook page at all. One possible solution is to create a new Facebook page named “The Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania,” allowing us our own access and vehicle to push our content. We do not currently use any other Social Media, although many are available. I have been informed that the Youth page will use Instagram heavily, which is more of a Youth-centric platform. Content is important here. Matushka Emilia is spearheading the Youth portion of the website, which will hopefully feed Instagram a bit. There is a push to add youth-specific content to the website – thanks to Mark Linnehan for spearheading this and keeping the Office up to speed.

### Alive in Christ

Matushka Sandra Kopestonsky has been graciously scanning back issues of the magazine, which have been posted to the website at the Alive in Christ page. The scans required some cleaning up and optimization to decrease the size. Just about the entire library is complete. As the re-design goes on this section will be completed. All are invited to peruse the library.

### Website Redesign

The redesign is under way under the guidance of Fr. John Parsells of Orthodox Web Solutions. There will be some big changes to the site map or site architecture in the early part of the year - hopefully navigation of the site will be much easier for all, and more user-friendly. Thoughts are that this re-design will result in traffic picking up again to levels of last year.

### Conclusion

The Communications Department continues to spread the message of the Diocese. There is a clear direction regarding content and message - the redesign should reinforce this. The website is updated frequently with the goings-on of the Diocese, but it needs more timely and helpful information. The increase in Parishes sending information was offset by parishes who did not submit anything this year. The core belief of the Communications Department is to spread the word, create excitement and interest, and make people sit up, take notice, and want to get involved in the Orthodox Faith along with the good works that are happening. Be a part of it! Share your good news! Do you have a parish website? Parish Facebook? Or a Parish Communications Coordinator? These are all important parts of a healthy parish. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone with any questions.

Yours in Christ

Aric Gingo  
Assistant to the Archbishop  
Communications



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“Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.” Augustine

# Website Statistics Comparison 2015 - 2019

