



The Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia

March 2, 2020

Dear Esteemed Members of our Parish Councils,

Christ is in our midst! As many of our parish councils are preparing their budgets for 2020, I am writing to remind you to review the priest's compensation package to insure the parish is properly caring for the clergy (and their families) that cares for you. The Cost of Living increase for 2019 is 1.6% (<https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2019/#10-2019-1>). Therefore, as the Social Security Administration is our guideline, every priest should minable receive an automatic 1.6% increase.

Also attached is the Clergy Compensation Guidelines and Median Income for Cities and Counties of the Diocese. As you wish for your own family members with advanced degrees to be compensated for their education, knowledge, talents and experience, please do so for your priest.

No priest should be below the Median Income for your locality of where the majority of your parishioners live. Also, keep in mind his years of service as well as merit increases. We have quality priests in our Diocese and we want to keep them. There are many places in the United States where the Median Income is significantly higher, which makes it difficult for us to attract new priests to the Diocese, especially if our parishes are not compensating clergy adequately. Please do not embarrass or humiliate your father in Christ, by him having to ask for what should be freely and lovingly given without hesitation.

Finally, as a reminder, the parish is to pay 8% on the priest's stipend as well as the housing allowance or the value of the housing provided. Likewise, the parish is to compute the Social Security based on the same. The clergy are required to contribute to the pension plan and Social Security based upon the same figures as well.

Thank you for insuring your priest and his family may live with dignity and placed on equal footing with those he serves.

Your Unworthy father in Christ,

+ *Mark*

+ Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

CC: Council Chairs and Treasurers of the Diocese

Clergy of the Diocese