



Department of Communications

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Marissa P. Costidis
Acting Director

Introduction

In his address to the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops In The Americas (SCOBA) on May 1, 2004, entitled “Six Challenges Confronting Orthodoxy in the Twenty-First Century: A Context for Discussion in the Pastoral Letter ‘And the Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us,’” His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios stated,

“It is time to remember that the Church has been, from her initial phase to modern times, an avant guard entity and a primary agent in using the oral and the printed word in abundance as a means for extensive communication and dissemination of the Gospel. Today, next to the oral and the printed word, we have the all-pervasive electronic word. How are we doing with this word? Having been the principle producers of speeches, manuscripts, and books for centuries, are we going to be insignificant partners in the vast array of electronic textual productions?”

On May 2002, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios announced the restructuring of the Department of Communications with the vision that the Director of the Department will coordinate the work and planning of the communication offices of the Archdiocese and their office directors, including the Offices of News and Information, GOTelecom, and the *Orthodox Observer*. In addition, the Director would also work with the Department of Information Technologies in the program of the Office of Internet Ministries.

This restructuring of this Department of the Archdiocese affirms the priority of proper and coordinated communications throughout the Church in America. In 2003 & 2004 intense efforts continue in order that the Archdiocese enhance communication at all levels. In the continued work of the Department of Communications, significant attention will be given to assisting the Hierarchs, clergy, parishes, departments, organizations, institutions, and programs in receiving and communicating information in timely and effective ways. This is critical both to the growth and support of every area of the life of the Church.

Thus the Department of Communications has a vital role in the following basic areas:

1. Communicating efficiently the scope of the ministry and activity of the Archdiocese to all people associated with the Archdiocese, to adherents of the Orthodox Christian faith, to the

- leadership and members of other religious bodies, and to members of the media, to public officials, and to academic leaders on national and international levels;
2. Assisting the work of the Archbishop through coordinated planning and communication of his vision and goals for the Archdiocese;
 3. Developing, evaluating, and modifying a continuous plan for communicating the work of the Hierarchs, Metropolises, Parishes, Departments, Organizations, Institutions, and Programs of the Archdiocese.
 4. Providing technical and resource assistance to all of the above to enhance and coordinate their communication and work of their ministry.
 5. Initiating, developing and maintaining contacts within the secular media in order to best portray the faith and mission of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

With an acknowledgement of these basic functions, with the growth of ministry and resources on all levels, and with an awareness of the plans to enhance the work of the Archdiocese, Metropolises, and Parishes through the establishment of a development program, it is evident that the coordination, resources and function of the Communication Offices must be at the highest levels.

Offices of the Department

As stated above, the Offices of, or related to the Department of Communications, include the following:

- News and Information/Public Relations
- GOTelecom
- Orthodox Observer*
- Internet Ministries

Since the restructuring of the Department, a number of internal protocol and workflow issues have been addressed so that the work of the Directors of each office is facilitated. This, along with coordinated planning will greatly facilitate the work of all of the Metropolises, Parishes, Departments, Organizations, Institutions, and Programs with their communication needs.

Initiatives

Parishes

Many of our smaller communities are not receiving information in a timely manner. The goal will be to evaluate their needs and confirm means of contact or provide resources so that they can receive information from the Archdiocese and their Metropolises as it is issued, in order to effectively use the resources of the Archdiocese and its ministries.

Departments, Organizations, and Institutions

The Department continues distributing information from the Departments, Organizations, and Institutions, so that it will have an ever-expanding knowledge of the extent of the work at all levels of the Archdiocese in order that information is integrated into all types of communication.

Electronic Resources

Technology has aided the use of electronic resources for all aspects of communication from digital video to e-mail bulletins. The goal will be to structure our electronic resources for the most effective use in terms of regular and informative communication from the Archdiocese. Some aspects of this have included current programs such as *Illuminations* and *Journey of Faith*, and a biweekly e-mail update on all news and information posted to web-sites of programs, departments, institutions, etc. and the implementation of a virtual *Orthodox Observer* that will provide current news and events in a timely manner.

Projects and Ministries

Specific projects and initiatives of the Department of Communications include:

Archdiocesan Logo - The implementation of the new Archdiocesan logo is proceeding smoothly and according to schedule. In November of 2003, the Archdiocese shipped identity standards resource kits to all parishes and metropolises in order to promote the new Archdiocesan logo. This introductory kit contained:

1. A detailed Graphics Standards Manual (GSM) outlining the proper usage and implementation of the Archdiocesan seal.
2. A CD-ROM containing digital files of the Archdiocesan seal and the approved versions of the Archdiocesan seal, including black and white, 2-color, 4-color, etc.
3. Licensed Macintosh and Windows fonts to compliment letterhead and other materials bearing the new logo
4. Templates of parish letterhead
5. Templates of parish business cards
6. A new Archdiocesan flag with the new logo of the Archdiocese.

After the distribution of materials to the parishes and metropolises, a logo help line was established via the Department of Communications and through the use of an email address. Through these means, parishes are able to contact the Archdiocese for technical assistance in resolving matters concerning the proper usage and implementation of the logo.

Future work of the logo committee, which is inter-departmental in make-up, includes a review of the status of the implementation of the logo at the Metropolis level, a review of the procedures that will be used to notify and provide guidance to parishes with logo violations, and a review of any departmental logo issues/violations, as well as a review of other outstanding items involving the comprehensive implementation of graphic standards.

Parish Ecclesiastical Calendars - 2004 was the first year the Archdiocese designed and offered to the parishes a full-color ecclesiastical calendar that listed the Saints (in Greek and English), Feast Days, Scripture readings, and fasting guidelines for the year. The calendar included icons for each month and hymns (in Greek and English) for the feast or saint indicated. Over 60 parishes purchased calendars totaling initial sales of over 30,000 calendars. It is anticipated that more parishes will order for 2005. This project offers a wonderful opportunity for our parishioners to feel connected throughout the country.

Orthodox Christian Network - OCN, the Network that produces the weekly "Come Receive the Light" (CRTL) Radio Program, has become an agency of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). The ministry has a board with representatives from all of the Orthodox jurisdictions in America. In 2003 the ministry grew to

include weekly broadcasts on 18 stations around the country, and area that covers a potential 38 million listeners. Weekly broadcasts are also available through the CRTL web site at www.receive.org. The goal of the Network is to expand into the nation's top 25 markets within the coming year.

Orthodox Question Box - In January of 2004, the Department of Internet Ministries restructured the method by which questions are received through the web site. The program was merged with the Field Education program of Holy Cross School of Theology, giving seminarians the opportunity to assist with answering questions as part of their seminary training.

Since January, the program has been receiving an average of 20 questions per week from people all over the world. The questions address all areas of our Orthodox faith, and by answering we are provided with an opportunity to witness, share, and guide those who are seeking and those who have basic questions about Orthodox Christianity.

The review of the questions and answers is supervised by Fr. Nektarios Morrow, Department of Communications, who also assists with answering when the number of questions is high. Many answers are provided by directing people to articles on the Archdiocesan web site, or by listing resources and providing the phone number for Holy Cross Bookstore.

Publications - The Department assisted with the publication of a book of Archbishop Demetrios' major academic and ecclesiastical addresses during the period of 2000 to 2003. The book brings together English and Greek texts that include major lectures at Harvard, Columbia, Yale, the Clergy-Laity 2002 keynote, the 2001 SCOBA Conference, and addresses at the Academy of Athens, Thessaloniki, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Annual Parish Reports – At the request of Archbishop Demetrios, and with the support of our Hierarchs, the Annual Parish Report was distributed to all parishes in January of 2003. Responses to the 2003 Report totaled approximately 150. The Annual Report was again distributed to our parishes in January 2004. We are hoping to improve in the number of responses from parishes over last year's number. It is critical that this report be completed by our parishes in order to maintain accurate records and evaluate ministries and resources.

Yearbook 2004 – The 2004 Yearbook was completed by December 24, 2004. Comments have and continue to be extremely favorable, particularly from the media who appreciate the immense amount of material and resources contained in the book. Additional copies are available for purchase at the Clergy-Laity Congress.

Patriarchal Visit of His All Holiness Bartholomew – March 2004 - Coordination of all media requests was handled by the Department of Communications. Press kits were designed and assembled, media alerts were distributed and press questions were answered and coordinated. At least two communications personnel were present at each event to facilitate press access. Additionally, a special website was developed to assist in the distribution of photos, press releases and speeches.

News Releases – Since January 1, 2004, the Department of Communications has distributed 115 Encyclicals and/or News Releases. Our releases are sent out by fax, listserv and posted on our website, depending on content and target audience. The Department also sends out Encyclicals and Releases on behalf of SCOBA and institutions of the GOA. We are currently researching methods of streamlining this effort. The Department also maintains the listserv.

Clipping Service – The Department of Communications is able to monitor national newspaper stories through its clipping service. This clipping service sends us actual stories from newspapers across the country that reference the GOA and Greek Orthodox communities and parishes. This is an invaluable tool to help us identify stories of interest and to help monitor the public discourse regarding the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Memberships - Marissa Costidis serves on the Membership Board of Faith and Values Media (Hallmark), attending meeting and Conferences throughout the year. She also serves on the Digital Committee of Faith and Values Media.

Conclusion

The work of the Department of Communications is varied and complicated as it includes contacts within our communities and faithful but also outside our communities and faithful. Our work must be completed and distributed in a timely manner, which will assist in facilitating the ministry of our Archdiocese, Metropolises, Parishes, Institutions, Organizations and Departments. It is critical that our work be filtered down and carried out by our Metropolises, Institutions, Organizations and Parishes to all faithful across the country.

It is clear in the level of work and planning provided by the Offices of the Department of Communications that our Directors and staff understand the work of communications to be a vital ministry of the Archdiocese. It is important and critical that we communicate with our secular media, however our content and the goal of our efforts must always be directly linked to the Church and to the Gospel message.

Respectfully Submitted,