



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Report to the 40th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress

Archdiocese Council Committee on Religious Education: His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit, Presiding Hierarch; Mr. Gerry Clonaris, Chair; His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas; His Grace Bishop Andonios of Phasiane; Mr. John Collis; Rev. Alkiviadis Calivas; Dr. Anthony Limberakis; Dr. Nicholas Loutsion; Rev. Frank Marangos; Mr. James Moshovitis; Dr. Vicki Pappas; Rev. Mark Sietsema; Dr. Theodore Vlahos.

Department Staff: Anton C. Vrame, Ph.D., Director; Anestis Jordanoglou, Office Manager; Aimee Cox Ehlers, Curriculum Specialist; Eva Stathi, Administrative Assistant; Rebecca Pietronuto, Customer Service; Kathleen Hunt Kyritsis, Accounts Receivable; John Ayoub, Rev. Makarios Dickson, Robert Spaliatsos, Gregory Marangos, Shipping and Receiving; Elizabeth Borch, *PRAXIS* Editor.

The Council Committee meets in person the evening before each Archdiocese Council meeting. In addition, the Committee uses email to discuss any issues concerning the Department. In the last two years, the Council Committee was restructured so as to focus exclusively on the Department of Religious Education. This led to a smaller number of members on the Committee at this time.

OVERVIEW

The last two years for the Department have been a time of productivity to better meet the needs of parish religious education programs and increasing efficiencies to decrease costs in a time of economic difficulties. The Department has stepped up the production of materials for junior high and high school age students. “Zines” (from “magazine”) have replaced “textbooks” for these classes, providing flexibility to teachers, but also presenting the Greek Orthodox Faith in a new way to our young people. These new resources – the “zines” – have been well received by students and teachers and have found a place not only in classrooms, but also in pews, at the *pangari*, in parish mailings, and for giving to visitors to our parishes.

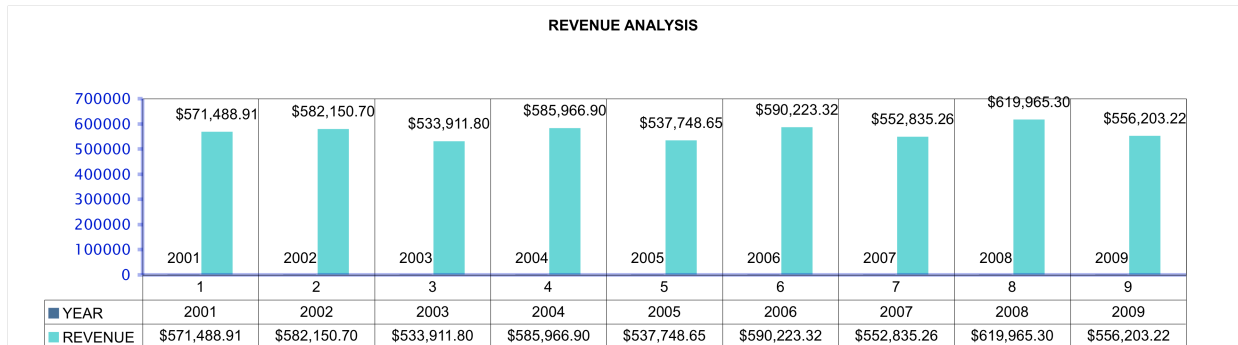
The Department has become more efficient, changing relationships with printers and other sources to produce resources at lower costs, while still maintaining the high quality our parishes expect. We are collaborating with the American Bible Society to handle the warehousing of parts of the Department inventory and order fulfillment for those items. In the short run, these efficiencies have saved the Department money, freeing up financial resources that can be invested in the creation of new publications. In the long run, they should enhance the Department’s ability to carry out its mission more effectively.

Communicating the work of the Department to those who carry out the work of religious education in the parishes has become a central focus. Through the use of print and mail as well as electronic media, the Department steadily reaches more and more people. There are still hurdles to overcome in this area, requiring greater work on all of our parts.

Sales/Inventory/Year-End Procedures

The Department’s average gross revenues have increased in the last two years from \$550,000 to \$570,000 per year. There are at least three possible reasons for the increase: 1) The production of new resources by the

Department; 2) Increased advertising of resources from the Department; 3) Outreach by the Director at parish and Metropolis events.



Annually, the Department conducts a complete physical inventory. At the end of 2009, the value was \$591,372. This is lower than in the past, caused by tightly controlling print runs and lowering costs of items produced. All financial modules for Inventory, Accounts Receivable, and Accounts Payable have been closed for the year 2008 and 2009. The Department's Statement of Activity and Balance Sheet are at the end of this report.

Warehousing and Fulfillment

For the last year, the Department has been in conversation with the American Bible Society (ABS) about storing the Department inventory in their warehouses and contracting with the ABS for order fulfillment. The Department is in the process of transferring textbooks to an ABS warehouse. We are connecting our computer systems so that their staff will fulfill orders of those items in their warehouse. Items that the Department will continue to warehouse will be shipped from Boston. This will increase the space available for storage from the cramped facilities at Hellenic College-Holy Cross. It will also even out shipping costs and schedules for our customers.

New Educational Resources

Since the last Congress, the Department has produced four more "zines" (from "magazine") aimed at junior high school and high school age students. They are:

- For to Us a Child is Born (jr. high)
- Heaven on Earth: The Divine Liturgy (jr. high)
- Of Your Mystical Supper: The Eucharist (sr. high)
- A Lamp to My Feet: An Introduction to the Bible (jr. high)

Each "zine" has a pupil text and teacher's guide with 4-6 lessons for classroom use. In addition, some parishes have used the "zines" with adult groups and retreats. Others have mailed them to all parishioners or placed them in pews and at the *pangari* for general distribution.

In the coming two years, the Department intends to create additional "zines," thus creating a menu for teachers and students to select from for study in Sunday Church school classes. In various stages of production, with tentative titles are the following:

- First among Equals: The Ecumenical Patriarchate (jr. high)
- Seeing is Believing: Icons in the Church (sr. high)
- Journey through Great Lent (jr. high)
- On Wealth, Poverty, and Stewardship (sr. high)

Updating Elementary Level Resources

A great challenge is the need to update the existing Living Our Orthodox Faith textbook series, produced from 1989-1993. The Department intends to digitize the existing books in such a way that they can be edited, have photos and artwork replaced easily, and redesigned as needed. We also intend to “break up” a textbook, transforming an existing unit into a “zine”/booklet for classroom use and then create one or more supplements for each grade.

***PRAXIS* Magazine**

Since the last Clergy-Laity Congress, *PRAXIS* has published the following issues:

- Vol. 8:1 Fall 2008 – Early Childhood Education
- Vol. 8:2 Winter 2009 – The Arts in the Orthodox Church
- Vol. 8:3 Spring 2009 – Summer Church Camp
- Vol. 9:1 Fall 2009 – Green Christianity (a special printing was also done for the visit of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)
- Vol. 9:2 Winter 2010 – Teaching Difficult Topics
- Vol. 9:3 Spring 2010 – Prayer

We have printed a collection of articles that represent some of the “best of *PRAXIS*” from the last few years for this Congress.

Over the next year, we intend to cover the following

- Vol. 10:1 Fall 2010 – Adult Education
- Vol. 10:2 Winter 2011 – Our Byzantine Heritage
- Vol. 10:3 Spring 2011 – Popular Culture (tentative)

PRAXIS currently has 622 subscribers. In addition, a complimentary copy of *PRAXIS* is also mailed to every hierarch, active and retired clergyman, and Church school supervisor for a total of 1322 copies. Between 50-100 copies of each issue are sent to each Metropolis, and additional copies are distributed at conferences and workshops for teachers.

Facebook and Listserv

With the growing use of social networking, the Department launched “Orthodox Christian Religious Educators,” a Facebook group, to connect teachers with the Department and to one another for sharing of ideas. The group has about 900 members. The Department also reactivated the Religious Education listserv, an email group of nearly 2500 members, who receive regular messages from the Department Director.

Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival National Finals

The Department, with the assistance of National Co-chairs Fr. John and Presvytera Margaret Orfanakos, plans and coordinates this program throughout the year. Since the last Congress, the Department has worked to release the topics for the Festival in September – rather than late December. This allows Church school teachers and advisors to promote the program earlier and include the topics in lessons, well before the time of the Festivals themselves.

- The 2009 National Festival was hosted by the Metropolis of Chicago at the St. Mary Church and St. George Church, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minnesota.
- The 2010 National Festival was hosted by the Direct Archdiocese District by the Archdiocese Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.
- The 2011 National Festival will be hosted by the Metropolis of Denver, June 3-5.
- The 2012 National Festival will be hosted by the Metropolis of New Jersey.

Increasing the number of parishes that participate in the Oratorical Festival is an ongoing goal of the Department. The table below shows the number of parishes in each Metropolis that hold a Festival and the percentage of parish participation for each Metropolis in 2010.

	2009	2010	2010 %ages
Direct Archdiocese District	16	16/68	24%
Atlanta Metropolis	38	36/71	50%
Boston Metropolis	21	20/63	32%
Chicago Metropolis	23	26/58	45%
Denver Metropolis	16	16/47	34%
Detroit Metropolis	21	25/47	53%
New Jersey Metropolis	31	34/55	62%
Pittsburgh Metropolis	15	16/52	31%
San Francisco Metropolis	24	20/68	30%
Total Parishes Participating	205	209	

New Resource Catalog (2010)

A new resource catalog with more than 800 resources has been published. It will be mailed to more than 17,000 clergy, Church school directors/teachers, and individuals on the Department's mailing list. The Department intends to produce the catalog annually, although with fewer changes from catalog to catalog. The Department also has begun mailing smaller flyer-like brochures, highlighting seasonal items to parishes and other customers.

Metropolis Directors of Religious Education

The Department held a meeting of the Metropolis DREs in January 2009 as part of the Youth Directors training on the Youth Protection Manual. Unfortunately just three of the nine Directors were present. Given the economic downturn, the goal for paid Metropolis Religious Education Directors has not been reached.

In 2010-2011, in collaboration with the Metropolis of Boston, representatives from the Department will participate in local leadership training workshops.

Summer Institute

In the non-Congress years, the Department sponsors a "Summer Institute." This was held July 29-August 1, 2009, on the campus of Hellenic College-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. The Summer Institute was held with the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. About 75 people and 10 presenters attended the program. The Department is presently studying dates, locations, and program ideas for the 2011 Summer Institute.

Director's Activity

The Director of the Department is available for workshops and presentations to Metropolis programs or parish programs. Since the last Congress he spoke at the following: Metropolis of Detroit Teachers Conference, Southgate, MI; Direct Archdiocese District Teachers Conference, Merrick, NY; Metropolis of New Jersey Clergy Laity Assembly; Metropolis of Denver Clergy Laity Assembly; Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy Laity Assembly; St. Anna Church, Roseville, CA; Holy Trinity Church, San Francisco, CA; Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Church, Chicago, IL; St. Demetrios Church, Weston, MA; St. Catherine Church, Braintree, MA; Sts. Constantine and Helen Church, Palos Hills, IL; Annunciation Cathedral, Columbus, OH; Annunciation Cathedral, Houston, TX; Metropolis of Boston Clergy Laity Conference; St. George Church, Bethesda, MD; St. Mary Church, Minneapolis, MN; St. George Church, Trenton, NJ; Holy Trinity Church, Concord, NH.

The Director is Adjunct Associate Professor at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, teaching the introductory course in Religious Education (PAST 5301) and leading a Field Education Seminar (FLED 5052). He also serves as Director of Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

The Director represents the Archdiocese to the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, serves as the Commission's Chair, and serves on the Executive Committee of the Governing Board of the NCC. He serves on the Board of Trustees of the Orthodox Christian Education Commission – the SCOBA agency for religious education – and is currently the Commission's Executive Secretary/Vice-Chair.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to pursuing the goals described above, the following recommendations are made:

- That the Archdiocese Finance committee and the Department review how the Department is financed – from its sales and an allotment from the Archdiocese – in order to find ways to increase the investment being made in the production of religious education materials.
- That should the funding be available, each Metropolis explore the possibility of hiring a Metropolis Director of Religious Education, whether full-time or part-time, using the job description and guidelines created by the Department in 2007.
- That each Metropolis create a “speaker’s bureau,” beginning with the names of its own clergy and presentation topics with which they are comfortable, then adding the names of local experts in various topics of interest to parishes.
- That every Parish annually update the names and contact information of its Sunday Church school supervisors and teachers to their Metropolis Religious Education Director, which will be shared with the Archdiocese Department so that the Metropolis and Department may communicate directly with supervisors and teachers.
- That every Parish begin a regular educational program for adults, beyond the traditional Bible Study.
- That every Parish set aside between 45 minutes to one hour per week for Sunday Church school.
- That children attend as much of the Sunday Divine Liturgy as possible, at least through Holy Communion.
- That parishes that do not have “bookstores” establish one.

**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY AND FUND BALANCE
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009 AND 2008**

	2009	2008
Operations		
Sales	\$486,443	\$556,931
Subscription Revenue	5,993	12,013
Income from Shipping and Handling	62,686	66,295
Cost of Goods Sold	(307,945)	(309,784)
Postage and Shipping and Handling	(40,778)	(41,698)
	\$206,399	\$283,757
GROSS PROFIT		
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATING EXPENSES		
Advertising Expense	1,823	400
Bad Debt Expense	0	9,041
Catalog Expense	0	38,063
Consultant Fees and Expenses	0	2,080
Depreciation	10,110	13,850
Equipment Rental and Service Contracts	15,367	13,065
Miscellaneous Expense	6	0
Office Expenses and Supplies	18,062	27,679
Payroll Taxes	16,601	20,494
Praxis Magazine Expense	33,553	29,677
Professional Fees	7,900	10,134
Salaries	234,361	281,036
St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival	4,783	5,492
Summer Institute of Religious Education	9,780	0
Telephone and Fax Services	1,500	2,700
Travel	3,936	7,516
Warehouse Expense	2,455	2,002
	\$360,257	\$463,229
Total Administrative and Operating Expenses		
Excess Expenses Over Income- Operations	(\$153,858)	(\$179,472)
Other Income / Expense		
Dividend Income	333	365
Donations Received, Misc Income	121	1,355
Interest Expense	(17)	(190)
Interest Income	328	2,040
Leadership 100 Grant	34,386	66,892
Other Income	125	119
Summer Institute Income	6,810	0
Unrealized Gain/ Loss - Stocks on Hand	6,528	(10,342)
	48,614	60,239
Total Other Income		
Net Profit- Operating Fund	(\$105,244)	(\$119,233)
St. John Chrysostom Fundtn- Restricted Fund		
Contributions	\$4,354	\$10,780
Interest Income	2,261	1,267
Scholarships Paid	(10,000)	(12,750)
Other Expense	(10)	12
	(\$3,395)	(\$691)
Net Profit- Restricted Fund		
Fund Balance, beginning of year	\$982,834	\$1,102,759
Fund Balance, end of year	\$874,195	\$982,835

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
Department of Religious Education
Balance Sheet
DECEMBER 31, 2009 AND 2008

	2009	2008
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash - Operating*	\$90,256	\$79,964
Cash - St. John Chrysostom Foundation - Restricted	148,759	150,154
Stocks on Hand	18,970	12,442
Accounts Receivable	49,128	55,850
Inventory-Books, net of reserve	591,372	674,261
Inventory-Display	3,625	2,851
Other Current Assets	7,718	10,602
Total Current Assets	\$907,828	\$986,124
Property and Equipment		
Office Furniture and Equipment	\$211,653	\$211,653
Leasehold Improvements	48,010	48,010
Religious Artifacts	1,000	1,000
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(240,797)	(230,687)
Net Property and Equipment	\$19,866	\$29,976
Total Assets	\$927,694	\$1,016,100
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	15,087	12,083
Accrued Payroll due NY Archdiocese	27,052	14,531
Deferred Subscription Revenue - (Praxis)	6,974	2,267
Other Liabilities	4,385	4,385
Total Liabilities	\$53,498	\$33,266
Fund Balance		
Operating Fund	757,181	862,425
St. John Chrysostom Foundation - Restricted Fund	117,015	120,409
Total Fund Balance	\$874,196	\$982,834
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$927,694	\$1,016,100

*Please note that the accumulated cash reserves are earmarked for continuing expansion of the ongoing programs of the Department and completion of the middle school and high school curriculum.