

O.N.E.

ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND

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Toward a Diocesan Crisis Response



V. Rev. Steven Voytovich

Even as we enter into a new calendar year with joy, victims of Storm Sandy and the shooting at Sandy Hook still call upon our attention and concern.

After Storm Sandy, questions circulated through our deanery and diocese respectively, asking whether our parishes and faithful had sustained damage. Most responded “no” concerning church buildings, adding mention of parishioners who were working through damage to homes. The hospital where I conduct pastoral care edu-

cation and training is Episcopal Health Services (EHS) located in Far Rockaway, NY, the only remaining hospital for those needing health care on this peninsula. This is where the homes burned because firefighters were unable to reach them in the midst of Sandy.

Staff members lost homes, cars, possessions. They had to make temporary provisions for family members and pets, all while continuing to care for patients and residents at the hospital. These facilities remained on

Crisis Response to 2

Crisis Response from I

emergency power for weeks, even through the Nor'Easter that followed.

At the writing of this article, many staff have not yet returned home, and others have had to begin a second wave of evacuations due to mold accumulation. I felt the need, as a person of faith, to respond to those I have worked with for at least two years, and wondered if our church would feel similarly along with me.

Parishioners at Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn., asked about my experience of the storm, knowing I work in New York. In some cases parishioners also knew persons in that area. I in turn asked for His Eminence's blessing to formally request assistance for staff that were continuing to struggle, since this locale is outside the physical boundaries of the diocese.

In waiting for our archbishop's response, I continued to resist parishioners' requests to help. Their response was to write checks, that they

then spontaneously cashed during coffee hour. With donations and funds that grew to almost \$600, I went to Costco to purchase more supplies to bring back with me for each of several Mondays after the storm.

It was with real joy that while serving as a volunteer manager assigned to what became the company store, I was able to offer one of the nine cleaning packages to a staff member. As a member of the staff and part of pastoral care at this facility, I was so moved that our Orthodox Church was meaningfully supporting those whose lives were so deeply impacted by the storm. Adding to this, one parishioner's doctor asked if anyone had connections to get supplies he purchased to Far Rockaway. The parishioner shared about Three Saints' efforts underway. Again my car was packed from stem to stern with these supplies.

Upon receiving His Eminence's blessing, Three Saints faithful came forward with further donations totaling \$1,225 for a special staff relief fund. I believe Fr. Patrick Burns and parishioners were moved by the fruits of their efforts, to which the greater community now also contributed.

By this time, nearly a month after the storm, the first federal relief funds began to arrive to the New York area. It took almost that long before media brought much needed attention to this and other areas.

An initial step toward a crisis response is to ask: "What are we doing to assist those impacted by the crisis?" Such responsiveness is especially needed early after the initial crisis impact.

Below: The photo reveals nine sets of cleaning packages parishioners of Ansonia were able to assemble, with bucket, mop, cleaning solutions, and gloves for staff to combat mold and other water related damage. The covered plastic container is filled with donated items from the manager on duty on Sunday, Nov. 18.



Giving Above and Beyond: March Is ONE Stewards Month

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

For the 2nd year in a row, the 2012 ONE Stewards donations exceeded the budget goal of \$20,000. This again was primarily due to the generosity of our Diocesan Archbishop Nikon who continues to make a significant personal donation in support of ONE Stewards. The “Bishop’s Circle” donors (\$500 or more) also were crucial in meeting the goals of ONE Stewards.

The annual Diocesan Youth Rally is scheduled again for August and ONE Stewards donations provide a major portion of the rally costs which total over \$20,000. Show your support of our diocesan youth, our diocesan

seminarians, our diocesan missions, and our diocesan charity donations by “Giving Above and Beyond” with a 2013 donation to ONE Stewards. You should be receiving your ONE Stewards appeal envelope in late February. Remember, March is ONE Stewards month. Let’s all join Bishop Nikon in supporting ONE Stewards in 2013.

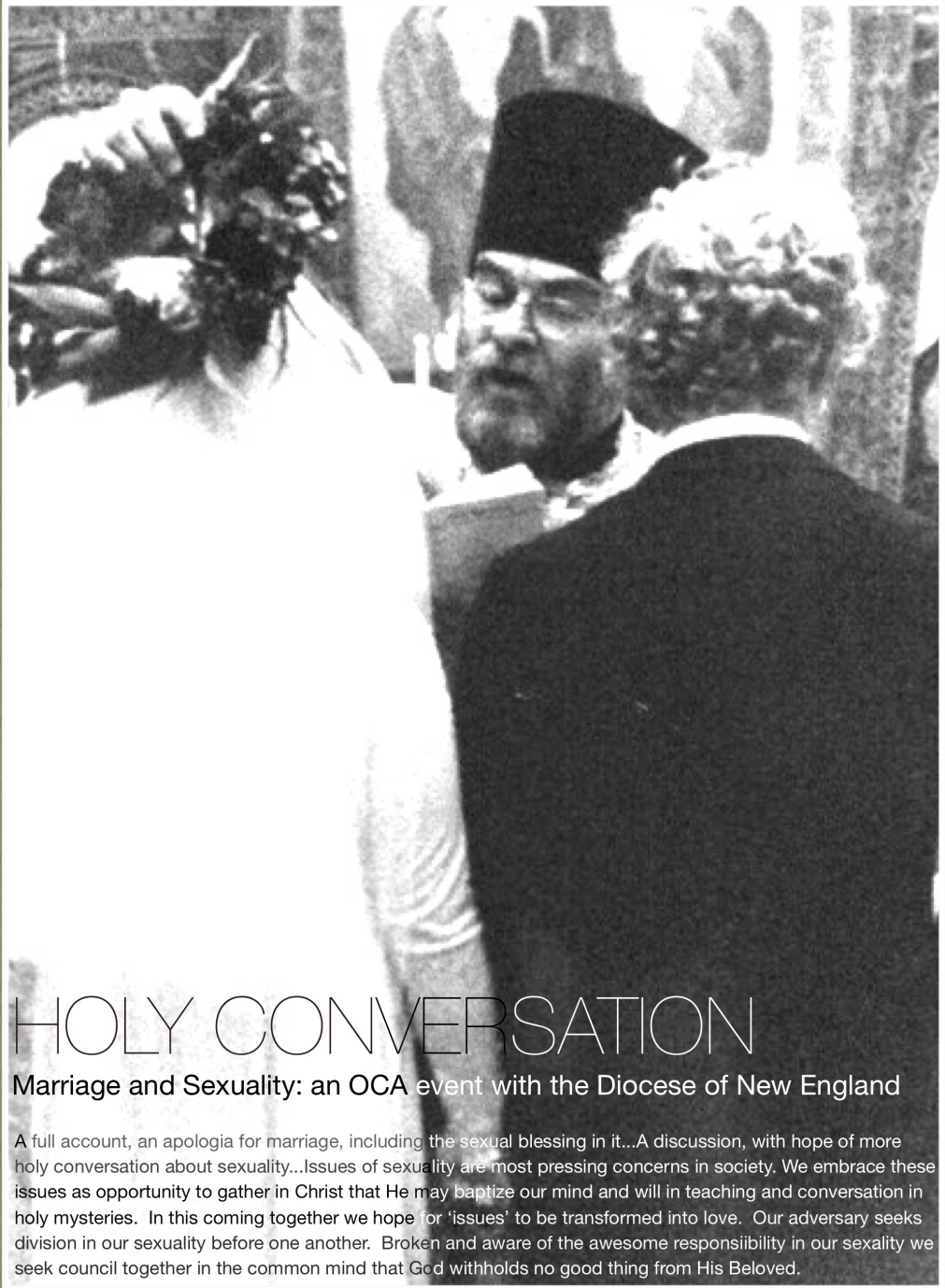
ONE Stewards
PO Box 1182
Torrington, CT 06790

Yours in Christ, Deacon Paul
ONE †

Below: Fr. Steven Voytovich presided at the **blessing of the lake** at the Salisbury mission this year. Fr. John Kreta was ill.

Blessing the Lake: All Saints of North America, Salisbury, Conn., Feast of Theophany, 2013





HOLY CONVERSATION

Marriage and Sexuality: an OCA event with the Diocese of New England

A full account, an apologia for marriage, including the sexual blessing in it...A discussion, with hope of more holy conversation about sexuality...Issues of sexuality are most pressing concerns in society. We embrace these issues as opportunity to gather in Christ that He may baptize our mind and will in teaching and conversation in holy mysteries. In this coming together we hope for 'issues' to be transformed into love. Our adversary seeks division in our sexuality before one another. Broken and aware of the awesome responsibility in our sexuality we seek council together in the common mind that God withholds no good thing from His Beloved.

Archbishop Nikon
Sr Nonna Harrison
Fr. John Behr
Mat. Jenny Mosher
Fr. Andrew Tregubov
Dr. Al Rossi
Fr. Theophan Whitfield
You

March 1 and 2 @ The Barn

923 Kings Highway
White River Junction, Vermont

Website: OCAconversations.org

Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn.

Barbara Ann Dixon

We started the fall season with a bang. A successful Food and Craft Fair was held on Nov. 9 & 10. Thanks go to the many volunteers who worked very hard making pierogi and stuffed cabbage, and those who helped set up, clean up, served food and manned the various tables.

In addition to our monthly food bank collection, a special collection for Thanksgiving was held. Donated turkeys and fixings filled many baskets with a complete Thanksgiving dinner. The generosity and outpouring of love from our parishioners was overwhelming. It was truly a blessing to help eleven families in our parish and community at large have enjoyable dinners in their homes during Thanksgiving.

Our parish also collected for Storm Sandy Relief. The first week, Father Steven Voytovich packed his car with goods to donate to his staff at the hospital in Long Island and barely had room for himself. Donations were given to the Connecticut Red Cross and other relief agencies to aid those in need.

For St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6, we welcomed a special honored guest, a monastic pilgrim, Sister Maria from the convent of St. Elizabeth in Minsk, Belarus. A breakfast was held following liturgy. Sister Maria showed a DVD on their



Above Right: Pierogi makers prepare for the Ansonia Food and Craft Fair.

Photo: Jenny Chaplick

Below: The Food and Craft Fair in progress.

Photo: Delores Carrangelo

work and the monastery. To support and develop the ministry, numerous workshops and studios operate within the frameworks of the sisterhood consisting of an icon-painting studio, sewing and embroidery shops, candle, and woodworking and blacksmith workshops. The Sisterhood also provides religious education and publishing.

On Saturday, Dec. 15, the senior group held their second annual "Cookie Walk." They were delighted with the enormous response for the homemade cookies. The seniors raised over \$1,000. Thanks to all who baked "goodies" with special thanks to Debra Helena Chunn (mother of Father Patrick) who spent many days baking cookies for this event. The senior group also mailed Christmas cards to our shut-ins.

A "Giving Tree" was placed in the Narthex with tags for parishioners to voluntarily take and purchase gift certificates for the less fortunate in our community. Fourteen homeless families received gift certificates to grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, movie theaters, fast food places, Target and Walmart.

ONE †



AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!
Fr. James Parnell was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on Dec. 23, 2012 at Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, Conn.

Middle: Fr. Parnell serving his last liturgy as a deacon, to His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon's right.

Below Left: Fr. Parnell is covered with the *aer* in preparation for his ordination.

Below Right: Fr. John Behr of St. Vladimir's Seminary preached.

All Saints Church, Hartford

V. Rev. William DuBovik

Hundreds of people flocked to All Saints Church in Hartford for some special activities. Our 39th Annual Russian Tea Room and Bazaar, growing in popularity through the region, attracted new and old attendees. The event began on Friday with a concert by the Yale Russian Chorus, along with a reception for the choir members and Bazaar preview. Saturday and Sunday, the Bazaar continued. Visitors were treated to delicious ethnic foods, imported gifts, baked goods, children's activities and more. There were in-

formative Church tours and iconography talks.

Fr. William recently gave a short video talk on the Jesus Prayer for a Sacred Heart University student who included it in a powerpoint presentation on the subject. He was happy to learn she received an "A."

The parish welcomed more visitors to its Holiday Food and Gift Fair, which offered Lenten foods, as well as gift items, and displays by vendors.

Our Church School presented its annual Nativity/St. Nicholas program, showcasing the talents of our children and youth, followed by lunch.

The Church looked beautiful with Christmas tree and plants, all courtesy of the Holobinko, Ranstead and Vargas families. And our Christmas tree was dazzling with specially engraved ribbons, commemorating parishioners' loved ones.

This year's tree included 26 green ribbons in memory of those lost in the Sandy Hook tragedy. Special prayers and a sermon were offered in light of this horrible event.

ONE +



Crisis Response from 2

Parish Grant Initiative for 2013

Protodeacon Paul
Nimchek

The diocesan "Parish Grant Initiative" will continue in 2013. Parishes in the New England Diocese can apply for financial grants to support outreach and charity programs in their communities.

The diocese has again budgeted up to \$10,000 in grant monies to help support parishes in these efforts. Check the Diocesan website for the grant guidelines and an application:

www.dneoca.org

Applications will be reviewed as received. See the website for details.

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Some may remember Hurricane Katrina near New Orleans. At the time we had a clergy meeting in Clinton where it was reported that church relief was on site and active, while government responses were delayed by formal paperwork. The Body of Christ is asked to share God's love with those in need, and to manifest sufficient concern and responsiveness to make it happen. A memorial service was held after the shooting in Newtown. Many faith leaders were present to offer heartfelt prayer. Sadly our Orthodox Church was not represented.

Responsiveness is the dimension I would like to focus on. Concerning the cleaning supplies, I did nothing unusual or heroic besides being willing to take a little time to shop (not my most favorite activity) and willingness to creatively pack my two door coupe to the point where I barely had room to drive. Doing this in turn helped me have a reason to push through my own sense of feeling overwhelmed to return each week to New York, knowing the devastation so many were dealing with fueled an atmosphere of discomfort mixed with uncertainty. These same staff continued to care for patients while trying to piece their own lives back together. In our Pastoral Care Department, we stepped forward to engage in staff child care while schools and day care facilities remained closed, distribution of food and clothing, and working to establish a company store for staff.

We had no special training, some mistakes were made that we learned from along the way, and these activities pushed aside our regular activities. We were exhausted as a result, and yet, staff were being supported long

before any FEMA aid reached this area. It will take at least a year before some staff have any measure of normalcy. Yet these steps provided temporary relief along the way. These persons have experienced colleagues and institutions caring for them in their time of need.

One of the greatest lessons for me is that I have to be willing to step forward to respond, to dare to move beyond the comfort of my daily existence and caregiving role. To extend this to parish or diocesan level spreads such a response among more persons, as was the case here at Three Saints. What one person cannot do alone, together the parish's responsiveness made a real difference!

A second lesson is to ensure sufficient self care in sustaining such outreach. At EHS we all experienced compassion fatigue in trying to respond to waves of needs during the weeks that followed the storm, and tried to implement support for one another.

Our communities of faith provide a significant context for working through grief, loss, and struggle, especially in the wake of crises. Each of these crises has in some way lifted up the role of communities of faith filled with compassion, grace, and ultimately the embrace of God's love. Let us strive to live into this role today that was so clearly evidenced in the Gospels as Jesus ministered to those he encountered during his earthly sojourn.

The V. Rev. Dr. Steven Voytovich is Director of Clinical Pastoral Education at Episcopal Health Services, Far Rockaway, NY.

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Upcoming Events

- March 20** Deadline for next issue of the ONE
- March 1-2 "Holy Conversation: Marriage and Sexuality," an OCA event hosted by the Northern Deanery, at The Barn, White River Junction, Vermont
- March 24 4 PM, Sunday of Orthodoxy Service at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church, Terryville, Conn.
- March 31 4 PM, Conn. Mission Vespers at SS. Peter & Paul Church, Meriden, Conn.
- April 14 4 PM, Conn. Mission Vespers at All Saints of N. America Church, Salisbury, Conn.
- April 21 4 PM, Holy Unction Service at Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn.
- April 28 4 PM, Conn. Deanery Bridegroom Matins at Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, Conn.
- April 20 Parish Growth Seminar by Fr. John Ivanoff at Holy Trinity Church, Willimantic, Conn.
- June 8 Consecration of new temple of St. Nicholas Church in Pittsfield, Mass.