

# South Florida Deanery Annual Report

## July 2007 – Diocesan Assembly

### A. East Coast Zone (South to North):

#### 1. Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Miami

This parish is the senior parish of the deanery, beginning in 1951. Archpriest Alexander Padlo has been serving the community since 2004. It is located just West of Downtown Miami, in an area called “Little Havana.”

Through the years, as the founders have passed away, and as the demographic changes have quickly turned much of Metro Miami into a non English speaking area, Sts. Peter & Paul Church has not been in a good position to deal effectively with these dramatic changes. Still, with a community of a dozen faithful members, they heroically continue to maintain their property, their full Sunday and Festival liturgical cycle, and their parish life.

Over the past year, this parish:

1. Made good headway in repairs from damages incurred from Hurricane Wilma. The roof was fixed, new gutters installed, and doors replaced.
2. Co-sponsored, together with the Lady's Societies of St. Sophia Greek and St. George Antiochian Cathedrals, the visit and well attended retreat led by His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar in May.
3. Continue to witness Orthodoxy publicly by participating in “Cultural Friday” events held regularly on 8<sup>th</sup> Street (Calle Ocho) with a table of icons and literature on the Faith.

#### 2. Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Miami Lakes (Hialeah)

A parish church since 1962, Cathedral status was granted to it in the beginning period of the Diocese. Its founding pastor was the energetic and visionary Fr. George Gladky, our first Diocesan Chancellor, who fell asleep in the Lord in 1989.

The parish relocated to its new campus by the “Palmetto Expressway” with the construction of a hall in 1994, and recently opened the new cathedral in October 2006. Fr. Philip Reese is the current rector

Although the Cathedral has experienced much of the same demographic changes as described above with all of its challenges, the very visible new church building and new location, together with its connection to the major highways and expressways, has helped to attract new people to it over the last year. Still there is a constant turn over of people leaving and arriving. There has been slow growth during the past year. The full Sunday and Festival cycle of services, together with classes for children and adults continues. Sunday attendance ranges anywhere between 45 and 90.

Over the past year, the Cathedral:

1. Completed construction and entered into its new church.
2. Hosted an OCL event (with Frs. Peter Guillquist and Gordon Walker as speakers), Sunday of Orthodoxy, and the Diocesan Assembly.
3. Dedicated the parish hall in memory of benefactor, Charles Stoyka, Jr.
4. Rearranged new spaces for offices and bookstore in the parish hall.
5. Has had 6 baptisms, 2 chrismations, 2 weddings and 1 funeral

In the months ahead the Cathedral parish looks to acquire its new iconostas and to see the beginnings of its iconography project throughout the church interior. The well-known Iconographer, Dmitry Shkolnik, will be working on this for some time.

### 3. St. Nicholas Church, Ft. Lauderdale

A parish since 1961, it is located a few miles north of Downtown Ft. Lauderdale. Fr. Kirrill Gvosdev is rector. This year, the parish reports positive strides in activity and growth. It has had particular success in ministering to the new Russian immigration.

It is not a seasonal parish and its good attendance is maintained year round. Holy Pascha saw more than 400 in attendance with over 125 at Pascha Vespers. Molebiens in Church Slavonic are served on the third Sunday of the month from September to May - to the Virgin or other requested Saints. The parish has currently one catechumen.

Over the past year, St. Nicholas Church:

1. With plans approved and contractor hired, the expansion program of the church and parish hall is on track.
2. A Nativity program was inaugurated with the parish youth.
3. Altar servers were presented Crosses and church school children were presented icon pins before the congregation.
4. Bar-be-ques are held at church in association with American civil holidays.
5. Has had 35 baptisms, 9 weddings and 6 funerals.
6. Hosted the deanery clergy for their meeting in December.

The current OCA scandal has been of particular concern to the parish and its leadership. It has chosen to hold in escrow all assessments until the time that "the whole truth has been told, restitution has been made, and our diocesan as well as national church authorities speak out shepherding the faithful in the ways of the Gospel and not in keeping silent for their own protection, gain, or because of fear."

#### 4. St. Herman Church, Lake Worth

A parish since the early 70's, it is located just south of West Palm Beach. Fr. Michael Zaparyniuk Jr has been its rector for 26 years. The community continues its good work amidst some difficult struggles.

Father Michael and Matushka Annette have been married now for 50 years. Forty-nine of those years have been in service to the Holy Church. However, they both struggle with health issues and worry about their daughter, Anna, and

Father's sister, Adella, who are both struggling with cancer. They request our prayers.

Additionally, the parish has struggled over not being able to re-roof the church and parish house from hurricane damage due to long-standing conflicts with contractors. They hope to resolve this issue within the next few months.

During this period and in spite of the above issues, the parish has maintained its membership and maintained its Sunday and Festal Cycle of services. Fr. Michael describes this time of the parish's life as being in transition.

Over the past year, St. Herman's Church:

1. Celebrated its Anniversary Liturgy & Dinner in February
2. Continued to hold its regular food festivals during non-fasting months
3. Celebrated Fr. Michael's 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to the holy priesthood in December

#### 5. St. Peter the Apostle Mission, Jupiter

The newest mission parish of our deanery, St. Peter's began in 2005. Jupiter is on the northern edge of Palm Beach County, next to Martin County, and is a quickly growing area. The mission is currently being serviced by Fr. James Mason, a retired priest who travels from Pt. St. Lucie. They are looking for a permanent priest who can help the community grow and to better establish itself.

It is a somewhat seasonal parish with attendance in the 30's in the winter, and in the 20's in the summer. They have no property, but rent a very adequate space in a local public school for Sunday worship. Unfortunately, they are not able to use the space for Vespers or Feast Days. The mission has been investigating property possibilities. The parish has done a good job in advertising in the local papers and has also adopted a local highway.

## 6. St. James the Apostle Mission, Port St. Lucie

The oldest mission parish of our deanery, St. James began in 1976. St. James Mission is the northern most parish on the deanery's East coast, in St. Lucie County – a fast growing area. Fr. Ernesto Ríos has been the rector there for 17 years.

The parish has reported a slight increase in membership, pointing out the demographic that 70% of the parish is 55 years of age and younger. Although there is a seasonal aspect to the parish, attendance is good throughout the year with only a slight decrease in the summer.

St. Mary's Sisterhood of St. James Mission has also worked very hard, managing the coffee hours every Sunday and preparing a monthly brunch (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday).

Over the past year, St. James Church:

1. Lost two long time members, Audrey Vivian and Marilyn Rinehart, as well as Nina Strazzo, Fr. George Gladky's sister.
2. Has renovated the temple, adding entrance doors creating a vestibule; adding new rugs, light fixtures, and a brand new golden cupola – blessed by His Eminence last November.
3. Conducted a grand banquet in honor of the Archbishop's birthday in November, with a piano concert by Alexis Ríos. His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico was also present for this festive weekend.

B. **West Coast Zone** (South to North):

1. St. Demetrius Mission, Naples

The parish is on the southern edge of the Naples area just East of US 41. Father Gleb McFatter has been assigned its priest since 2005. It is very much affected in attendance by seasonal variations.

There has been much activity this year in the parish:

1. Renovations: new a/c system, front sidewalk, meeting room and plans for new kitchen.
2. One catechumen received at Holy Pascha
3. East European New Year Celebration – a successful fundraiser
4. Helped sponsor a retreat with Fr. Hopko with the local O. clergy assn.
5. Three Successful Orthodoxy 101 Sunday sessions with local Orthodox clergy.
6. Substantially increased attendance at Holy Week & Pascha
7. Had regular “Town Hall” forums on Wednesday evenings that has helped communication within the parish.

Father Gleb expressed the need to attract a choir director to the parish with a small stipend, even one not Orthodox. He also looks forward to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the parish that will be held on the weekend of December 1, 2007]

2. Holy Cross Church, Ft. Myers (Olga)

This parish is about 10 to 12 miles east of central Ft. Myers in an area called Olga off of SR 80. It is long time serviced by Fr. Leonid Palceski. He is now accompanied and assisted by a new deacon, his son-in-law, Fr. Dn. Matthew Casey.

Fr. Leonid has reported that for the first time in the last few years there has been growth in the parish. They have increased this year by five new members. This has given new enthusiasm to the community.

The parish did host the West Coast Deanery Mission Vespers in March, which saw a good crowd of parishioners from Ft. Myers, Venice, Naples and the Miami Cathedral.

### 3. Holy Spirit Church, Venice

This parish is the northern most parish of the deanery's west coast. Through the recent efforts of Fr. Bob Kondratick, it has experienced in a short time a renaissance of activity, new members, and enthusiasm.

It is truly a gathering of many people of diversified backgrounds who have come forward to participate in the full cycle of service that have been offered during this time.

Although the parish community has been traumatized by the murder of a young mother Yana Huss, and the suspension of their pastor in April, the community remains dedicated to building up and revitalizing the Orthodox faith in this community.

The spiritual experience at Pascha was absolutely incredible with an attendance of over one hundred and twenty in attendance.

The faithful have confirmed the vision and direction set by Archbishop Dmitri by the placement of a full time pastor who has expended much time, labor and love for its rejuvenation. Plans were underway for the possible expansion due to the overwhelming additional needs of this community. All of the faithful who had fallen away for one reason or another have come back bring others to share in this wonderful witness of the Orthodox faith and love through fervent prayers.

Currently, the parish is being serviced by retired priest, Fr. Stephen Plumblee, and other deanery and area clergy.