

Report to the 2026 Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the South

Clergy Representative of the DOS to the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America

V. Rev. B. Peter Robichau

July 21, 2026

I write to the Assembly as the outgoing Clergy Representative of the Diocese of the South to the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America, to close out my service with a final account of the work undertaken and, with the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, to formally commend the balance of my term to Archpriest Jason Foster. I was elected to this position at our 2024 Diocesan Assembly in Richmond, for a three-year term that was to run through the fall of 2027. Over the past year, a combination of personal and professional demands made it clear that I would not be able to give the Council the attention its work requires and deserves, and this spring I asked His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, for a blessing to step back earlier than planned. The transition took effect on June 1, 2026, roughly halfway through the term I was elected to serve. It is a real comfort to me that Fr. Jason, who was himself widely supported for this same seat at the 2024 Assembly and already serves the Diocese as our Development Director; he was ready and willing to take up the remainder of my term. I have briefed him on the Council's current work, provided him with the files and correspondence relevant to each of the items described below, and I am confident the Diocese's clergy-representative voice on the Council remains in capable hands.

Much of my service centered on the Council's Internal Governance Committee, which the Metropolitan asked me to chair not long after my election. The Committee had gone largely dormant in recent years, and one of the first tasks was simply reconstituting it: Fr. Daniel Greeson, Kevin Duffy, and Miho Ealy Ochiai each agreed to serve, and we began meeting regularly in the fall of 2025. Together we produced a revised Draft Revised Governance Committee charter that attempted to clarify the Committee's purpose and authority, separates its work more cleanly from that of the Finance Committee, to which internal audit responsibilities more properly belong, and grounds its responsibilities explicitly in both the OCA Statute and the fiduciary duties that New York State law places on every Council member. That work is in the hands of the OCA Administration and Metropolitan Council for its consideration and next steps.

One of the Governance Committee's standing responsibilities is maintaining the Council Member's Handbook, and I found, on taking up the role, that the Handbook had not been substantively revised since 2019. I undertook a fairly thorough rewrite: consolidating material that had grown repetitive and hard to follow into clearer sections, restoring the late Thaddeus Wojcik's article on fiduciary responsibility to a more prominent place near the front of the document, where new members are more likely actually to read it, and updating the discussion of members' duties under New York law to reflect more recent guidance. A working draft, dated February 2026, has already been shared with the OCA Secretary and the Council's leadership. It remains a draft rather than a finished product, and I am glad to leave its further refinement and possible formal adoption to the Council.

At the Governance Committee's request, and with the Council's encouragement at our spring meeting, I designed and administered a Board Effectiveness Survey of current and former Council members in May of this year and prepared the accompanying summary report. Forty-four members responded, a response rate of forty-four percent, which gave us a reasonably solid basis for drawing conclusions. The picture that emerged was, on the whole, an encouraging one: members consistently affirmed the collegiality of the Council and the sense that its work matters, and a majority endorsed how the Council handles several of its core functions. Members were considerably more divided on a few points, most notably on whether the Council strikes the right balance between strategic direction and administrative detail, and on how well new members are prepared before being asked to take on committee responsibilities. I tried, in writing the report itself, to let the survey data speak for itself rather than press my own conclusions onto it, and I have handed the full report, along with the underlying responses, to the Governance Committee and to Fr. Jason as a resource for whatever changes the Council judges are worth investigating and/or making.

The piece of Council work that occupied the most of my attention, and that I want to describe as plainly and fairly as I can here, concerns the Council's oversight of the OCA Pension Plan. The Plan is by a considerable margin the Church's largest financial obligation, and the Statute's language, that the Council shall adopt and amend the Plan “upon recommendation of the Pension Board,” has left genuinely unsettled how much independent analysis the Council is expected, or even permitted, to bring to that responsibility on its own. During my time chairing the Governance Committee, I asked the Legal Committee for a formal opinion clarifying the Council's authority in this area, and at last fall's meeting in Springfield I broached the subject of completing independent scenario modeling,

exploration of funding strategies ... all of which the Plan's own actuary has formally recommended (and suggested be completed and reviewed by the OCA every five years) - this is a remaining gap in my opinion. The Pension Office's most recent communications to members have been noticeably more detailed and transparent regarding the Plan's financial position than in the past, and the Pension Board is to be commended for this. This is truly worth the Metropolitan Council's gratitude and should be acknowledged.

I do not think it would be honest of me to suggest that the underlying question, whether the Council has done enough independent oversight work of its own to satisfy its fiduciary duty of care, separate from what is being reported by the Pension Board to the Metropolitan Council, has been fully answered. I raise this not to reopen old disagreements or to fault anyone for where things currently stand, but because I believe continued and steady attention to this question matters more than any single vote or report, and I would not want the DOS Assembly to come away thinking recent improvements have closed the file on this matter. I trust that our representatives will continue to press for the kind of sustained governance improvement and engagement from the Metropolitan Council *and* the OCA Administration that the issue deserves.

I would also like to note, with real gratitude, the service of Genevieve Lyday, our Diocese's lay representative to the Council throughout my time there. She has represented the Diocese of the South with good judgment, genuine care for the welfare of the Church and I am confident she and Fr. Jason will work well together on the reporting and other work still ahead of them.

It has been an honor to represent the Diocese of the South on the Metropolitan Council, even for less than the full term to which I was elected. I am grateful to His Eminence for his patience, understanding, and blessing through this transition; to our Diocesan staff for their support along the way; and to the many people at the Chancery and across the dioceses who received my questions, and occasionally my more insistent requests, with genuine collegiality even where we did not always see things the same way. I ask the Assembly's prayers for Fr. Jason as he takes up this work, and I remain grateful for the trust the Diocese placed in me these past two years.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

V. Rev. B. Peter Robichau
Former Clergy Representative to the Metropolitan Council
Diocese of the South