Mosaic of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, Ravenna, Italy, circa 450 A.D.

Orthodox Clergy Survey

(Full Report)

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony L. Scott

Stewardship Advocates

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Introduction

The leadership of the Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom gathered at Cambridge University. Fr. John Jillions, the present Chancellor of the OCA, and at that time the founder and first Principal of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies at Cambridge, served as emcee of the gathering. Present were such Orthodox luminaries as the famous composer John Tavener, Lady Marks of Marks & Spencer, Greek shipping and banking magnates, the hierarchs and scholars of the church including Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Fr. Ephrem Lash, the uncle of actors Joseph and Ralph Fiennes. The keynote speaker was Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who was born Prince of Greece and Denmark in Corfu, whose mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg, at her own request was buried next to her aunt, St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess and New Martyr, at the Russian Orthodox Convent of St. Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem.

Fr. John began his remarks by describing the day he first informed his pious Russian grandmother that he felt called to be a priest. She was silent for a moment and then replied, “You will have an interesting life.” Fr. John then said to those gathered, referring to the present occasion, “I think this is what she meant.”

The response of clergy to this modest survey demonstrate that Fr. John’s grandmother spoke prophetic truth for him – and perhaps prophetic truth for every ordained Orthodox deacon, priest or bishop – that the consecrated life of an Orthodox clergyman is infused with elevated and enhanced color, joy, tragedy, discovery, opportunity, elements of paradise and fragments of hell, richness, purpose, dignity and endless variety. Indeed, an interesting life.

I am grateful for the clergy who took time from their busy days to give thoughtful responses to the dozen questions that were posed in this simple survey. I was inspired, brought to tears more than once, cajoled to laughter and touched by the candor of the responses. Their interesting and challenged lives are on full display.

Purpose of the Survey

One common theme throughout the survey was the consistent identification of secularism as the great challenge before Orthodoxy today – a challenge perhaps more threatening than the historic wars waged with Islam or the dark days of militant atheism when the Church had absolutely no difficulty identifying the adversary. Unlike Islam and militant atheism, however, secularism and its progeny – relativism, materialism and scientism, are oh-so-very-seductive, discrete, alluring, entertaining and addictive – promising a garden of delights but often delivering the despair, isolation, and confusion that lead to spiritual death. Secularism whispers in the ears of the faithful, “There is no God. Science and technology will solve all human problems. Religion has not been healthy for you. There are more pleasant ways to spend your time and energy.”
It has been said that while we are in church worshiping God, the devil is sitting in our favorite chair at home reading the bible. He is carefully perusing ill-advised stratagems of the past when his designs were quickly identified and resoundingly defeated.

Like the faithful worshiper in church unaware of the studious and malevolent adversary ensconced comfortably in his home, perhaps we as the church have not been vigilant enough regarding the great challenge of secularism now facing us. One respondent to the survey astutely observed that the greatest threat of secularism is not that it is attacking the church from outside, but that it is attacking the church from within.

Have we trusted too much in culture and ethos to ensure the continuation of the church in this country and perhaps all countries where Orthodoxy exists? Have we conveniently or blithely accommodated ourselves to the virulent growth and pervasive influence of secularism – a threat every bit as daunting as the Arianism sponsored by emperors with near absolute earthly power?

The solidity of Holy Tradition and the reassuring consistency of doctrine and worship may have led to a somnolent desuetude among clergy and the believers they serve. Meanwhile vast industries employing the brightest minds, overflowing with money and resources are feverishly working day and night to stimulate and shape every last little synapse in our heads. Other malignant forces work on our hearts and on our bodies.

The first purpose of the survey, therefore, was to listen very carefully to the bishops, priests and deacons who are on the front lines of Orthodox Christian advocacy for the One True Way, the One Authentic Truth and the One True Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Clergy are in the trenches where secularism batters at the church both inside and out. We know and believe with certitude that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against Christ’s church. Yet the near term outlook may be a little bleak.

It’s the province of God to empower and enlighten us as to how we should address this societal and indeed, inner, parochial threat. One way that God does this is through clergy who despite all difficulties – underpaid, insufficiently staffed, poor health, overworked, on call 24 hours a day, and often times the only firm rock against the tsunami of secularism sweeping through the parish – regularly arise to offer thanksgiving on behalf of the church in the world to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit in order to bring to the world the LIFE it so desperately seeks – communion with God and His gift of unfathomable, transformative, limitless and unconditional love.

The second purpose of the survey was to identify specific contemporary challenges to parish spiritual development. Some of the questions in the survey suggest that there may be practical tools and methodologies readily available to assist clergy to effectively address seemingly
intractable and chronically deleterious behaviors endemic to all parishes, such as low levels of giving, volunteering or poor planning.

Enlightened stewardship through professional methods of fundraising or strategic planning in a parish environment are by no means substitutes for discerning and following the will of God through participating in sacramental life. God forbid!

Rather, these proven methods should be seen as aiding in the process of spiritually developing the parish. It’s working “on” the parish as well as working “in” the parish. Nonprofit development methodologies, properly and appropriately applied according to the ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church foster community spiritual development. Here, by leading and managing a process effectively, a bishop, priest or deacon can extend and amplify his necessary and essential influence to shape the community in a Godly fashion.

Would St. Paul have availed himself of the major gift method of fundraising or leadership development of the 40 or more people he was managing if it proved to be the easiest, most effective and most ethical means of financing and developing his evangelical mission to the Gentiles? He appeared to be quite ready to change his methodology if it would produce the results he was looking for: “I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.” (I Corinthians 9:19)

It is the conviction of the sponsor of this survey that the best way to combat secularism is not to shut the doors of the church on the world but to engage the world in the fullness of the Faith. We have good precedence for this in both the ministry of our Lord as well as the work of the apostles.

Respondents to the Survey

Turning now to the subject of the survey, the results are in with an encouraging and credible rate of response. Four bishops, 285 priests and 57 deacons participated, totaling 346 respondents. This is within the range of what professional surveyors consider a statistically valid sample, usually consisting of a 10%-20% response rate. Three-hundred and forty-six clergy is surely more than 10% of the total number of clergy serving in the United States but likely less than 20% of all clergy. Every jurisdiction listed on the website of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America was invited to participate as well as Oriental Orthodox clergy on the Stewardship Advocates newsletter recipient list. A few Orthodox clergy from other parts of the world weighed in with their thoughts as well.

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) provided the largest numerical response at 116 participants or 33.53% of the total. Next was the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (GOA) at 98 respondents or 28.32%. The third largest response was the Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese (AOCA) at 51 clergy or 14.74% of the total. The complete listing of the participants by jurisdiction is illustrated in the graphs below.
The Findings of the Survey

After identifying the clerical designation of each respondent in Question number one (bishop, priest or deacon) and the jurisdiction of each participant in Question number two, the third Question asked, “What is the single greatest challenge facing the Church today?”

The comments were filled with wry pastoral wit and incisive observations based on thousands of clergy-years of service “in the trenches”, where the hand-to-hand combat for souls is often won or lost. Three-hundred and forty-six clergy multiplied by a conservatively estimated average of 10 years pastoral experience each = 3,460 clergy-years represented.
The most often mentioned challenge was eroding church membership and lessening parishioner involvement, both attributable to rising secularism. This is unsurprising because it is happening or has happened in all areas of the world traditionally regarded as Christian cultures whether Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant. This lament was above and beyond the usual and perennial clergy complaint that people need to come to church more often or get more involved in parish life. Comments in the study spoke of, “retaining members”, “keeping the youth who are leaving in droves”, “loss of members”, “less church participation”, “more funerals than marriages or baptisms”, “our failure to evangelize” and “need for church growth”; or simply one word: “secularism”. This challenge was cited 135 times.

In second place, in terms of the church’s greatest challenge, were the old bugaboos of apathy and complacency. These were mentioned 15 times. Other frequently identified challenges included “ethnocentrism”, “our church is administratively divided”, “lack of vision”, “lack of faithfulness”, “declining morals of the culture”, “competition from other faith traditions” and “Orthodox nominalism”.

Listed below are comments by survey participants on these and other challenges before the church:

- Showing a face of Christ’s Love and not a face of what we are against
- Preparing bishops and priests from the new generation to lead the church in the coming 30 years
- Too few Orthodox Christians know their faith well enough to defend it and to witness to it
- Our in-house weaknesses are greater than our outside spiritual enemies. Our road to self-destruction is paved by secularism inside the Church, not outside
- The greatest challenge is the same as it has always been: the salvation of mankind
- Lack of dedication to the Lord as true disciples from a scriptural/spiritual vision...all other issues is the result of this
- Millennials who have disconnected from the Church because we have failed to make them Orthodox Christians with a relationship to God, Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. We have taught the structure of the Church, Archdiocese, Metropolis, parish, but not God
- The idea that Orthodoxy is a religion
- As always, answering the call to discipleship and taking up the cross
- Sectarianism, idolatry, and the unwillingness to engage postmodernity
- In our church, mission drift from forming disciples of Christ to ethnic heritage preservation
- Getting people to live a sacramental life
• Meeting non-Orthodox where they are: being approachable so constructive questions can be asked by those interested in the faith
• The denial that the church should have any part in the life of a Christian
• Countering our secular culture’s deadening spiritual influence on our faithful

**Question number four** continued this line of inquiry concerning challenges asking, “What are your three greatest frustrations working in your diocese, parish or organization?” In many ways the response to this question amplified and provided color commentary to the responses to **Question number three** concerning the single greatest challenge facing the church today. The responses were pithy, often just one word, such as “finances”, “apathy” or “communications”. Formatted single-line responses produced a 31 page document with 930 identified frustrations with a few often repeated.

The highest number of clergy identified frustrations was the general category of parishioner non-response to the gospel. Clergy lamented the ignorance and/or active resistance to the gospel by the general parish membership. This was often described as “apathy”, “indifference”, “fear of change”, or “lack of response to pastoral initiatives”. This was mentioned 137 times.

The second most often mention frustration was connected to stewardship. Eighty-four of those who completed the survey identified “inadequate funding”, “poor financial stewardship” and “scarce or inadequate resources” as a major aggravation.

Of course, stewardship is not only about giving treasure but also time and talent through volunteering. Here, 37 frustrations were registered regarding recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers. If we combine these with the reported frustrations with financial stewardship, we see that 121 or approximately one-third of clergy noted the poor practice of sacrificial giving of time, talent and resources as one of their top three frustrations.

Another frustration, mentioned 81 times, were difficulties associated with diocesan offices or hierarchs. Comments by priests and deacons regarding diocesan frustrations concerned “lack of support”, “lack of vision”, “poor communications”, “poor leadership”, “upside-down priorities”, “ethnocentrism” and “unwillingness to resolve the uncanonical governance of the Church in the United States.”

Please keep in mind that this was not a blanket indictment of all bishops. Respondents were very likely commenting on their frustrations with a particular bishop or diocesan administration. Later in the report we shall read a different commentary on hierarchs – one infused with joy and gratitude.
Administrative and task overload leading to exhaustion and burnout caused by insufficient staffing and a shortage of clergy was mentioned 43 times.

The reduction of the church into an association of people defined in purely human terms – ethnicism, phyletism or parochialism resulting in racism, bigotry and exclusivity were mentioned by clergy 40 times.

Thirty-five clergy said that parishioner conflict with each other or with the priest was a major source of frustration.

Thirty-three mourned the general lack of evangelical fervor in the church and their own parish as one of their greatest frustrations.

Poor parish council performance, manifested by antagonism, conflict, trusteeism, congregationalism and treating the parish solely as a business was noted 29 times.

Lack of vision within the church by both clergy and lay leaders was mentioned 28 times.

Selected interesting, insightful and sometimes humorous comments by clergy on ministry frustrations:

- Loss of the spirit of liturgical renewal which seemed to be present 40 years ago
- Getting parishioners to look beyond the parish and serve the wider community
- Lack of tithing
- The ethnic captivity of the church
- Lack of concern or commitment to personal and family prayer
- Endless fundraisers, sometimes for dubious causes
- Secular attitude of the kids
- Shift in priorities away from church life
- Ethnic exclusivism and bigotry
- The apparent inability to effect real change in people’s spiritual lives
- Being judged very harshly for mistakes parishioners make on a regular basis
- Lack of focus by the parish council on building up the spiritual side of the local church
- How my own sinfulness adversely affects the parish
- Volunteer management and unrealistic expectations
- Ever increasing demands on my time for services, meetings and visitations
- “Sacramentalism” (the sacraments are for me and mine)
- Lack of openness to new approaches to evangelism
- Meat-headed priests
• When the bishop is out of touch with himself, his priests and his people
• Helping people to experience Orthodoxy as a way of life not simply a cultural or ethnic compartment of their life
• Parsimonious and recalcitrant parish councils
• Make rich people tithe
• Absence of parish hospitality
• We need more spirituality (monasticism would help)
• The virtually constant barrage of inaccurate, anti-Christian messages people are exposed to on a daily basis
• Lack of time to outreach because of the magnitude of parish size and being the only priest
• Funerals outpacing weddings or baptisms
• Lack of formal continuing education for clergy in the diocese (talks, retreats, seminars)
• Performing services in languages that are not understood
• Crotchety people (like me)
• The lack of “practical tools” at seminary – such as stewardship
• People not mindful of the need of the priest for personal time
• Loneliness
• No vision and practical plan for implementation of outreach, starting new parishes or evangelization
• $$$$$
• Emphasis on “pietistic behavior” rather than dynamic inner relationship with God in personal and community life
• Fundamentalist Orthodox Christians
• Liberalism (rejection of Holy Tradition)
• Feeling disconnected from the diocese
• Emphasis on operating politically rather than apologetically
• Limited vision of what the Church is capable of
• Second guessing our hierarchy at every turn
• Knowing how to minister to the often anti-Christian culture around us

**Question number five** asked survey takers to reflect upon the joys of ministry rather than the challenges and frustrations: “What are your three greatest joys working in your diocese, parish or organization?”

Despite the personal frustrations noted above in terms of lay resistance to change, ignorance of the gospel, conflict, poor parish council performance, etc. clergy cited “wonderful
parishioners” as their greatest source of joy in parish ministry. Variations of this joy were mentioned 297 times!

The joy stemmed from certain collective, visible, palpable and active qualities within a percentage of parishioners: “people who love God”, “people who serve God”, “their love and hospitality”, “their patience and acceptance of their priest despite his many shortcomings”, “people returning to the church after a long hiatus”, “the radical joy of participating and assisting people to change, to come to know Christ”, “witnessing people growing in their faith”, “observing selfless acts of kindness”, “people who are sincerely seeking truth”, “the joy of discovery and gratitude that illumines the face of converts”.

Predictably, joy at serving at the altar was often mentioned – 174 times! Here were other sources of joy:

Brotherhood of the clergy – 57

Working with the youth, children and young adults – 68

Helping people in crisis and need assistance, making a difference in people’s lives – 43

Outreach, evangelization, working with the poor, prison ministry – 69

Excellent leadership, support and programs by the hierarchy – 54

Teaching parishioners, studying with parishioners – 31

Preaching – 28

How parish ministry brings growth to my own spiritual life with God – 24

Sacrament of repentance – 19

Working with the parish council and developing lay leadership – 8

Comments by clergy on ministerial joy:

- Pastoring God-lovers: having a hand in helping people to repent, trust in God, forgive their offenders, embrace the Faith, etc.
- Having and attending as many liturgies and other daily services as possible
- Sharing Christ and the Church with those who are seeking truth
- Our diocese is enthusiastic in helping our parishes through program development in strategic planning
- The excellent example of our bishop – a real pastor
• Ministering to the elderly
• Studying the faith with other parish members by reading the fathers
• Spiritual growth among volunteers
• Belonging
• Uncovering the treasures of Orthodox life
• Faith and zeal of parishioners
• Working with catechumens
• The leadership and sincerity of the hierarchs
• Parishioner initiated new ministries
• The privilege of sharing the joys and sorrows of my flock
• Being a speck in the Body of Christ
• The brotherly love between priests
• Parish environment that is fully accepting and supportive in integrating people of all backgrounds (even if some find out that a few had been incarcerated in drug or some kind of addiction rehabilitation)
• Talking with people about things that really matter in life
• Preparing sermons and preaching
• Excellent youth programs and facilities at the metropolis level
• The knowledge that I am working to do God’s will
• God’s little surprises that bring daily joy
• The challenge and joy of growing a mission
• Sometimes the unjoyful joy of preaching
• Joy when there is enthusiasm and participation for projects
• The joy when a child is born into a family adding a new chapter to the faith
• The incredible outreach to those in prison, homeless shelters, etc. for a parish this size and the acceptance and support for anyone trying to take responsibility for their life and faith
• Our hierarch is a brilliant, erudite speaker
• The parish as family: I love these people
• Working with families when a spirit of unity and mission bonds a group of people in the church
• God and therefore joy is everywhere if we can see Him
• Having prayerful, caring bishops who are truly good people
• What I am learning from people I serve with
• Conventions
In my position I am blessed to be able to participate in people’s lives at all times, from the best to the worst... and in all of these I am blessed to see joy and faith such that I can only aspire to

- Progressive mentality of our metropolis
- I feel loved and accepted
- A nice, fully paid-for facility
- Evangelism
- Deification
- The uncompromised witness to God’s truth in Orthodoxy
- Quality seminarians, committed faculty and staff
- Baptizing babies
- Hearing people speak with enthusiasm about what God is doing in their lives and in the church
- A glimmer of hope here and there
- People in non-Orthodox Christian churches
- Positive feedback on how a sermon, advice, or just a ministry of presence helped someone in their spiritual life or growth in the faith
- Teaching children; I learn a lot that way
- Being part of a rich network of Coptic young people who love their Church and this country
- Academic parishioners who challenge me
- Bishops who care
- All the beautiful little moments when people’s lives are touched by God
- Being with my clergy and people
- Active, positive and effective parish council
- People who are grateful to God
- Parishioners who welcome new members
- My jurisdiction’s desire to proclaim the gospel to Americans and America
- The wonderful, practical tools that are emerging to help us develop our parishes
- My wife
- Really being able to help someone
- Serving God by serving the people of God
- Campus ministry
- The privilege of being a priest
- When someone says, “Thank you. I get it now.”
**Question number six** focused on financial resources. As is well known, money isn’t the solution to every parish challenge. Actually, only a few of the most important challenges can be addressed by adequate funding. Still, for proper facilities, effective programs, necessary ministries, sufficient staffing, certain forms of education and equipment, money is one of the key prerequisites along with vision, leadership (both lay and clerical), proper planning and project management skills.

When asked to describe funding within their parishes, only 10% of clergy chose “We are blessed with an abundance of funding and can easily finance any program, project or staffing that is needed.” Most (65.1%) expressed either that adequate financing was almost always near the top of their concerns or that every year it’s a struggle to make ends meet. The remaining 24.9% of clergy acknowledged that they personally were adequately funded but that there was a scarcity of funds for parish development – property acquisition, buildings, programs and staffing. Therefore, 90% of clergy report that the mission of the parish is jeopardized by a lack of funding.

Chronic inadequate funding has a corrosive and debilitating effect upon a parish. Stop-gap measures are employed; long-term planning often goes by the wayside as parishes live day to day, so to speak; an endless cycle of fundraising projects dominates the parish calendar; festivals grow larger and larger in importance, consuming ever more precious volunteer time and energy.

Nonexistent programs and ministries, inadequate facilities and insufficient staffing translate into non-growth, or worse, shrinking membership. Perhaps most damaging of all is the loss of personal connectedness that sacrificial giving to the mission of the parish engenders in parishioners – it’s the thanksgiving offering to Christ that sanctifies our life and creates an abundance of joy!
Q6 Funding for your ministry and parish life

Answered: 341  Skipped: 5

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's a constant struggle and this is often near the top of our concerns</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>It's an every year concern - we make ends meet but every year it's a stretch</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>139</td>
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<tr>
<td>I personally am adequately funded but there is a scarcity of funds for</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>organizational development - property acquisition, buildings, programs and</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>staffing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We are blessed with an abundance of funding and can easily finance any</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program, project or staffing that is needed</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Answered question 341  
Skipped question 5

Question number seven inquired as to the use of English in liturgical services. This was the result:
The wide-spread use of English as the primary liturgical language is there for all to see. A total of 291 clergy (84.6%) out of 344 reported that their services were 50% or more in English. Many if
not most of the responses are probably referring to the Sunday Liturgy. The percentage might drop if respondents were asked about the use of English in Holy Week or orthros when chanters have a greater role to play.

**Question number eight** asked clergy to identify three main shortcomings in their ministry. Most identified personal shortcomings. Some identified external factors such as a second full-time job or long geographical distance from the parish.

“Challenged ability to lead, manage or administer the parish” was the most often mentioned shortcoming at 187. This is a very broad category with most respondents identifying a lack of knowledge of specific skills such as social or information technology, planning, goal setting, fundraising, prioritizing, micromanaging, communicating, financial matters, envisioning, motivating others, developing lay leaders, delegating, lacking confidence and so forth.

The second most mentioned general shortcoming was “the failure to take care of myself” at 151. This second large category included “being too hard on myself”, “not being a saint”, “trusting too much in myself and not enough in God”, “lack of personal prayer”, “lack of family prayer”, “not being dependent enough on others in building a support group”, “don’t know how to say ‘no’”, “workaholism”, “poor diet”, “little exercise”, “properly balancing family life and parish life”, and “failure to continue my ongoing education and learning”.

Challenged interpersonal skills comprised category three with 77 items. Clergy were painfully aware of their behavioral shortcomings relating to parishioners such as, “too indulgent”, “too judgmental”, “fail to be a good example for others”, “get angry with people”, “appear rigid”, “too self-conscious”, “not a good listener”, “lack of love”, “guarded around others”, “not a warm loving person”, “difficulty accepting people unconditionally”, “lack of charisma”, “bitterness”, “expect too much from others, resentments”, “poor diplomat”, “lack of sympathy”, “cynicism”, “pessimism”, “inner negativity”, “taking things too personally”, “easily discouraged”, “reactive and explosive”, and “the need to be more flexible”.

Similar to challenged ability to lead, manage or administer the parish described above, was the need many felt for further education. This was registered 50 times and included “continuing education as I seek to improve my ability as a pastor”, “learning how to be a good teacher”, “learning how to be a better preacher”, “better counseling skills”, “acquiring discernment and wisdom”, or “acquiring more knowledge and experience”. Some cited the need for “more training in basic teachings of the faith” (these tended to be the newly ordained.)
Forty-six noted lack of time. This shortcoming mostly concerned priests or deacons with second or even third jobs, long distances they had to cover or commute and priests of huge parishes that are significantly understaffed.

Poor time management due to poor organization was mentioned by 34.

Thirty-one cited low energy, poor health and aging.

Another category included self-acknowledged laziness, passivity, procrastination, spiritual lethargy, tiredness associated with teaching catechumens, not proactive and not a self-starter at 29.

Also mentioned 29 times was the struggle to conduct difficult and possibly confrontational conversations with parishioners, being passive/aggressive, reluctance to speak a painful truth to people, cowardice, too willing to compromise and having fear of people.

Twenty-six described an inability or failure to empower laity, failure to delegate or equipping others to lead.

Pride was mentioned 23 times.

Twenty-on clergy said that they don’t visit enough, stay in touch, follow-up with the bereaved, the drop outs, the sick, the needy or the troubled.

Failure to evangelize was registered by 19, described as inability to reach the unchurched, lack of effective evangelization tools, lack of fervency and afraid to try evangelism.

Insufficient preparation for sermons, poor preaching or public speaking was noted by 18.

The least-mentioned but very likely also the most under-mentioned “shortcomings” were 12 clergy who described themselves as depressed, despondent, resigned, indifferent, isolated, discouraged, lacking interest, bored, burned out, doubtful, and disillusioned. The sponsor of the survey pleads with these 12 and perhaps many more who find it difficult to acknowledge their present state in life to get the help you need and deserve. You have much to offer the world and your church.

Here are selected comments by clergy on their own shortcomings:

- Not good at dealing with confrontations
- Lack of good administrative skills
- Not enough time dedicated to personal prayer
- Not adept at discerning strengths in others
• My struggle for holiness in family life
• Not taking care of my own spiritual and physical health
• Understand big picture but unsure how to get to the details
• Doing too many things at once
• Scared to try something new “out of the box” evangelizing
• Knowing when to say no
• I am a very unorganized person
• Trying to please everyone
• Not willing to give others responsibilities – I feel I can do it better and easier than explaining to someone else what I need done
• Seeing the way forward
• My inability to be at EVERY meeting so that the groups don’t go too much out on their own
• Enabling consensus
• Scheduling time with my wife
• There’s only one of me
• Lack of education in stewardship, office administration and conflict resolution
• Only 3?
• Don’t read books that I would like to read due to time
• Failure to reach “lost” populations of the community (fallen away youth, disgruntled old-timers, people in mixed marriages who give up on church after a short time, etc.)
• Fundraising skills
• I live from deadline to deadline
• Listening without hearing
• Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!
• My personal spiritual life is shallow
• Progressive senectitude – I am 90 years old and counting!
• I keep committing the same sins over and over again. How can I lead my parishioners if I can’t show them a good example?
• Have not invested enough in building other leaders
• Too often I am only involved liturgically
• I focus on the wrong goals and measure success in the wrong way
• Philautia
• A dying matushka
• Can’t sing
• Confidence/assertiveness
• Not venturing out in ministry
• Too easily distracted by the tyranny of the urgent
• Vision for the future
• I take way too long to deal with the minutia of administrative tasks, leaving little time left over for religious/ministerial study and preparation.
• No formal training in pastoral care
• Ask my bishop, ask my wife, ask my congregation [for his three greatest shortcomings]
• Not knowing how to deal with stone ears and stiff necks
• Terrible at asking for funds
• Poor training in homiletics and preaching
• I need to live what I preach

**Question number nine**, perhaps the most revelatory of all, was the following:

“If you received an anonymous donation of $50,000 and it was restricted to the spiritual development of the parish (or organization) how would you use it? You may choose more than one response and/or write a new one.”

The top three responses (remembering that people could choose more than one new initiative) were: 1) “Fund a serious evangelization and outreach program for church growth at 177”; 2) “Invest in the leadership development of chanters, choir members, ministry heads, key volunteers, parish council members, catechists, etc. at 152”; and 3) “Establish a new program to serve the poor and the needy in the community in which we are located at 141.”

Some respondents may have overlooked the phrase “**restricted to the spiritual development of the parish**” in the question. In the philanthropic world it is deemed unethical and often actually illegal (subject to lawsuits) to accept a gift with certain conditions (see phrase) and then to use it for another purpose. When a “restricted” gift is accepted, then a moral and often legal contract is forged between the donor and nonprofit organizations including churches.

It is incumbent upon the parish, therefore, to fulfill their part of the charitable transaction if they agree to accept this *conditional gift*. Stewardship Advocates has unfortunately and not infrequently observed a failure to do this in parishes or Orthodox organizations we have worked with. This very well may be one of the key reasons why wealthy Orthodox Christians confidently make huge gifts to universities, hospitals, etc. and give relatively little to their own parish or diocese. They may not feel confident that the parish governing board (parish council) or leadership (priest or bishop) will be capable of following through with their part of the agreement – using the money for the purpose for which it is given. Fundraising in the church, therefore, should be done with the thought of honoring the intention and purpose of the gift. To promise a
result if a gift is made and then fail to follow through or use it for different purpose is to convey to a donor that “We don’t really care what you think or want to give to. We’ll spend it any way we need or want to.”

If a parish has accepted a gift with certain conditions – ones they are no longer able to honor, then three options are possible: 1) ask the donor(s) if the funds can be used for another purpose; 2) ask the donor if the funds can be safely deposited in a restricted account until such times as it becomes possible to use them for the purposes for which they were given or 3) offer to return the gift to the donor. Usually, if carefully managed, option number 1 can resolve the matter satisfactorily for all parties.

As an addendum, Stewardship Advocates must state very clearly that in the well over 100 parishes, dioceses, seminaries, schools and charitable agencies of the church that have been served, all of them, with perhaps the exception of a few, have members and donors who are fully capable of giving $50,000 for the “spiritual development” of the parish or organization, especially if this is a gift that could be given over a few years. Dare to dream but do not fail to responsibly plan how the gift will be used and how the donor will receive updates on the impact of the gift.

Here were the responses of clergy to the restricted gift of $50,000 for the “spiritual development of the parish”: 

Q9 If you received an anonymous donation of $50,000 and it was restricted to the "spiritual development of the parish" (or organization) how would you use it? You may choose more than one response and/or write a new one.

Answered: 343  Skipped: 3
### Answer Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish or enhance a parish library</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund a serious evangelization and outreach program for church growth</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find matching funds to hire another full time pastoral care giver or ministry head</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide scholarship assistance to parishioners who want to seriously study Orthodoxy</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish an ongoing renowned speaker program for retreats and lectures</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire an executive assistant to support and enhance my ministry by freeing me from administrivia</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in the leadership development of chanters, choir members, ministry heads, key volunteers, parish council members, catechists, etc.</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in my own continuing education to better serve my community</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a seed fund to start a mission involving the parish in the project</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially sponsor a youth group pilgrimage to Mt. Athos - young men to the mountain and young women to Ormylia</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a new program to serve the poor and the needy in the community in which we are located</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment or other method of funds application</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question**: 343

**skipped question**: 3

Seventy-nine respondents elected to also register a comment. All are included here because often novel and interesting ideas are described.

- Honestly, I'd knock off $50K off of our mortgage!
- Put money towards our building fund. (As a mission, we rent a property.)
- Pay off the borrowing from our small priest escrow/endowment fund
- Fund more involvement of our parish youth in projects for their benefit and spiritual growth
- Would divide the $50,000 between charity, evangelization, and scholarship assistance
- Provide scholarships to camp
- Open a coffee shop/ bookstore in our church property, modeling it after Hagia Sophia in Colorado Springs, CO. This would allow us to attract people in the area. As part of this I
would establish a reentry program which identified and worked with prisoners who are in need of job training so that when they get out, they would have a first shot of employment at the coffee shop. This could be a springboard to other ministries.

- Establish a legacy fund or foundation with the money, and encourage other parishioners to donate (from wills etc.) to this legacy fund. Invest the money in this legacy fund and use the money from the interest of the principal to use as scholarships, and outreach.

- I would establish a parish bookstore
- Tithe it and give some to charity
- Set up a small Endowment Fund to secure future financial success of the church
- Give to the seminary to support priest and deacon vocational calling
- Definitely start family parish retreats that would include the whole family of all ages.
- More education programs
- Further develop and expand social ministry outreach into the community around the Church
- I would use the funds for a youth position as we have a large group of young families with many children and want to give them the concentrated ministry to help them survive this culture's challenge of our faith and practices
- Provide a better income for our priest
- Invest in the expansion of our worship space to allow for growth
- Start/seed a practical sermon on the mount outreach ministry
- I can't say that $50,000 would be that helpful at present
- Since we are at present $50,000 in the red, the parish council would be obliged to pay the outstanding debt
- Get a real choir director
- Use it to continue the ongoing programs (Mission & Outreach already a serious Budget Line Item & Ministry; have a Library; scholarship fund; etc. except for youth group pilgrimage to Mt. Athos, etc.). Now looking to firm up OCF outreach in local area Universities
- Serve the poor, homeless, hungry, visit the sick, hospital and prison ministry
- Start founding a retreat center for youth
- Marriage Prep programs
- Church beautification
- Actually this parish does not have funding for a full-time priest, so it would probably go toward that. But unfortunately it wouldn't even cover a year's salary, and there are no possibilities right now of funding a salary
• Establish an educational institute for the Greek language (New Testament Greek-Conversational Greek), the Culture and the Faith
• I would first discuss the matter with the Parish Council as well as call for a discussion group to meet on how to move forward on use of the funds. Once I gained a good idea of the will of the people and the Parish Council, I would go through a process of elimination to determine the most appropriate uses, predicated on the needs and abilities of the community.
• We also need a better quality spiritual edifice, with more hand-painted icons, proper Beautiful Gates, higher-quality chalice sets and new Gospel and Epistle Books, funds to train newcomers as chanters and choir members, an outdoor chapel area with native greenery and flowers, at least a couple of large icons with kioti wooden frameworks containing Saints' relics for public veneration, etc.
• Note: first answer (fund evangelization) would be dependent upon training myself and select parish members in the how and why of evangelization (see number 8)
• Add social hall and class rooms
• Anything and everything that would help to grow the parish!
• Establish an active youth program and retreats
• Add to endowment fund which in turn helps ministries of the parish
• The idea of hiring an administrative assistant of some sort is a great, and necessary one. Unfortunately, it would take much more than $50,000 to do that in a sustainable and responsible way
• Fund the study preparing for the Diaconate who will be my replacement
• Retreats, discussions on books like Philokalia etc
• Our funding is comparatively good but there are always areas that interest us. We are currently outgrowing our space so expanding facilities is a parish focus and enhancing our outreach always
• The decision will be made by the church committee - not by me
• Support a long-term missionary and invite to visit the parish for a retreat and develop an ongoing relationship
• Despite our 2.6 million debt (for constructing our sanctuary, which I inherited when I came here 6 years ago), I will say shortage of funds is not our problem. Our problem is in spiritually feeding our parishioners. If we could fill our sanctuary more than we do now, the money for the loan repayment would come. I'm in a community of 25,000 Armenians and I'm one priest who works 7 days a week. I need help in teaching and outreach.
• Upgrade sanctuary needs and iconography of the church
• A community center to run activities and programs
• Enhance our program to help the needy
• Funding mission work with other struggling Orthodox parishes
• While we are short of money, that is not the problem. I don't think anything that can be bought with money will fix our problem
• Begin a discretionary fund to achieve any or all of the above in anonymity
• Provide matching funds so that members of the parish can participate in short term mission trips
• We need the money for our own church building. Various outreach activities are good, but without a secure base from which to work we are very limited in what we can do. We often do not have enough people for the services -- choir, readers, and so on.. And it is not a matter of money or the lack of it. We also have needy and even homeless parishioners who need our help and whom we cannot help much. So, before going out into the community, we must take care of our own people first
• Fix church property infrastructure. Make our church more physically accessible
• Enhance the prison ministry program that the mission is involved in
• Donate half to the above and half to an existing local program to care for the poor
• Pay off the mortgage
• Iconography for our Temple
• Establish an Orthodox seminary on the West Coast
• 1. Scholarships for Ionian Village for our youth and off-site parish retreats (families)  
2. A system to stream liturgical services and adult religious education
• Take care of long-neglected physical plant needs--windows, garden, sidewalks, driveway.
• Allow the assistant to focus half their time on youth ministry; we have so many young families in our community and it seems that other Christian churches in our community have many more family focused programs and youth director positions to support this work
• Establish a parish store
• We've put in place a parish library, outreach program, the leadership development of chanters, choir members, catechists, etc., and a youth group WITHIN THE FUNDS of a modest parish budget, utilizing volunteer support and the help of friends of the parish. Maybe the best use of such funds is to train priests how to establish such things without more money!
• Would like to use monies for regional Brotherhood activities
• Wisely invest it and use the dividends to pay for musical training, workshops, etc. for choir members; paid section leaders
• Help Orthodox people in poorer countries
• Beautify the church

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• Contribute to local efforts to aid the hungry and homeless - no need for new programs
• Develop an education program for all parishioners with the assumption that most people have lost their way and have become too Americanized. People need to believe that there three things important in live; their family, their God and their Job. They must put in the proper order there categories. Remember the future starts now, not later
• I would purchase the Logos software system of Bible tools and searchable Church Father commentaries to use preparing for sermons and classes that I teach. I would also take classes on Project Management and Leadership
• First and foremost, the use of these monies would be discussed at the Parish Council and General assembly levels to ensure that all the people had a voice in to the Spiritual development of the parish.
• Send a certain parishioner and his wife & children to St Vladimir Seminary (possibly a second parishioner and his wife); build a very modest office/social area onto our church building
• Begin a development program to cultivate and sustain funding for spiritual development of the church
• Probably, it would go for much-needed and much-deferred maintenance
• Start an endowment fund for maintenance and repairs (from the proceeds of the investment only) that are neglected from year to year until something completely fails. Make requests that the endowment fund be added to via special donations, donations in memory of, wills, bequests etc.
• Pastor's compensation (my parish is a tiny mission that by sacrificial giving provides housing, but no salary, I work outside the parish, but thank God, still with the Church); 2. Enhancements to our (rented) sacred space (e.g., an iconostasis with holy doors and curtains; liturgical fans; processional cross); 3. The beginning of a building fund (we now rent). — Right now we have a ministry to Orthodox prisoners at a federal prison some 40 miles distant from the church, but we do not have an organized ministry for the needy in our town/county; we have considered joining with other groups for such ministry, but our own resources are really stretched; if non-Orthodox friends of the parish and of particular parishioners did not contribute substantially to our mission, we would not be able to support ourselves at this point—and their financial support is an encouragement to keep going, it means that we are somehow of value to them, even if they do not join us.
• We lack funds to pay a full-time priest. This would enable us to find a good one.
• Help fund internship, which is exactly what happened this spring
• Would not need the $50,000. Do need more parishioners as this parish has declined because of age. No one to take their place. Average age: 90. Eight to twelve at Liturgy and six at Bible Study.
• Fund mission growth for the deanery - paid interns out of seminary to help establish and train lay people in growing a new mission
• Half the money to the program of the poor and needy and the other half for the outreach
• Repair the infrastructure of the church. God's house needs to be maintained.
• Consider beginning an endowment, the partial proceeds from which could be used each year while the rest would be reinvested automatically. Not flashy, but might bear much fruit and allow for other opportunities over time
• Our youth is the future of our church

Question number ten inquired as to the way in which clergy were influenced to accept the call to serve: “In addition to the prophetic calling of the Holy Spirit what three events, people, books, experiences, etc. were most influential leading to your ordination? How were they influential?

If anyone EVER doubted the powerful vivifying, fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the world let them read the responses of men called to serve the altar of God. It seemed as though every response to this question brought forth amazing acts of God – from the old Bing Crosby priest movie “The Bells of St. Mary” to the death of a friend. Somehow it seems only meet and right that the many names mentioned in response to this question are included here. Rather than a breach of confidence, it is far more a cause for thanksgiving.

Perhaps in listing all these paths that resulted in ordination, seminaries and bishops, ever needful of students and candidates, will discern new ways of helping men to discover their prophetic calling to serve. Parish priests may also discover anew how, unknown to them, the Holy Spirit is mysteriously and secretly working through them to spiritually influence those they serve.

• My spiritual father--being able to hear my confessions, guiding me towards ordination, helping me answer God's call
• Clergy symposium where guest speaker was dean of St Tikhon's Theological Seminary
• My mother and grandmother - always in church attendance with their children/grandchildren
• ELDEMERS
• Dad as an Orthodox priest. It did not seem remote or impossible throughout childhood -- though I had other career goals throughout my youth -- and he always took his service seriously, faithfully, and with a realistic, joyful consideration. He's smart and didn't accept error or stupidity as valid options
• Seeing the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom when I visited a Byzantine parish
• Realization of God's profound Wisdom and how it is preserved and proclaimed through liturgy and the entire life and action of the Church
• My parish priest showed me love, nurtured me, listened and taught always
• Discovering genuine Orthodox theological writings - Lossky, Florovsky, Schmemann, Meyendorff
• Fr Richard Ballew our Parish priest reading and studying Orthodox faith with us
• My family
• The living example of faith by my parents and grandparents
• Reading the book Becoming Orthodox. Introduction to the Faith.
• My Spiritual Father; seeing how he dealt with the joys and struggles of parish ministry
• Hearing a speech by Patriarch Ignatius in 1984 - made me more serious about my commitment to Christ and His Church
• Being raised by devout Christians
• My parish priest who made me look into myself and see things that I had forgotten
• My parish priest when I was growing up, mentored me as an altar boy
• Fr. Tom and Presvytera Kyriaki FitzGerald - through them I came into the Church.
• Early childhood experience of God's love in the presence of a cherished family icon
• Spiritual Father: He is an example through his love and leadership in the parish community. He is strict, yet loving
• Discovering Orthodoxy through a mission bookstore
• Archbishop Iakovos – Remarkable leadership, vibrant personality, a man of Ecclesiastical Magnificence
• Working at a youth camp as a counselor - I found myself leading small groups and assisting the clergy quite a bit
• Metropolitan Herman, who always encouraged and guided my vocation
• My current Metropolitan was my childhood parish priest and has been a mentor to me my entire life. Our personal friendship is something very special
• The pastor of my church I grew up in - he is the example of what a priest should be
• Example of specific priests and lay people who truly loved Christ and their neighbor
• Two Episcopal priests challenged, mentored
• Deacons in the community leading by example
• My priest
• My grandfather was a priest and saw his intensity of prayer
• My bishop. Without his encouragement, I would not have persevered to ordination.
• Early childhood experiences with clergy
• My parish priest and his example of love in action
• The conversion of the Evangelical Orthodox to Orthodoxy and my visiting them before they were Chrismated
• The guidance of my spiritual father
• Summer program for boys at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY
• Experiences
• A pariah priest (spiritual father, guidance, teaching)
• Family support and commitment to the Serbian Orthodox Church
• Encountering a "closet orthodox" Anglican priest
• Support from local priest
• Mentoring to help me sort through issues of Orthodox theology and practice
• Bishop Basil Essey
• My Spiritual Father's direction
• Six years of bickering with Protestants at Union Theological School /NYC.
• My first interaction with an Orthodox priest
• My grandfather, who was a priest
• Priest who patiently introduced me to Orthodoxy
• Deep disillusionment with American life, the social revolution, materialism, etc.
• My father the Priest
• I had no "mountaintop" moments, just a slow, steady sense of having the gifts for ministry and God's encouragement at every fork in the road to go towards ordination
• Schmemann's book, For the Life of the World-- gave a cosmic vision of the Divine Liturgy as a way of life
• Age maturity
• The death of a boyhood friend who in his own life felt close to God, was instrumental in motivating me to think about God, Christ and the church
• My Parish Priest who served our Parish for 55 years. He baptized me and was the priest of priests
• Personal influence of my seminary dean in my life
• Initial training with Franciscan friars before becoming Orthodox. Learned about how to be a brother, an adult Christian, and about the poor and serving them
• Fr Stanley Harakas, his personal encouragement and, when he was pastoring St Gregory the Theologian in Sharon, MA, (1995). Saw 100% use of English & congregational participation in Services, plus Parishioners eager to learn
• EST (new age 1970's enlightenment program) - woke me up. There's more to life than an upgrade of my parent's life
• Pascha
• My grandparents
• Parish priest
• Boston Colleges/Jesuit Teachers-This turned my mind around to Christianity and made me more service minded
• Radio Ministry
• Seminary dean - supported me during many challenging times when I did not want to continue
• Books
• Early church fathers and their relevance today
• A Greek festival
• The continuous encouragement of my spiritual father to become a priest
• Spiritual fathers
• Serving in Sunday school
• My father’s passing
• My spiritual father and his ethos
• Encouragement from great priests
• Seminary professors
• Wife
• Solid Orthodox family life which included European grandparents living in same household
• Spiritual fathers and friends
• The pastor of my home parish
• Orthodox guidance, since childhood, by caring pastors
• Spiritual Father - guidance
• The simple faith of my grandparents
• My Metropolitan. The joy I witnessed in his ministry, and the joy I witnessed in the ministry of my spiritual fathers drew me to the ministry. That he (and they) gave me a few serious pushes helped too
• Archbishop +JOB's mentoring
• My father, who truly sought to follow the ways of Christ
• Vision of the Blood of Christ: it convinced me that this is what God wanted
• Timothy Ware's The Orthodox Way
• Childhood experiences of good preaching inspired vision for the Faith and communication of the gospel
• The example of other Priests
• Many deaths in my family from a young age led me to search for higher meaning in life, and thus to Orthodoxy and the Priesthood
• Being active in the church
• The Orthodox Church - Ware
• Having Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko as a teacher and spiritual father for seven years (1994-2001). His advice, concern, leadership, and care for me was unparalleled.
• My parish priest - he was there when family needed comfort and love of the church upon the death of my mother
• Spiritual Father
• Reading ecumenically oriented Orthodox authors: Schmemann, Berdyaev, Pavel Florensky
• Faithful parents
• On the Priesthood-Chrysostom
• Introduction, as a youth, to OCF and regional/national retreats (in the 70'S and subsequent re-involvement with Church after a hiatus of many years - ENGLISH service were a BIG factor) - DEFINITELY!
• Met. Kallistos Ware: His books really drew me to Orthodoxy and wanting to serve the Church
• Fr. Theo in advice on how to accomplish ordination, got me started
• Parish Priest
• To thank God for my return to good health
• This sounds trite but: Jesus Christ. I just can't get away from him no matter what I do
• Encouragement from my priest
• Lifelong love of the Church
• My wife - she would never let me run away from God's calling
• Spiritual Father
• Fr. Ken Stavrevsky, Air Force Orthodox chaplain helped me to see Orthodoxy positively when I left the Episcopal Church
• Son of an immigrate Russian Royal Calvary Officer - Ordained a Russian Orthodox Priest who was not very successful in America (he only lasted in a parish for a short duration of a year, and we had to transfer and move to another parish each year). I wanted to show the world that he was a victim of circumstances!
• My parish priest-- how joyful he was in serving God; the guidance he gave me and how prayerful he was during the Divine Liturgy
• My parents -- with their faith in God and bringing me to church
• The Ministry of an US Army Chaplain
• Protopresbyter Nicholas Masich (+1974) - My first spiritual father who impressed me as a child, with his personal story of sacrifice and his piety during the Divine liturgy
• People: priests that I knew in college (they were great people, truly inspiring, and showed they loved the Lord
• Spiritual father - prayers and guidance
• Visits to Mt. Athos (6 over the course of my first 21 years of life). I experienced peace, and came back into the world wanting more in my ever-day life
• I felt the calling, started preparation and God threw stumbling blocks in my path which prevented my ordination...twice
• The Liturgy
• St Silouan of Mt Athos and Fr Sophrony and his disciples
• The Orthodox Church - Timothy Ware
• My spiritual father (my parish priest)
• Parents
• My theological education
• The books "The Papacy" by Abbey Guette and Ernest Benz "The Orthodox Church" helped me to convert from Catholicism to Orthodoxy
• The dean of my deanery encouraged me to pursue studies to help me discern a possible vocation
• A friend and Methodist Pastor / University Professor - they showed me a love for God, the church, the people and spirituality
• Abbot of a monastery
• Pilgrimage to a holy place - brings spiritual clarity and opens the heart
• St John Climacus- Ladder of Divine Ascent - for ascetical formation
• Parish priest
• +Metropolitan Silas (then of New Jersey). He was my spiritual father and ordaining bishop, who constantly encouraged me to enrich my ministry and my knowledge. He was the epitome of a clergyman with a theological conscience and an excellent administrator
• Reading Schmemann and coming to understand Christianity as a Life rather than a religion
• Holy Scriptures. In them I sensed my calling to the priesthood
• St Tikhon's Pilgrimage - I had never seen such a thing before and it impressed me in every way.
• Church Summer Camp and Sunday School where I was taught the tenets of my faith
• Having the example of a holy priest as a child
• Attending piously conducted services
• My pastor, Archimandrite Pachomius Belkoff
• Monastic Life/ Living in community
• Involvement in Jesus Movement
• Throughout my youth I knew a monk who greatly influenced my spiritual life
• The priest of my home parish
• Good priests as models when I was young
• Parents raised me to love God and neighbor
• Being brought up as a child of a priest took a liking in all things church and faith
• "Of Water and the Spirit" by Fr. Schmemann
• Fr. Schmemann, my pastor, my wife
• Death of my father that compelled me to prioritize my life
• My direct calling from God (experience)
• Simply love for Christ and His Church and the heartfelt desire to serve others in His Name
• My parish priest
• Former Fr. David Tillman- seeing and encouraging my calling
• Encountering a priest involved with spiritual growth, education and focused on worship
• Serving the people
• Undergrad in a Protestant college
• Fr. George Nicozisin, started me on the path
• Fr. Photius Donahue led me to the church and mentored me
• My spiritual father
• Meeting my wife who was deeply engaged in the church
• International mission experience
• My parish priest. Wonderful man of God
• Intellectually I reached the conclusion that we needed a priest and that among all the people in our community I was the only one who could become one at that time
• Meeting a priest who was also in the military and having him teach me about the faith
• The example of experienced and committed clergy
• The Bible
• Grad work at Oxford
• The catastrophic failure of Western Christianity
• Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (of blessed memory) for his example and teaching.
• Parents who loved God and were very active in the local parish
• Departure of my parish priest, spiritual father, and friend (same person)
• My wife - she has served, loved and challenged me to grow my relationship with God
• Fr. Taras became my mentor when I was 12. I was his first altar boy. We played soccer together, went to various activities together. He continues to inspire me
• My father
• Parents' faith and practice
• A calling to serve Christ,
• My grandmother - She taught me the Faith through her life
• Prayers and support of my mother
• Loving Pastor
• My own Spiritual Father as an example
• Love of the Liturgy
• Former parish Priest planted the seed
• Healthy parish, community, and family relationships, especially with my father
• Fr. Mesrob Sarafian, an Armenian Priest in Oakland, CA. Now asleep in the Lord. He was a great model of caring ministry
• Serving as a deacon from young age
• Fr. Alexander Atty - helped me to see what a priest should be
• Seminary - being immersed in the liturgical life helped to hear the calling of the Holy Spirit
• Interaction with Orthodox priests while I was still a Protestant pastor
• Bible
• My parish priest. It was his idea
• My former pastor provided me with an excellent liturgical background
• The faith of my family: Parents, Grandparents and Uncle and Aunt (foundational with direction)
• My wife
• Clergy in my childhood, young adult life, and at seminary. Their example and dedication impressed and inspired me to emulate them
• Parish community encouragement
• Fr Alexander Schmemann
• Spiritual father
• My spiritual Father - he STILL is a part of my spiritual path
• A well-read, pious Uniate Catholic friend who guided me toward Orthodoxy
• Talks of Fr Hopko
• Parish priest - His love for Christ and His Church
• Learning the Divine Liturgy from the pastor of my former parish of 25 years
• Childhood Priest (Roman Catholic Church) - He showed me the importance of finding the truth, which led me to Orthodoxy
• Life in a monastery: superior's encouragement
• Childhood upbringing
• Attwater's Dissident Eastern Churches -- read in 1954/55
• The Mother of God
• Grandmother
• My parents
• Godfather (a priest)
• Late vocation diaconal program. Helped me discern my calling when full time on campus seminary was not a possibility. After being ordained a Deacon, I knew I was called to pursue the Priesthood, as well
• A priest who was a friend of the family who continued to talk to me my whole life of serving God by serving His people
• Family in ministry
• book: Children’s' Stories of the Bible (when I was young) - God touched me through these stories
• My Parents and Grandparents: My family
• Strong sense of vocation
• Bishop telling me this is what is going to happen. Obey the call
• My parish priest at the time
• My father, a priest
• Seeing my priest struggle to keep up with preparation -- from simple things like candles and chairs to more complicated things like service preparation and guidance to chanters. There was a need to be filled; I couldn't expect anyone else to fill it
• Timothy (at the time) Ware - The Orthodox Church
• My bishop
• The influence of my parish priest who was welcoming and supportive
• Trip to the Holy Land
• Personal experience of Jesus Christ
• My spiritual father, Father Veronis in Lancaster, Pa
• Parish priest urging me to "live" the Orthodox Christian parish life "for several years" (ended up being 6 years) BEFORE going off to seminary. I had another seminary degree; I read every Orthodox book I could get my hands on. I hated his advice, but it was right (at least for me)
• Every priest I encountered asked when I was going to be a priest
• How God's grace allowed me to do various ministries in the parish I'd never done before whenever there was a need.
• Love for God
• My involvement in the Patriarch Athenagoras National Institute in Cheyenne, WY
• People were the most influential --they helped reveal to me what God was trying to tell me
• Over the years my three parish priests all of blessed memory
• The clerics suffering in the communist prisons
• Past involvement with Christian group that had 10% Orthodox, friendship with those leaders
• The writings of Fr. Alexander Schmemann
• Memory of my own sins and God's forgiveness and mercy
• My mother - she had a love for people, especially those who were hurting
• Fr. William Chiganos, mentor and Spiritual Father
• Schmemann
• Great Uncle who was an archbishop
• Spouse
• Newly departed Archim Roman Braga
• The Orthodox Church by Metropolitan Kallistos
• My mother
• Peers
• My participation in the Evangelical Orthodox Church from its beginnings
• I was cradle Orthodox in a parish that was more about form than substance, after years searching unsuccessfully to find a way to fill a spiritual void a late night conversation at our church camp with a pastor showed me how all the positive aspects I found fragments of in other places were in fact in the Orthodox Church all along
• Pilgrimage to Holy Land (1985): It brings the faith to life to see the holy places and walk where Christ and His Apostles walked
• My parish priest saw within me something I didn't realize and he brought to life my desire to serve the Lord
• Conversion to the Orthodox Faith
• Project Mexico (2003) - first received "calling" while on my first ever mission trip. Emptied myself there and the Holy Spirit filled the void
• A former pastor, who encouraged me to go to seminary in spite of major issues in our national church
• The Bible
• Prophetic Calling? My decision to the Priesthood was fostered though my Spiritual Father and Bishop
• My wife! She encouraged me every step of the way. Now she prays for me in Heaven
• Encouragement of other faithful
• Experienced and dynamic priest
• Youth minister/mentor
• A young American born priest who encouraged me
• My own conversion experience...made me want to serve the Lord all the days of my life
• Fr. George Gladky (of blessed memory)
• Several priests who were respected and honored in our churches
• Various persons: Fr Jason Kappanadze. Fr Igor Tkachuk. Monk Sergei (Udics)
• My spiritual Father
• Greek Orthodox Neighbors / Ukrainian Catholic Church
• Summer Camp
• My grandfathers and my parents were pious people with strong dedication to the Lord
• A priest in the parish I grew up in
• My Bishop and parish Priest
• My mother, who took me to church as a young child
• Epistles of St Ignatius
• "Power and the Glory" book by Graham Greene
• Parish priest
• The only calling I had was from the Elders Council of my monastery when they voted to ordain me
• Father Alexander Schmemann's writings, journals and prayers
• Moving to Kenya as a missionary for a year with my family
• Fr. John Meyendorff
• Assuming leadership roles in parish lay ministry
• People agreement on the nomination and election
• Confession Father
• Father Ghevond Samoorian - he explained to me the true meaning of the priesthood
• Fr. Alexander Schmemann, For the Life of the World
• A good parish priest-good example
• My family in particular my dad who is a priest, my brother of blessed memory also a priest, my son who is in seminary learning to be a priest
• Bp. Basil Essey of the Antiochian Archdiocese (mentor)
• Father James Kenna, now gone on to his reward.
• Father Alexander Schmemann—who gave a vision of the Church that still, feeds me to this day.
• My teachers as a youth who inspired a love for the Liturgy
• Military service - Over the course of three deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, I saw the great need for Orthodox chaplains to serve the faithful in the ranks
• Attending the Divine Liturgy
• I was fortunate to grow up in an era when clergy focused on the entire parish, including the youth
• My wife--she saw that God was calling me to the priesthood
• The example set by our Archbishop in the years after I became orthodox, very humble and accepting of differences and needs
• My spiritual father - he always directed and encouraged me, and he continues to do so
• My bishop - His matter of fact approach to my work in the Church was crucial
• Early childhood Christian leaders
• Parents - father was priest
• Fr. Michael St. Andrew of blessed memory
• My high school teachers who, when asked, all said I should be a clergyman
• Priest mentor spent time with me discussing "vocation"
• Example of childhood pastor
• It was a prophetic call to my ordination. When in my 20s (living in Romania) I wished to be ordained, but was not considered for ordination, and in my mind I said, "I will be a priest when I will be 50 years old. Without thinking during the years, I was ordained in the US at the age of 50 even if I resisted first to be ordained
• AP John Reeves/AP Peter Gillquist - took the time to answer questions; extended hospitality; made themselves personally available
• Books on early church history...led us to Orthodoxy
• Rather not say
• My father, grandfather, great grandfather, and uncle who were all priests
• Being an altar server
• Serving the Church in a lay capacity
• Serving in the altar--gave me a love of liturgics
• Desire to return to mankind / faithful the blessings that God had given me over the years as an Arborist contractor
• A bishop who was first my childhood pastor/mentor
• Love of God
• Excellent OCF with two very good priests and pious fellow OCF students
• Fr. John Sochka, my spiritual father and friend
• A dedicated priest for a grandfather
• The experience of Summer Camp with future priests showed me how people's lives could be changed.
• My parish priest, a very humble and deeply-believing person
• Example set by Fr Richard in his commitment to Christ and the Church
• My parish priest
• Reading the New Testament
• Encouragement of Bishop Basil. His loving and fatherly nurture was essential in bringing me to Orthodoxy
• Parish Youth Program; instilled in me a love of Christ and people
• My father - he served the church as a pious lay man
• Listening and being inspired by Missionaries and Pastors
• A strong group of likeminded friends in seminary along with quality instructors at St Tikhon's Seminary
• St. Vladimir Seminary professors and my spiritual Father at Seminary. mentoring and guiding me
• Monks and Nuns at New Skete Monastery - the worship experience
• Fr. Alexander Schmemann, his person, his writings. He challenged my nostalgic and I dare say idolatrous notions of church
• Parish Community I grew up in treated me and my family as part of a big family
• Meeting Orthodox monastics for whom the Faith is the healing mission of Christ
• Metropolitan Philotheos of Meloa - excellent teacher, mentor, a Great liturgist
• The parish I converted in encouraged me greatly to enter the priesthood based on their knowledge of me
• My Baba, who taught me to love church
• My family has a very strong Orthodox Faith, including my wife (who is "cradle" Orthodox) have encouraged me my entire life to love and serve the Orthodox Church
• The chancellor at the seminary I attended - he encouraged me to look my shortcomings and realize that while I am unworthy, Christ still calls me
• Excellent seminary professors who inspired by their living examples as well as in the classroom
• My wife's willingness to sacrifice and support
• Websites
• Personal desire to serve
• My mother and father's faith - their struggles
• Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos - helped me understand what Orthodoxy really is
• Clergy who mentored me
• St. Tikhon's Seminary and Monastery for its excellent building of spiritual foundation
• My work with our Orthodox Mission in Flagstaff AZ that showed me the need for workers for the ministry
• A desire to serve in the best way possible
• The Law of God by Fr. Seraphim Slobodskoy
• Books
• The life of the Church (safety, richness, depth)
• Supportive Diocesan Bishops, priests and their families
• A "negative space" series of experiences in the Evangelical world
• A course of study which fit my needs
• Reading Orthodox literature to acquaint me with Orthodoxy
• Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
• The amount of time I spent while growing up in the church and programs
• Inspiration from Anglican Scholars at Union Theological Seminary plus Jesuit Scholars of Woodstock Community sharing our space.
• My personal study of Orthodoxy
• Writings of Alexander Schmemann
• Unchanging theological and spiritual basis of the Church
• My understanding of literature and the arts led me to seek a firmer spiritual grounding in Christianity
• Close affiliation with the Church while growing up - Altar Boy, youth programs, Church School
• Reading the Sub-Apostolic Fathers like Ignatius and Polycarp: gave a vision of the Church and early Christianity
• Getting to know priests personally
• An older parishioner friend who came to see me on many occasions and continued to encourage me to begin studies leading to the priesthood
• Attending an Altar boy retreat and hearing a presentation on Hellenic College Holy Cross
• Childhood experience of the Church lived at home with my family
• A great home parish during the late 90s (Holy Transfiguration OCA Livonia). Great people and liturgy. They also paid for my seminary education
• Our pastor (Fr Dean Talagan) and own home Parish of St Catherine's in Greenwood Village (Denver), CO, with its All English and progressive approach to outreach & starting/supporting new parishes with the same vision. (was ordained there)
• Parents - kind, loving, devout, took me to church all the time; they, my sister and I were the 4 part choir at Saturday night Vespers
• Parish priest
• The Scriptures, especially the Psalms
• Volunteering/Working in Armenian - This helped me better understand my people, language, culture, tradition
• Parents - instilled the importance of Christian service in me from a young age
• People
• Experience of the liturgy and wishing to have that experience as a celebrant
• My wife's support
• The need of the people in our small mission to receive the Sacraments
• Discovering the Church as community
• My father of confession
• Archbishop Dimitrios love and support
• Solid friendships of people close and dedicated to church and its ministry
• Family illness and death
• Bishop
• St. Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore was excellent resource providing books to read and learn more about the faith, saints, etc.
• Desire to serve others
• The ability of my home pastor to recognize my potential to serve God
• Encouragement to participate in parish life, choir, reading, altar serving, etc.
• Intro to Orthodox Spirituality by Met Hierotheos - fundamentally changed my worldview
• The example of my father-in-law who was a priest
• My spiritual father(s)
• Active liturgical life of my home parish
• A group of service-oriented monastics
• My Spiritual Father: he truly led me on the path to humility and service
• Fr Thomas Hopko
• Youth fellowship with other zealous young people fueled a passion for evangelism and church renewal
• My spiritual Father
• Spiritual father who guided me to be more involved as adult in altar service and at chanters' stand, also encouraged me to go to Seminary
• Spouse encouragement
• Visit to first Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union
• The OCA cathedral parish of Saint Nicholas in Washington, DC, and its pastor Fr. Constantine White; without the two beautiful years I spent with that community, I probably would not have even converted, let alone gone to Seminary
• St. Paul Church in Irvine, CA with Fr. George Stephanides....taught me how a church can explode in growth when it is committed to core values of the faith
• The Services of Holy Week
• Service during the Vietnam War: tested, weakened, then strengthened my faith
• Great pastors and mentors
• Wounded by Love-St. Porphyrios
• As a youth, the example of my pastor and his wife (Fr. Leonid & Matushka Kishkovsky).
• Bishop Basil Essey: After testing me and our parish, he ordained me
• My wife's encouragement knowing she did not want me to be a priest
• Godfather
• To know the faith
• Fr Alexander Schmemann whose writings changed my paradigm and made me Orthodox.
• Job "crisis"
• Pious mentors
• Fr. Alexander Atty - Our first spiritual father who married and chrismated us. Most of what I use day to day--I learned from him
• Reading of Scripture and spiritual books
• Fr. Don Hock, pastor of St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, Omaha NE taught me the faith as a new convert
• My father a priest, brought me into the Altar to serve as an acolyte at the age of three. The beginning of Christ calling me!
• Fifty years ago there weren't very many Orthodox books in English, so I relished the ones I could get my hands on and studied them intently
• The church services themselves -- though in Slavonic -- gave a sense of the mystery and awe of God
• Living Closely with Monastics Actively Involved in Mission and Ministry
• Archbishop Anthony (Medevedev +2000) Who ordained me and inspired me with his unwavering piety, awe of his own office and responsibilities and, above all, his pastoral love for his flock, particularly the children.
• Event: thoughtful/prayerful state that asked me to consider the priesthood
• OCF - informed and shaped my faith
• My father - although I never wanted to be a priest growing up (which he was), when I felt called, he was and is the perfect role model in balancing the narcissistic temptations of ministry, and pouring your energy into self-care, family life, and prayer
• My priest asked me to be his Deacon and I refused. 25 years later he continued to ask and I left it in God's hands and said yes. Four weeks later I was ordained to the order of Deacon
• My grandfather
• A Spirit-filled parish priest, a hieromonk
• Becoming Orthodox - Peter Gillquist
• The simple and pure faith of my great-grandmother, reflected also in the life of my mother
• Early leadership opportunities in school and church
• I didn’t feel comfortable outside of the church
• The Divine Services were so spiritually uplifting and inspiring that I continually thirsted to learn more and more about the Faith
• The people of my parish encouraged me to seek ordination
• Becoming dissatisfied with my secular job and seeking something more permanent and deep
• Christian upbringing
• Mentor Priest - taught me everything that seminary could not with regards to running a parish and balancing family life
• St Gregory of Nyssa- Commentary on Song of Songs and Life of Moses; St Symeon the New Theologian- Hymns- both for spiritual intensity and growth
• OCMC short term missionary experience
• +Archbishop Iakovos of N. & S. America, who encouraged me to go to Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and encouraged me to accept my position with Metropolitan Silas. Archbishop Iakovos was the epitome of a pastoral conscience
• A belief that Vietnam was no place for our American military which pushed me into a corner that pointed only to seminary
• Love. God instilled in me a deep love for the spiritual condition of others
• The priest who Chrismated me - he showed me how essential good pastors were
• My parish priest and other clergy who demonstrated through their sacrifices that there is greater purpose to life than making money and pursuing simply the American Dream
• Studying other religions and philosophies and seeing their obvious shortcomings
• A positive well educated spiritual father
• My religious upbringing
• Our Holy Mother
• Seeing a good clergymen when I first returned to church
• Being an altar server since the age of 7 greatly influenced my spiritual life
• My father, who was a chanter
• Many SVS Press publications
• Parish priest as a child was wonderful
• Being offered to be ordained in Mauritius by Bishop of Madagascar Nektarios or blessed memory and to be in charge of the parish there
• Fr. John Platko
• The New Testament, Jubilee Magazine from the 1950's articles on persecution in Russia,
  For the Life of the World, Having a devoted and loyal spouse that provided me with the space to develop my calling
• The mentoring of Elders (Fr. Paisios, and a number of monastics in Greece)
• The call from God
• Reading St. Silouan by Archimandrite Sophrony- the saint spoke to me through this book
• My Spiritual Father's example
• Jesuit high school Latin teacher
• Now, Metropolitan Gerasimos, kept me on the path.
• Fr. John Ball gave an example of humility
• Personal loss and suffering that God helped me overcome
• Nurturing priest
• Missionaries
• Love of people
• Non-Christians asked me to say prayers for some of the Orthodox buried here who were most likely not buried by Orthodox priests
• A loving and supportive orthodox wife
• "For the Life of the World" by A. Schmemann
• Abune Yesehaq Mendefro, the Archbishop who ordained me Deacon, then priest
• Ancient Faith Radio Podcast
• The life of Blessed Seraphim Rose
• Pilgrimage to Holy Land with Bishop (now Metropolitan) Kallistos of Dioklea in 1986. To walk in Christ's footsteps and to listen to great explanatory talks was a great help in helping me follow God's call to serve the church
• My parish priest when I was a boy
• Metropolitan Joseph's confidence in me
• Bishop Paul of Africa - he has a missionary zeal that is contagious
• I was blessed to be picked to serve on our mission trips to Ukraine for orphans affected by Chernobyl. Seeing the conditions those children lived in and knowing all I could do was pray for them helped shape me
• The scriptures
• Encouragement from laity in the parish
• A feeling I just had to be involved with the Church and its people
• Growing up around lots of clergy - They were all positive examples of what a priest is to be
• The inspiring stores of priests and bishops who I read about and admired
• Discussions with Monastics
• Love for the Divine Services
• Loving clergy father figures
• Choir director spoke to the Bishop
• Love for Christ and His church and recognizing Her need for laborers
• Fr. Tom Paris, retired Greek Orthodox Priest. Caring and supportive. A model of ministry
• Being disciple to some great servants
• My Life in Christ - Saint John of Kronstadt
• Books
• Bishops example, by shepherding skills, compassion and love for his people
• Holy men and women of God who inspired me
• My Fr. Confessor at seminary who encouraged me to continue toward ordination
• A former seminary professor, now a Bishop, was clearly a model for me in spiritual formation
• My trip as a teen to the Ionian Village Archdiocesan Camp (experiential spirituality in a majority and historic context)
• My godfather
• A bishop (not from the diocese I came from) called me on the phone a week after I graduated from seminary and said he wanted to ordain me for a specific parish. I had asked the Lord God to make it clear to me in a very direct way if He was calling me to the Holy Priesthood. A phone call from a "strange" bishop with whom I had had no previous communication was about as direct as I could expect
• Spiritual father
• College priest
• Wife
• A near death experience and recovery
• The life of St. John Maximovitch
• Leadership of St Vladimir's Seminary - choir, retreats, family Ed Day
• Church services
• invitation by my current pastor to join the Diaconate Formation Program
• Fr. Alexander Schmemann - He made clear the importance of teaching people the truth, and led by his example
• Spiritual father's encouragement
• St. Vladimir's Seminary and Fr. Alexander Schmemann
• Ware's The Orthodox Church
• My religious upbringing
• Parish Priest
• My spiritual father
• Visit to Russia
• Fr. Alexander Atty, Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary. His personal encouragement, guidance and counsel
• An elderly stranger, when I was questioning my vocation, to whom I gave up my seat while waiting in a dentist's office who turned and said to me: "You would make a good priest."
• Growing up with a "healthy" Parish life
• Book: The Orthodox Way by Kallistos Ware - It taught me what it means to be Orthodox and resonated with me
• Nourishment from God's Word ~ The Holy Scriptures
• Moment of crisis when I knew I had to make up my mind
• St John of Kronstadt: his life and example
• Going to an Evangelical Christian college and having my first serious experience of the uniqueness of Orthodoxy
• St. Stephen's Course -- the instruction and fellowship put a lot of meat on the bones of my aspiration to the diaconate
• Fr. Alexander Schmemann - For the Life of the World, Of Water and the Spirit
• My father
• Fr. Schmemann who was an inspiration
• Witnessing several miracles
Conversion by the Fathers and saints of the past which left a dilemma about which jurisdiction to join

My parents and their faithfulness.

The confirmation of the Body of Christ of my vocation and the need to go to seminary (again)

A young boy told me I was a priest (though I was not yet)

Multiple people from my parish who kept telling me that they thought I should go to seminary to become a priest, in spite of my vehement rebuffs of such a notion

Love for the faith

My Spiritual Father

The toughest times in my life served to show me that God has always been with me. They are now my biggest source to draw from when assisting others in my ministry

My service in the altar and singing in the youth choir

St. Basil the great

"Bridge" catechism by Orthodox sympathizer

The writings of Fr. Matthew the Poor

Example of self-sacrificial, joyful, thoughtful and committed priests in my own life

Parish priest - pushed me beyond my comfort level and opened me up a new understanding of Orthodoxy

Metropolitan Isaiah, mentor, Confessor and Spiritual Father

The Church's worship

Example of grandparents generation

Godfather

Living next door to church growing up

Sacraments and Orthodoxy by Fr Schmemann

My brother who was a priest

A radical conversion to the Living Christ

Pastor taking my interest/curiosity in the church and nurturing it

Bishop Basil (Rodzianko): Bp. Basil, of blessed memory, led our Holy Land pilgrimage. He was the first genuinely holy man I ever met. His influence continues today in my life

Growing up, my grandfather was a devout RC, going to mass every day after retirement. His devotion was inspirational and influenced my desire to move closer in my relationship with God

The care of the priest who led my family and I into the Church
• Fr. Michael in Pittsburgh - on the Project Mexico mission trip and in our parish. Still my very good friend and confidant
• The encouragement of my spiritual father and my instructors and fellows at seminary
• My home parish/parish priests
• My seminary colleagues and professors. They encouraged me to persevere
• Frs. Alexander Schmemann, John Meyendorff and Thomas Hopko
• Influence of another priest
• A deacon who also encouraged me
• Seminary provided an incredible time of spiritual development and gave me the tools to serve in the future
• Discovering the Orthodox Faith in the Encyclopedia of Religion in the library
• Piety of My grandmother, mother and a friend
• My Father
• Constantinople - Icon of a Sacred City - Philip Sherard - Orthodox Church - Timothy Ware
• Dynamic/Relevant Clergy
• My upbringing in an urban parochial school with high academic and religious standards
• A loving parish that welcomed us before I was ordained
• "For the Life of the World"
• My youth leader as a child, who organized many activities for us, which taught us about Jesus Christ
• Example of parish priest
• Fr Paul Tarazi - professor and confessor
• Monastic communities
• Fr. Thomas Hopko's prophetic teaching
• The Orthodox Spiritual life by Silouan the Athonite book
• Fr. Tom Hopko
• Personal contacts with priests
• Books and studies
• On the Priesthood by St. John Chrysostom
• Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy, opened my eyes to the existence of the Kingdom here and now
• Family-encouraging in all respects
• My heart and soul has always had me being a part of the church whether choir director or president. I want to do things to make peoples attending services special and spiritual
• Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver (mentor)
• Antiochian House of Studies
• Fr. John Namee—he lived an Orthodox Christian life in this world. He showed how to love. Great example.
• The death of a loved family member which caused a re-evaluation of my life and work
• The Orthodox Pastor, Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) - Reading this book left me with an overwhelming sense of awe (in both meanings of the word). I couldn't imagine doing anything more purposeful with my life, nor being more scared of doing it
• Fr. Daniel Griffith
• The clergy of my youth were involved in the religious education of the children in the parish
• My parish priest
• In growing a library for my own learning (liturgical and theological) I became a reference for English only speakers in the parish
• Thanking our Metropolitan for accepting us converts into the Church. He then responded by saying that the need for clergy was great (akin to saying "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few..."). That planted a seed in my heart that could not be ignored
• My wife - her support gave me the courage to ask the bishop what he wanted me to do
• Formative high school English teacher
• Growing up poor
• Interior call
• A parish priest who was an example of solid faith and Christian love
• Involvement in the Young Adult Movement in the early 80's
• Enthusiasm for Christ coming from back in "Jesus Freak" days
• I was recommended by Fr. Vasile Hateganu (even if he never told me), then I was received with love by Bishop Nathaniel at the recommendation of Fr. Roman Braga
• Theological/moral crises in my former Protestant denomination compelling me to explore Orthodoxy
• Elders of the church...led to my conversion
• Growing up with deep love and respect for the Church
• Seeing the Liturgy amazingly served and lived in a few parishes
• The ordination to priesthood of a friend
• A feeling that has come over me my whole life that I cannot describe, something I felt the first time I served in the altar when I was 7 that has never left me
• My seminary instructors
• Divine Calling
• Every other job opportunity had an absurd block so that I was funneled into ordination, as an idiot who had to be led step-by-step
• Protopresbyters Alexander Schmemann, Thomas Hopko, John Meyendorff and Prof. Serge Verhovskoy
• A desire to be an instrument of God's healing and salvation of the human race
• The Bible itself also inspired me and made me believe that my inner thoughts were also God's
• Russian writers and philosophers who awakened me to a serious examination of the "ultimate questions" about life
• The writing of St Athanasius on "The Life of St Anthony"
• My Bishop
• A desire to help and serve my people in the best possible way
• The providence of God which supplied a place, people and resources in miraculous ways
• Church Music; my personal passion
• My life in Teen SOYO and the priests I encountered throughout the Archdiocese during those years
• "The Orthodox Way" by (then) Timothy Ware and "For the Life of the World", Schmemann
• The living example of Christ-like service from Bishop Michael Dahulich, who at the time of my seminary education was the dean of the seminary
• Parents for allowing me to pursue this calling and taking me to church
• My family
• Archbishop Anrei Rymarenko (disciple of the last Optina elder) ordered me to petition for priestly ordination. I was a deacon for four years and wanted to stay in that position
• Experience of worship: authentic and genuine worship
• Seminary experience of professors who value the inner conversion of the person
• Metropolitan Titus of Rhethymnon and Avlopotamou - My spiritual father - a great leader, teacher, and orator
• The parish priest through the Sacrament of Confession helped me to discern my calling to the priesthood
• My parents, who brought us to church faithfully
• St. Stephen Antiochian House of Studies and St. Sophia Ukrainian Seminary and all of staff, priests, professors, etc. have been a blessing
• The war in Iraq in 2003 - Being in danger of being recalled to active military service (I am a veteran), I prayed for release from this obligation, and God permitted that, so I gave my life to him in response
• Family members for whom the commitment to Christ was at the center
• A journey to the holy land
• The amazing teachers and being in the community at the seminary
• Books
• My parish priest willingness to work with me individually
• Father John Romanides
• St. Patrick of Ireland
• My experience at Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, MA
• the support and encouragement of my family and church community
• The Orthodox Church by Timothy Ware (Kallistos)
• People
• Mystical theology of the eastern church (paradigm shift)
• The availability of books and classes for further study
• Kallistos Ware's The Orthodox Church
• Family support
• Retreat and study time to concentrate on spirituality
• Reading the Fathers
• A wonderful visit to the Seminary when I was a young middle or high school student had a tremendous impact on me
• Invitation and ordination to 14 yr. Diaconate in Orthodox Church of France with permission to serve at discretion in any canonical Church
• My first experience of the Divine Liturgy
• The joy of choral leadership
• Spirituality not based on eliciting emotions
• Strange events, seemingly accidental, led me to seek the fullness of Orthodoxy
• Another Priest relayed that he saw me as a Priest
• Reading Met. Anthony's beginning to Pray: need for inner growth, personal prayer, and stillness
• Visiting seminary
• After reading numerous spiritual books, both Orthodox and others were formidable in my ultimate quest to enter studies for the priesthood
• Serving as an Altar Boy during holy Week and witnessing the love of Christ on not only the faces of the Clergy but the people in the pews
• Inability to find personal satisfaction in my successful secular career
• Being at St. Vlad’s Seminary 2000-2003. Learned so much from so many people
• The life (and prayers) of St John Maximovitch
• A Hari Krishna lady in a magazine - She was a young, Hollywood actress living a devotional life which included vegetarianism and chastity. If she could do that, I could go to the seminary
• St. Nektarios
• The spirit of helping others
• Mary Kaye Waldron-a friend who died young but left an example of the power of faith
• Be impossible to name exactly as it is a very complex issue
• Certain key confessors, professors at St. Tikhon's and a couple of guest speakers at St. T's
• Fr. Seraphim Rose and the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery
• Mt Athos
• My bishop
• Support from my wife
• My upbringing
• Undergraduate education
• My father
• Encouragement to my bishop
• Pastoral School of the Chicago Diocese - online, asynchronous, theological education that is truly affordable, and of VERY high quality
• The Monks and Services of St Tikhon's Monastery
• Being brought up in the Church from my youth
• My seminary education. It was an opportunity (especially the parts that took place outside the classroom) to engage with the Life of the Church and find that same joy in ministry as I witnessed in the lives of my Metropolitan and spiritual fathers
• Faithfulness of my mother
• A very hard period in my life which led to a metanoia--an understanding of the glorious reality of Christ
• My wife: need I say more
• Experience of the Liturgical Life of the Orthodox Church
• Conversion of the Evangelical Orthodox Church to canonical Orthodoxy pioneered, in part, my own conversion
• My family
• My father's comfort in speaking with me on spiritual matters influenced my direction to the ministry
• Priest's ministry and wanting to be a part of it
• Former pastor as an image
• My catechist down in Washington, Dr. Clark Carlton (who now has a podcast on AFR); his teaching and love for the Church, for Orthodoxy, and his inspiration as a fellow-convert were very influential on me in my formative years prior to Chrismation.
• A YAL event when challenged by one to share my love of Jesus Christ....that was the first time and it was challenging.
• Support of good friends.
• Example of priests from childhood through adolescence.
• Church involvement.
• On Social Justice-St. Basil the Great.
• Meeting Frs. A. Schmemann, T. Hopko & Prof. S. Verhovskoy (SVS) and studying under them (w/ Fr. A.S. as my confessor and Prof. S.V. as my mentor).
• Fr. Michael Keiser: He rescued our little mission and shepherded me toward ordination.
• Working in hospice, and being with the patient as they go to heaven.
• Visiting monastery on Pascha.
• To teach the faith to make Orthodoxy more visible.
• Orthodox: Fr Peter Gillquist who guided my way in.
• Scriptural readings.
• Supportive family.
• Joe Phelps - Pastor of the last church I attended before becoming Orthodox. I learned how to love parishioners through him.
• Friends and other parishioners.
• 1952, Metropolitan Boris - St Nicholas Cathedral in NY City invited me (then 12 years old) to serve as an "Epodeacon", and continuously did serve until I got married at the age of 32 years old, and having studied in an Orthodox Seminary - I had no choice except to accept ordination. I have continuously served my present parish for the past 33 years!
• The most Holy Mother of God. It was through her guidance and influence after I received my calling that I made it to seminary, met and married my wife, and was subsequently ordained.
• Clergy who encouraged and mentored me.
• The Lives of the Saints.
• Experience: Holy Cross Theological School made me sure that I wanted to serve the Church.
• Seminary - gave me the tools and resources to minister.
• My experience in college - I went to a large school in the Big Ten, where I studied engineering. I saw brokenness and experienced the pressures and anxieties of the world. It led me back to Christ.
The support of the parish with my acceptance to become Deacon
The Orthodox Church by Timothy Ware
Two Antiochian priests
The many works of Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos
The chapel services at Holy Cross
Wanting to share the Good News of Christ as I saw Him change lives
My ignorance (At that time I didn’t know the "challenges")
Our Lord Jesus Christ and The Church became the central focus of my life; so much so that though I consciously tried to 'run away from the Priesthood', I felt that God had a hold of my suspenders, and the further I ran, the tighter the grip that pulled me back...and so I surrendered and went to the seminary
Study of the Scriptures led me to seek God in prayer to discover His will for my life
My uncle and his love for the church
Spiritual Father - taught me the phronima of the Orthodox Church
Fr. John Meyendorff- for spiritual and scholarly guidance and mentoring
Godparents
Metropolitan Philotheos of Meloa, who taught me to be a prayerful liturgist, and to pay attention to details
Holy people. The lives of the saints and the joy of deep Christians highly influenced me
Philip Sherrard - His writings still influence my thinking, especially in areas of Environmental Issues
My parish itself, which included participation of my entire family. They brought me through difficult years of the 1960s and 1970s, where it was the norm to question authority and leadership. My parish saved me
Taking a month off to pray about whether or not to enter ministry
Reading the spiritual classics of our church
The book, Rush to Embrace. Showed me many of the deficiencies of papism and Orthodoxy’s fulfillment thereof.
Being a Mendicant for the Poor and Homeless
Seeing another clergyman with a true pastoral heart
The priests who served in my parish while I was growing up
My grandfather, who was a priest
Pious Monastics and retreats
God gave me a love for church
• Meeting Bishop Savas of Troas (now metropolitan of Pittsburgh) in New York and he basically planting the seed in my heart by querying why I wasn't already ordained
• Going to college and being challenged to explain my faith
• Being a Professional Counselor for three decades and seeing that really helping people needed to go another step beyond counseling
• Having access to a devoted and zealous priest monk in a leadership position at the seminary to provide spiritual formation
• A number of church texts (too many to mention) all seminal authors on theology
• To care for God's people
• My overall experience at St Tikhon's Seminary
• Dumitru Staniloae's books
• Contact with educated Orthodox clergy who filled in the above
• Bishop Gerasimos, of blessed memory, modeled the role of a clergyman par excellence
• My wife inspired me to love and give myself for others
• Went on a mission to Africa
• Reading works of Met. Ware, Frs. Schmemann, Hopko, Meyendorff
• Parents and grandparents
• Love of worship
• The older people were worried that there would not be an Orthodox priest available to bury them properly. In sum, I felt there was great need for a priest and that I could fill that need
• Serving with a different priest as an altar server
• Worshipping in a mission community
• For the Life of the World (Sacraments and Orthodoxy) by Rev. Alexander Schmemann
• Time at St Vladimir's Seminary
• The intercessions of Saint Raphael
• A presvytera who has stood by me and been a constant help at all times.
• My parish priest while I was in college
• Books by Elder Sophrony and venerating relics of Elder Joseph the Hesychast
• My own conversion - woe is me if I do not preach the gospel
• Seeing Fr. Anthony serve services and his people with such a great joy made me want to attain that joy and share it with others
• My brother
• Wise senior priests who provided encouragement
• A happiness within myself just to learn to be a servant of God
• My family's dedication to the Church
• Feeling that God was calling me to serve him as a priest
• Involvement in Parish Lay Ministries
• The decision of the Bishop
• Education in the faith--reading
• Current Priest encouraged and formed me
• Athleticism / outdoor recreation: taught the nature of sacrifice / discomfort for the sake of the prize
• A class by Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis at Holy Cross Seminary on the "The Ascetic Tradition of the Orthodox Church."
• Reading many spiritual books, biographies of saints, and their sayings
• Diary of a Russian Priest - Fr. Elchaninov
• Experience
• Patrology books
• The clergy leadership in my diocese who expressed confidence in me
• My late Dad, who ran a business and taught me that the customer is always right
• My life in the church (Sunday School, Choir, Altar, etc.)
• My parish priest
• I had a mystical experience in my youth in which the Mother of God told me her Son and our God had chosen me to be a Priest. I told my best friend about it but he mocked me and made fun of me and accused me of making it up so I never told anyone else about it until now
• Several miracles to strengthen the faith of my family
• The availability of books in English
• Need of my neighbor
• Helping troubled youth, and immigrants, through Church programs
• The life of Father Seraphim Rose
• Moscow Patriarchate history, family - service to the church, iconography, "feeling of Home" in whatever Orthodox Church family attended
• The opportunity to be more than a liturgical deacon
• My wife - Her loving support and encouragement to take up my cross and show others how to do the same
• The spiritual quality of my original home parish
• The Liturgy
• The Pastor's mentoring
- The support of a spiritual father
- Pentecostal Black woman
- My three years living in Russia
- Eternal mysteries beyond the grave
- The priestly formation at St. Tikhon's seminary
- My family who prayed together and were most supportive of me and my vocation
- Living on the West Coast
- My upbringing by my parents and my parish priest who kept me on the straight and narrow
- The process of salvation as stages of Growth in "Christlikeness - Theosis," "putting on the new self" (Col 3:11), working out our salvation (Phil 2:12).
- My upbringing in a Catholic family (pre-Vatican II)
- My wife and family
- The revelation that there wasn't anything I wanted to dedicate myself to more than the Church
- Meeting other deacons; seeing them serve
- Parish community into which I was chrismated - priest, choir, seminarians
- Pilgrimage to Armenia
- My seminary classmates who were and are a context and support in what I do
- Seeing the overwhelming number of martyred Saints
- Time alone in wilderness
- Camp Nazareth in Western Pennsylvania
- The agreement and encouragement of my wife
- My wife encouraged me to pursue seminary
- Then, my parish priest telling me that he too thought I should go to seminary to become a priest, regardless of my impassioned aversion to the idea
- Serving
- My home parish and the parish I was attending when I was in the military
- While books are important and many made a huge impact it was the personal relationships which made the biggest difference for me
- St. John Chrysostom
- "Becoming Orthodox" and the A.E.O.M.
- Seeing the world through a lens of compassion and love
- Experience of church life, liturgy, prayer, scripture as my true home
- Visit to SVS - impressed with people my age offering themselves to serve the Lord
- Life experiences and brotherly friendships at HCHC
• My now-deceased first priest
• Help of a choir leader to teach me the music and structure of the Divine Liturgy
• Bishop
• A love of history and folklore
• The New Testament
• My Sister who is a Nun
• The Holy Fathers of the Church, and more recent Holy Elders...St. Piasius of Mt. Athos, etc...
• The Orthodox Way by Timothy Ware  Mere Christianity C.S. Lewis
• Parish rector/my own family: Without Fr. D's mentorship and my family's cooperation and encouragement, I would not have followed through with my late vocation as a Deacon. Finally, it was the love and support of my wife and her encouragement that led to me accepting my ordination. Without her constant help, I would not be able to do my ministry
• Life at St. Tikhon's Monastery solidified my purpose and calling
• Fr. John in Florida - my mentor and teacher as I trained for the diaconate. Still my spiritual father and friend
• The moral support of my (non-Orthodox) family
• Other Christian role models
• Certain clergy that mentored me, and are continuing to do so now
• St Silouan and Elder Sophrony of Essex
• Parish ministry experience
• Attending a Summer Conference about the church inspired me
• My own life experiences (work, education, etc.) led me to the point of knowing there was really nothing else I wanted to do with my life except serve the Lord
• Marrying my wife...which led to our mutual conversion to the Orthodox Faith
• Healthy and vibrant parish life in California despite poor episcopal leadership
• Experienced during Divine Liturgy
• Receptive Pan Orthodox Church attended in college
• SVS
• My spouse's encouragement
• St. John Chrysostom's "On the Priesthood"
• The friends of my youth, who were all connected to the same church I went to, so I stayed involved!
• Kindness of my home parish to me
• Diocese of New England - CT Deanery clergy meetings
• Wife
• Fr. Marcus Burch - my dean at the time - his encouragement and, of course, my wife
• The inspiring work of the parish I'm serving at in Washington DC that called me to the priesthood
• Archbishop JOB
• Personal contact with serious Orthodox Christians
• Life experience
• St. Nersess Summer Conferences - summer youth conferences
• Fr. Meletios Weber, Bread and Water, Wine and Oil
• Readings-Bible, religious writings. Orthodox and non-Orthodox
• I have always challenged people to do things. It was (is) my turn
• Fr. Chris Margaritis (mentor and with whom I served as Deacon)
• Father Alexander Schmemann and Father Thomas Hopko after him
• My brother priests who nurtured me along the way
• An encouraging priest friend/spiritual father who opened doors to the priesthood for me
• Countless priests, who recommended I look into seminary, but especially Fr Peter Baktis, who was my priest during one of my deployments to Iraq
• Traveling to an Orthodox country like Russia
• After a short hiatus from Orthodoxy. I realized how much the faith was part of my life
• Several challenging years in a particular job where the corporate world showed its ugliest political side and I found the leading to "use my powers for good instead of evil" ;)
• Reading St. Silouan the Athonite and realizing how much God loves His world and everyone in it
• My parish - they simply were amazed I wasn't already considering the priesthood. They insisted I start
• Bing Crosby's role as Fr O'Malley in "Bells of St Mary's"
• Holy Trinity Monastery Jordanville
• St Herman of Alaska
• My father, who was a good example of a devoted clergyman and family man, which can be a tough balance
• Love serving God, people and the Church
• Many different books calling one to a higher spiritual life
• A mission church (Colleyville, TX) needed a priest, and I prayed the Lord to bestow His grace to be able to help and serve them
• Holy Trinity parish itself, State College, PA
• Elders thought I would be a good deacon
• Hymn singing; Byzantine Chant; Teaching
• Readings lots of books about modern-day Christians and martyrs, seen as examples and heroes
• My love of service to others

**Question number eleven** asked survey participants to assess various activities within their own parish by selecting one of five options: Excellent-Good-Acceptable-Unacceptable-Very poor. A few selected “Does not apply.” Of the 13 described parish activities only one received greater than a 50% excellent-good rating. This was parish council or board performance at 55.46%. All activities, save one, (planned giving at 25%) received a lukewarm “acceptable” rating of 30-38%.

Activities ranking the *lowest* in terms of unacceptable-very poor were planned giving at 50.54%; Evangelization at 42.68%; volunteer management at 42.09%; sufficient staffing at 41.79%; and major gift-giving at 40.12%.

Most clergy strongly felt there was significant room for improvement for these activities in their parish in all categories, unless the parish is content with basically a mediocre “C” grade, or, “just passing”.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Activity</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish council or board performance</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>31.86%</td>
<td>33.04%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>5.01%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term or strategic planning</td>
<td>5.92%</td>
<td>22.19%</td>
<td>32.25%</td>
<td>21.89%</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>3.55%</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship financial giving</td>
<td>6.31%</td>
<td>24.62%</td>
<td>30.33%</td>
<td>29.13%</td>
<td>10.21%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major gift giving above and beyond stewardship</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>20.36%</td>
<td>29.64%</td>
<td>19.76%</td>
<td>20.36%</td>
<td>5.09%</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned giving/estate giving</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>21.34%</td>
<td>25.61%</td>
<td>32.93%</td>
<td>13.41%</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General trend in church attendance over the past three years</td>
<td>8.96%</td>
<td>31.04%</td>
<td>32.54%</td>
<td>21.19%</td>
<td>6.57%</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth ministry</td>
<td>5.65%</td>
<td>17.26%</td>
<td>32.74%</td>
<td>22.62%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>10.42%</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelization/parish membership growth</td>
<td>4.18%</td>
<td>17.61%</td>
<td>34.33%</td>
<td>29.55%</td>
<td>13.13%</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our service to the poor and the needy</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>21.73%</td>
<td>33.04%</td>
<td>22.62%</td>
<td>13.69%</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer management - recruitment, training and retention</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
<td>16.42%</td>
<td>33.43%</td>
<td>27.46%</td>
<td>14.63%</td>
<td>7.16%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient staffing</td>
<td>2.99%</td>
<td>14.63%</td>
<td>34.63%</td>
<td>27.76%</td>
<td>14.03%</td>
<td>6.87%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>5.69%</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>38.32%</td>
<td>20.06%</td>
<td>8.98%</td>
<td>4.19%</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My continuing education</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
<td>17.61%</td>
<td>38.81%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>9.25%</td>
<td>10.15%</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question number twelve identified seven specific means for parish development and asked participants to select the one they felt would be “of greatest practical assistance” to them. Finally, at the conclusion of Question number twelve participants were accorded the opportunity to
write their own thoughts about what would be helpful to them. Many utilized this “free” space to offer a general comment on the survey or on nonprofit development theory and methodology.

Of the seven identified possibilities of “greatest assistance to you”, the one most often chosen (97 clergy) was:

How to work not just "in" the parish or organization in completing the 101 daily tasks but also how to focus on the one or two most important ways to work "on" the parish or organization in terms of vision, mission and values for the general development of the entire community.

Imagine a cobbler. He loves shoes. He loves working on shoes. They are a delight to his eyes. Making them and repairing them one by one brings joy to his life. He enjoys being of service to his customers and often develops cordial relationships with them. He also dreams of someday owning his own shoe-making and shoe-repairing shop so that more people can be served and regular customers can receive better service. Eventually, he is afforded the opportunity to own and develop his own shop.

The shop he now owns is precisely on the street corner that hundreds of factory and business workers pass every day. The shop is flooded with orders. He busily dedicates himself to making and repairing as many shoes as possible so as to fulfill all the orders that come flooding into the shop. Overwhelmed by the work, he neglects advertising, bookkeeping, invoicing, attentiveness to changing styles, customer relations, ordering more leather, inventory, additional financing from the bank so that more employees can be added, etc.

He falls further and further behind no matter how many shoes he makes and repairs. After a while he finds himself harried, exhausted, irritable and discontent. Alarmed, he also discovers that former customers are now going to other cobblers because he lacks the time to fulfill their requests and his demeanor with the customers that remain is often curt and lacking the personal interaction that both he and the customer enjoyed. He realizes that having his own shop is not what he dreamed it would be. He now knows that he will either have to return to working just one shoe at a time, thereby surrendering his dream of a larger shop where more people are properly and courteously served, or change how he manages and develops the shop.

This is the world of nonprofit leadership, management and development. As the survey shows, a large majority of bishops, priests and deacons find much joy in serving and working with parishioners but they also often feel overwhelmed by the 101 daily tasks
that arrive in emails, texts, letters, phone messages, events, sacraments, funerals, people that drop by the office, parish calendars, etc. There is little time for strategic planning, envisioning, finding financial resources to hire a second “cobbler”, etc. These skills and others are essential to the *healthy* spiritual development of the parish and the maintenance of the good health and positive disposition of the “owner” of the shop. These skills, *properly applied*, result in far better service to more people than ever before. Soon thereafter the shop is selling socks, ties, belts and hats as well as shoes. Customers are steaming in. Within two years, the cobbler realizes that a second location across town is necessary. Deep within he knows he is fulfilling his life’s dream and even takes his wife and kids on a three week vacation to Greece.
The second most often chosen “greatest practical assistance” to a clergyman was learning “The basic how’s of effective evangelization and church membership growth” at 84 clergy. This high ranking, together with the majority “vote” in an earlier question in which 51% of clergy said that if the money was available, they would invest $50,000 in a serious evangelization effort, indicates a powerful awareness and deep desire to “put on the whole armour of God” (Ephesians 6:11-18) for this effort. However, it appears as though many feel uncertain exactly how to lovingly and effectively go about evangelizing.

As a servant leader within the Church choose which of the items below would be of the greatest practical assistance to you, your parish or organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategies and methodologies of effective fundraising</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A basic knowledge of strategic planning in the nonprofit environment</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The basic &quot;how's&quot; of effective evangelization and church membership growth</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective adult education material</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free professional online courses of study in Orthodoxy</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish council development methodology</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to work not just &quot;in&quot; the parish or organization in completing the 101 daily tasks but also how to focus on the one or two most important ways to work &quot;on&quot; the parish or organization in terms of vision, mission and values for the general development of the entire community</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment or add item</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 324
skipped question 22

These were the comments offered by the 60 participants who wrote in a response:

- I love being a priest. I find it difficult to understand how many obstacles there are to overcome that should not be there--the Metropolis should be a source of help and support, so should brother priests, and they simply are not. Also, my church community is growing, packed on Sundays, thriving youth programs, but empty coffers and I really don't know how to change that
- People have a good intent, but we all seem to lack sufficient time and/or vision and skills to select and accomplish particular goals beyond the little things

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• Add an assistant priest and 2 MORE deacons plus 2 deaconesses and eliminate parish council
• We as priests need more meetings throughout the years where we would discuss practical obstacles and successes in our parishes, rather than some theological lectures. The knowledge and experience on the ground is priceless.
• I have no hope that anything I would do or propose will change the lethargic and contented social club which is my parish
• How to support the Church and its mission in a way to promote its prophetic and healing ministry in the face of parishioner's desire for the status quo and religious laxitude
• Parish Council members need to be trained & develop a good ORTHODOX FRONIMA. Repetitions in the Liturgy need to be eliminated. We are Churches & NOT Monastic communities!
• Thanks.........and God bless!
• In the GOA deacons play an important role and should be supported more. And the role of a deacon explained to our communities and the programs for the deacon at seminaries marketed better
• For some, previous life experience is never valued; thus, almost all seminars, conferences, classes are recreating the wheel; some clergy have a vast amount of life experience that is never tapped
• The term fundraising should be set aside. In itself fundraising is not stewardship and emphasis on it misleads the faithful
• Have the Uniates in our neighborhood continue alienating our already alienated populace
• In USA, we are accustomed to directed instruction
• It seems that the Orthodox Church lacks this
• Yes, we have Church School materials, but it can be improved
• Our instructional material for adult catechumens is lacking
• Also, basic knowledge of strategic planning in the nonprofit environment; Strategies and methodologies of effective fundraising and maybe some more (but more in-depth) 'how's' of effective evangelization and church membership growth
• Co-operation in community activities with other churches, etc.
• How to implement the idea of Acquire the Spirit of Peace and a thousand around you will be saved--St. Seraphim of Sarov; as a missionary approach
• People are not willing to learn what their Christian duty is. God is not our first Love. This affects our giving as well.
• A way to end the contesting for supremacy among two major factions
• New mission - our struggles may be different than established parishes
• There is a great need to combat secularism within the school system! It all began with the demise of the BLUE LAWS, and the RC Church instituting Saturday Evening Mass fulfilling Day of Obligation!
• The greater society and each parish need a New Evangelization. The teaching of the church in an almost pagan culture
• Dissolution of the protestant and corporate model of parish councils. It is ridiculous that people who don't know anything about the faith and argue with their priest would vote for other people of the same kind. The church needs to restore Herself to being the body of Christ, led by a spiritual father
• The diaconate is very useful to the priest by allowing the Priest to recite all the prayers during the services. The Deacon can also be available when the Priest is sick or out of town.
• Given the level of technology currently available, much more could be developed to help instruct/guide leaders (clergy and laity) in their efforts to spiritually nurture the faithful
• number 6 needed another option for me higher than what I choose but less than the best
• I have serious objection to endowment programs and long term strategies I have seen some use. These seem death dealing to active life of the parish. I am willing to discuss and be educated
• I am sorry Father Anthony Scott, but most of the questions above simply don’t correspond to the reality in my parish. 20 years ago I used to be a trainer on strategic planning for not-for-profit organizations in Eastern Europe. You can trust me on this: no strategic planning or board member training works in the orthodox ethnic parishes. It looks like you are doing something we used to call needs assessment. Good luck!
• Our Church has very serious challenges before us that I think we - that is, all of us, including myself - are not meeting. The consequences are that we will lose many of our future generations if we continue as we are. Your survey is one of the important challenges that helps us to face our realities and to seek the best answers and enact the soundest solutions for every challenge before us. Thank you for this survey. Please continue this valued service
• This sounds like a sound byte, but it is the truth: When we start truly repenting in a healthy way our parishes will flourish
• Question number11 is unfair
• I can't begin to tell you how much this survey has helped me to realize how far behind I and my parish are in terms of our responsibility. I'm grateful to you
• We need to provide more dynamic outreach while we maintain core of the apostolic teaching. We need to translate our spiritual vision into terms of the modern 21st-century
can understand. Services need to be made more relevant to the 21st-century lifestyle and working conditions of our peoples

- In today's challenging environment we do not need administrative leaders, but we need true spiritual leaders such as bishops and priests who are not afraid to Rock the boat. The church needs the zeal of St. Paul. With this zeal, passion and through the liturgical services of the church it can be assured that all our churches will be filled and financially stable. May Christ our God be with us and help us during these times

- Another priest to help me!
- Thank You

- Better inspire others to pray, then do Liturgical consistency (guidelines)
- Less central bureaucracy
- Of course, that would present the tricky question, How to qualify 'professional'?
- The lack of committed designated gifts and long term financial planning for our mission is my fault. As is the majority of our low marks. Our mission has grown from 18 to 100 in four and a half years with the vast majority being converts. There are many areas we struggle with and, again, I am to blame. All this to say it would be beneficial for us if there was some sort of class or conference for young missions that are enjoying a time of unity and growth - what to be aware of, how to stay on mission, etc. Thank you
- Thank you for your God-pleasing work! - may it help to improve ministry
- Need to encourage understanding, reverence and PRODUCTION of iconography through workshops by qualified leaders, especially iconographers
- I'm in a very small Parish and I work a secular job. Clearly not what I had intended, but it's what God wants me to do
- ALL of the problems of the parish stem from one basic problem--a spiritual problem borne out of poor or non-existent catechesis and understanding of what it is to be an Orthodox Christian (not just a Greek or a Russian or what have you) which goes back generations for the cradle Orthodox. For adult converts, it is the overwhelming influence of secular society and compartmentalization of Church and the rest of their life
- More focus on pastoral counseling skills
- We don't need a business model for the church with strategies, methodologies, and educational material. What we need is for people to become the body of Christ and that's simply done by coming and attending liturgy. If this is done with the right goal in mind, then everything good and holy and Christ-like will flow from it
- Money
- The security of a parish home
- Another reader and singer

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• Get rid of the Parish Council elections and have each parish and Diocesan Bishop appoint the Parish Council, the way most Bishops appoint their Diocesan or Metropolis Councils. Thus, getting quality and not popularity votes, or this is the way we've always have done things
• The great need is to facilitate greater spiritual formation and holy experience by parish members
• Thanks for asking; I look forward to the results!
• Wow! I wish I could have chosen more of these. I would have also chosen Parish Council Development Methodologies; and the last choice as well, How to work not just IN the parish...but ON helping it accomplish the Church's mission & values...
• I would also like to see better adult education material and on line continuing education courses
• Financial help to create and record a Mission Starter Kit; ordination of a deacon
• Parish council development methodology
• Am retired
• In the absence of a permanently assigned priest in the past, our members took on matters of ordinary administration—this is mostly a blessing for me, since I don't have to deal with a lot of detail
• Thank you for allowing me to share
• This is a parish which has services twice a month with two different priests at its service. With no youth returning to the parish from parents of the 60's and beyond. I see no future for this parish. I do praise them for the refusal to close the doors. If English were permissible, we could at least go out and try to bring people in for worship. Without that tool, evangelization is futile
• Truly thank GOD for all things and in all things. I know we have our struggle in the parish - not enough building fund to take care of some very needed repairs - but our church is free and clear .and the parishioners enjoy a loving bond with each other. I hope and pray we can get a priest to take us to the next level ( since we don't have a serving priest at this time)

Concluding Comment

The survey revealed two practical ways in which Orthodox seminaries, dioceses, publishing concerns, podcasts, blogs, departments and knowledgeable laity can be of greatest assistance to clergy:

1. Provide tools, materials and skills in leading, managing and developing parishes consistent with the ecclesiology of the Church;
2. Provide tools, materials and supremely *practical* skills in effective evangelization consistent with Orthodox spirituality.

**Note**

Stewardship Advocates is the first Orthodox consulting service working exclusively within the Orthodox Church. Founded in 1999 it has served well over 100 Orthodox parishes and organizations in all jurisdictions. Subscribe to the monthly newsletter here. Search the Stewardship Advocates Library. Send a comment or submit a question to Stewardship Advocates. I’ll do my best to respond in a timely fashion. I’m presently working in five Orthodox parishes or organizations so time is at a premium. Please be patient.