

Deacons Retreat Held in Metropolis of San Francisco



The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco offered a Deacons Retreat at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, CA from October 28 – 30, 2022. The retreat welcomed Deacons and Diaconal Candidates, and some of their spouses, who spent over two days in fellowship while gaining valuable information and insight into the important role of the Diaconate and how this ministry is beneficial to our parishes and the overall Church. Under the direction of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, this retreat was designed to provide training to enhance the ministry of the Deacons, as well as provide a basis for Diaconal candidates studying at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.

In his opening remarks, Metropolitan Gerasimos commented on the retreat theme, “Be doers of the word, and not just hearers only” (James 1:22). “The Book of James is one of the most practical books of the New Testament, providing us with instructions and admonitions about living the Christian Faith in the world,” stated His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos. “The practicality of the Book of James reminds us that the ministry of the deacon is a practical ministry. It is about the practice of the faith, the practice of the Church, the lives of people. In our time together, perhaps we can reflect on the various practices – the many things we do

as Orthodox Christians – and connect them to the work of the parish and how the ministry of the deacon can enhance these practices making our parishes more vibrant and dynamic.”

The featured speaker for the weekend was Rev. Dr. George Parsenios, Dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. His presentation focused on St. James’ instructions to “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.” He showed the way in which the Desert Fathers are examples of this life by frequently asking both to hear “a word” and “what should I do?” He traced the examples that St. James provides of Abraham and Rahab’s Works of Faith, Job’s Endurance of Faith, and Elijah’s Prayer of Faith. Fr. George opened these Scriptures in a way that not only stimulated the participants’ minds, but also stirred their hearts.

The group was also joined by Dr. Bruce Beck, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and the Director of Enrollment Management at Hellenic College Holy Cross. In addressing the retreat participants, Dr. Beck informed the deacons and candidates about updates to the administration of the Diaconate Program at the Seminary. He also explained that going forward Diaconate Candidates will be officially classified as students at Holy Cross and full members of the Seminary community.

The beautiful setting of Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center and the Saint Photini Chapel provided a perfect setting for this retreat, and the Ranch extended outstanding hospitality – philoxenia – to the group. Likewise, the sisters from the adjacent Monastery of the Theotokos the Life-Giving Spring also welcomed the Deacons and Diaconal candidates, and Gerontissa Markella shared inspirational wisdom about dedicating one’s life in service of the Church and how you cannot separate one from the other.

This is the third Deacons Retreat sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy Continuing Education ministry. This year’s retreat was organized by Rev. Deacon Justin Bosl, Rev. Deacon William Callas, and Rev. Deacon Daniel Cunningham.

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