

August 4, 2010

To: Parish Rectors and Parish Councils in the Orthodox Church in America

From: His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH

Re: Update on the OCA's Sexual Misconduct Policies

Dear Fathers and Parish Council Members,

Although it is not pleasant, it is my important duty to convey to you, Pastors and Parish Council Members, the reminder to be attentive in regard to issues surrounding the possibility of sexual misconduct in the Church. During the past twenty years the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) has had a number of initiatives to address this tragic but recurring fact of life. However, periodically it is important to remind ourselves about the complexities and consequences of sexual misconduct. I have enclosed with my letter a memorandum prepared by a member of our Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee, Protodeacon Peter Danilchick. Protodeacon Peter's comprehensive memo should be copied and passed out to all Parish Council members, Church School teachers and all parishioners who are active in parish administration.

The Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee is currently reviewing the OCA's existing *Policies, Standards and Procedures* with the aim of streamlining them to be more comprehensive and universal in their application. This is a complicated, time-consuming process but they hope to present a revised document to the Holy Synod before the end of this year. For the time being, it is essential that all Dioceses, Parishes and Church institutions comply with the existing *Policies, Standards and Procedures*. To facilitate this process a Compliance Report has been developed and sent to the Dioceses for distribution and completion by all Parish rectors. Compliance with all measures will help to protect our children, our youth, our brothers and sisters, from the unspeakable. This is the concern and the responsibility of everyone, but in particular, given your respective duties in the life of the parish and in light of potential legal liabilities, Rectors and Parish Council members especially need to encourage each other to be proactive and attentive to these matters. We hope that the results of the Compliance Report will be placed on the OCA website on an annual basis, with the initial report expected to be issued in September, 2010.

Praying that you will have a blessed Fast and greeting you in anticipation with the celebration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ our Lord,



+JONAH
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

