



Annual General Meeting  
September 30, 2007  
Report of Fr John A. Jillions, Dean

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ... [Speaking] the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love (Ephesians 4:1-16).

This is one of three important passages in St Paul's letters where he speaks about the Church as the Body of Christ, and of us as members of the body, each having our own unique gifts and tasks but also needing each other (see 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12). "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you' (1 Cor 12:21). No parish, and certainly not the Cathedral, will thrive when too few people have opportunities to share in the real work of building up the church in the various ways needed: liturgy, music, repairs, teaching, hospitality, administration, finances, care for each other and for newcomers. I know that in the past and in other parts of the Orthodox world, *ministry* has been seen as something that the professional clergy do. But that is not what our Lord had in mind when he founded His Church with fishermen. It wasn't what St Paul envisioned, and it hasn't been our practice here. We are all called to ministry, to service in the name of Christ. Healthy church life demands that lay people get thoroughly involved if church life is to flourish. Your own prayer and study, your own life in the liturgy, but also getting your hands messy with the day-to-day life of building a community, serving, making the parish a place of welcome, worship and beauty for others who need an oasis in times of stress, busy-ness and emptiness. Such service is good for the parish, but it's also essential for each parishioner. If you are not serving others in some way, your spiritual life will dry up.

Look at the agenda. These ministries reflect the involvement of many people giving many hours to pastoral care and parish life in all its aspects. And this is the way a healthy parish *ought* to live. Since the 1980's the Orthodox Church in America has had a Department of Lay Ministries to encourage just these kinds of developments. This is our first year being organized by ministries, following the pattern set elsewhere, especially in Calgary. It is still experimental. Some things worked, some didn't. But God blesses such risk, as he blessed the ones who risked their talents, and not the one who safely buried it in the ground. When something we try as a parish doesn't work, we try again or try something else. As Thomas Edison said of his years of attempting to make a light bulb: "I didn't fail: I just found 10,000 ways that didn't work."

The main tasks of the clergy are to bring vision to the community, to lead the sacramental and spiritual life, to preach and to teach, but also to ensure that “the saints”—that means you—are equipped for the work of ministry. I am bringing this to your attention now because the next phase of our Cathedral’s growth as a community concerns precisely this point: how we function as a body, with everyone doing their part—and their share—so that each person’s ministry can blossom and that everywhere in the parish there is balance and harmony as we seek to build each other up and bring others in. Are you new to the parish or to parish work? Are you worried that you don’t have enough time or talent? Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes, and He will give you strength if you ask for His help and depend on him for whatever work you undertake for His sake. And you will be bearing the burdens of others who perhaps give too much and need a break (before *they* break). Because the most zealous church workers need a sabbatical from time to time to rekindle their energy. Or are you one of those who is “weary in well-doing”? Then “cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you” (Psalm 55:8). Ask Him to renew your strength, your faith and your joy. These are prayers he won’t fail to answer. Jesus said, “Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matt 7:10-11).

I want to thank everyone who has given of themselves to help in this past year. For those who have served in public or in the background, especially my fellow clergy, Fr Symeon and Dn Gregory, may God reward you.

But I must be completely honest here. Part of the reason the Cathedral has had to learn the importance of lay ministry is because I, as dean, by necessity, by vocation, and by the bishop’s blessing, also teach at Saint Paul University. While this helps the Cathedral and Archdiocese in various ways, it’s true that it takes me away from parish life. This is another reason why we need to look carefully at how present and future pastoral needs can be met. This is something Archbishop Seraphim and I have been discussing since last November (as an appendix to this report I have attached a letter to Abp Seraphim—which we discussed and he approved –concerning my own particular role and how cathedral, diocesan and university duties intersect).

In early August Archbishop Seraphim wrote formally to the Parish Council in connection with these questions to explain how he sees the role and functioning of the Cathedral.

It has not been written out clearly before, in such a manner as this, because in earlier days, the Cathedral building was small, and the community was too. Now, the building is large, and there are increased demands on all, even though the actual numbers have not much increased. As usual, it is a few that must bear the great weight of responsibility, and action. In this context, and in the context of a current examination of how better to meet the spiritual needs of the Cathedral faithful in particular, it seems important to clarify some aspects.

The role of the Cathedral in the diocese is not addressed in any way in the Statute of the OCA, nor in the Archdiocesan By-laws. Nevertheless, such a community always has a special role to play in the life of the diocese. It is the see of the bishop, and it indirectly, along with the bishop himself, has an influence on the rest of the diocese. The rest of the diocese also has an influence on the Cathedral. All of this is at the level of subtlety, but there is involved the responsibility of giving an example, providing service, and also of cooperation by all.

The bishop is central to the Cathedral parish. Indeed, without the bishop, nothing can have life, according to our ecclesiology. Accordingly, the bishop is the rector of his Cathedral. However, as the bishop is unable to be active in the day-to-day life of his parish, the daily responsibilities are delegated.

With the Bishop, is the Cathedral Dean. The Dean may, or may not, be the actual pastor of the Cathedral parish, but it would certainly be the norm—even expected. The Dean, by virtue of this position, has a seat on the Archdiocesan Council, and upon the bishop's blessing, he represents the bishop at official functions in the City of Ottawa, as may be deemed necessary, or expedient, by the bishop.

If there would be a priest assigned to be the active pastor of the Cathedral, it would be necessary that this priest have the ability to lead the community paternally. The Dean would be, then, in a position somewhat similar to the bishop. The pastor would have to be able to exercise his pastoral gifts rather freely, and often to preach, and teach. It would fall to him to organise many of the normal aspects of parish life...

It is understood that, ideally, the Cathedral would have even many deacons serving in the parish, together with lay persons exercising particular gifts, as a part of the overall pastoral ministry to the parish family, and the surrounding environs.

I hope that these details will be of some aid in future decision-making with regard to the pastoral care, and the administration of the Cathedral. Clear, pastoral, fatherly, leadership is to be worked towards prayerfully at all times. This is one reason I took time to write these words, which I write not just as a suggestion.

Recently the Pastoral Needs Committee of the parish council has started to look at the questions raised by the bishop's letter and by the general concern for pastoral life in the Cathedral. Next week all the clergy and Liana Crookall, as Pastoral Care Coordinator, will meet with Sasha Lopoukhine (Warden) and Lawrence Purdy (Asst Warden) to take this further and to start developing a strategy to involve the parish in the next steps. We are faced with a number of questions. 1) How does our vocation as

the national cathedral affect our pastoral life? After last summer's Archdiocesan Assembly in Ottawa it ought to be clear to everyone that we are indeed the national cathedral. Those demands will only increase, especially with the start of the archdiocesan pastoral training program to begin here in the next year. 2) What exactly are the parish needs around pastoral care and outreach? 3) What part of these needs should be fulfilled by clergy? What part can be fulfilled by lay people? 4) Do we need to add more deacons? 5) Or can we think of another full time priest, as in similar parishes where the dean has duties that take him outside the parish (Edmonton, for example)? This is a possibility envisioned by the Archbishop, and personally, that is the vision I would like to see us work towards for the long-term health of the Cathedral. But then we have to ask how we can plan responsibly for such changes. These are the kinds of questions we need to discuss over the next year, in order to have a plan ready for the AGM next September.

Even contemplating such changes can be stressful in any parish family. It took the parish some time to consider and decide to take the momentous step of moving from 55 Clarey Avenue. But with God's help and a spirit of mutual love, forbearance, patience and calm, we will face this challenge with no less grace than the purchase and renovation of this building.

Respectfully submitted,

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Archpriest John A. Jillions, Dean