

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Chicago, Illinois • 1 June 2016

I. OPENING

The meeting, convened at the Holiday Inn Midway, opened with the singing of the Paschal Troparion led by His Grace, Bishop Paul, at 10:13 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE.

Present were Bishop Paul; Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor; Archpriest John Matusiak, Secretary; Robert Koncel, Treasurer; Archpriests James Dank, Alexander Garklavs, Alexander Kuchta and Elijah Mueller; Priest Nicholas Finley; Dennis Garlick, Barry Gluntz, Robert Graban, Michael Herzak, and Daria Petrykowski; Bishop's Council members Archpriests Andrew Clements, Thomas Mueller, and Andrew Yavornitzky; and Philip Sokolov, Bishop's Secretary.

III. SCRIPTURE READINGS.

Mrs. Petrykowski read the day's selection from Acts 13:13-24, while Father Kuchta read the day's Gospel reading – John 6:5-14. Bishop Paul noted that while this miracle – the multiplication of the loaves – appears in all four Gospels, only in Saint John's account does it mention that Jesus “gives thanks” – a reference to the Eucharist – leading into Our Lord's discourse on the “Bread of Life.” Also implied in the miracle's account is the tithe – we give to God, Who multiplies that which He gives to those who have faith.

IV. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Father Garklavs noted that in VI.C, “committee” should be replaced with “task force.” The minutes were accepted as revised upon motion by Mr. Gluntz, seconded by Father Dank.

V. BISHOP'S REPORT.

Bishop Paul reported that, after traveling a bit less during March and April, he is again maintaining a full schedule of archpastoral visitations. He attended the Spring Session of the Holy Synod and will attend the annual Synod retreat during the second half of June. He also plans to attend the Small Parish Forum in Canton, OH. In July he will visit Russia at the invitation of Bishop Mystyslav for the Feast of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God. In turn, Bishop Mystyslav will visit Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, in October 2016 and present a replica of the Tikhvin icon. Turning his attention to the diocese, Bishop Paul observed that the number one concern he encounters in 85% of the parishes is how to keep our youth in the Church. He opined that people “choose” to stay, generally because of the positive “atmosphere” they find in their parishes. With so many changes in our society, we need to find appropriate ways to respond to these changes when they differ from that which the Church teaches – always with love and respect. Bishop Paul also spoke of his desire to see uniform rubrics for the celebration of Vespers, as he has observed a variety of rubrics during his visits. He also shared concerns about his health, nothing major. In response, Father Garklavs stated that “there is a good feeling in the diocese under Your Grace's watch.”

VI. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT.

Father Zdinak reported on a number of matters.

A. Assessment payments. Most parishes that were in arrears have submitted acceptable “plans” to repay their deficits. The situation of three parishes needs to be reviewed. Should a parish's debt be forgiven, it will be removed from the diocese's balance sheets.

After brief discussion, Father Finley, seconded by Mr. Gluntz, moved to forgive the deficit incurred by the Protection of the Holy Virgin Church, Royalton, IL. Motion passed.

Father Garklavs, seconded by Father Elijah Mueller, motioned to forgive the debt incurred by Saint Thomas Church, Springfield, MO. Motion passed.

Father Dank, seconded by Father Finley, motioned to forgive the debt incurred by Saint Andrew Church, Maple Heights, OH – approximately \$107,000.00. Mr. Graban moved to table the motion, but there was no second. Mr. Garlick then presented an amended motion, seconded by Mr. Gluntz, to forgive 90% of the deficit incurred by the parish, which would be required to repay the remaining 10%. The amended motion passed with one nay vote. In the ensuing discussion, it was decided that the parish would have four years to remit the 10% balance while remaining current in its payments. Motion carried.

B. Diocesan Compliance, Sexual Misconduct Guidelines. Father Zdinak reported that all is going well in this regard and that the third phase – involving youth workers – will be implemented this summer. Priest Benjamin Tucci will offer a presentation in this regard at the Diocesan Assembly.

C. Diocesan Funding Stewardship Committee. Father Zdinak reported that the committee meets weekly via video conference and is making careful progress. A time-line is in place. A final presentation will be made at the 2017 Diocesan Assembly for implementation in 2018. Uniform parish profit-and-loss forms and balance sheets will be available by September 2016.

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Mr. Koncel reported that there were no major unanticipated expenses in 2015. Expenses were \$35,000.00 over budget, but this was anticipated. The difference was taken out of the "OCA Escrow Fund."

There is \$6,000.00 available to cover the aforementioned October visit of Bishop Mystyslav.

Upon motion by the Finance Committee, Fidelity funds will be moved into a Morgan Stanley investment account. Motion carried.

VIII. BY-LAWS REVISION.

After a review of the draft revision of the By-Laws and discussion, the By-Laws Revision Task Force motioned that the final draft be approved for presentation to delegates at the Diocesan Assembly, pending final legal advice. Motion carried.

It was noted that one hard copy with a cover letter will be sent to all parishes, while a PDF version will be available on the diocesan web site. An e-mail account for the task force will be created to address questions and concerns.

IX. DEANERY UPDATES.

A. Chicago Deanery. Father Thomas Mueller reported that with the impending assignment of Priest David Gresham as Rector of Holy Apostles Church, Normal, IL in July 2016, Priest Danial Doss would be attached to Saint Luke Church, Palos Hills, IL. Saint Nicholas Church, Joliet, IL remains vacant, but is being served by Father Matusiak, Pastor Emeritus of Saint Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL, and Archpriest Ned Lunich, Pastor Emeritus of Saint George Serbian Orthodox Church, Joliet, IL. Subdeacon Brian Bodien was ordained to the diaconate in January 2016 and attached to Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Milwaukee, WI. Deacon Brian received an M.Div. from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, and a Th.M. from Boston College. Saint Luke Church, Palos Hills, IL, has established a chapel in New Lenox, IL as an outreach ministry. The deanery's 30th annual summer camp will be held July 6–10 in Troy, WI.

B. Kansas City Deanery. Father Finley reported that the proposed merger of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL and Saints Kirill and Methody Church, Granite City, IL, had been voted down during a recent vote by parishioners. While the majority of the Granite City faithful voted in favor of the merger, two-thirds of the Madison faithful voted against it.

X. PARISH DEVELOPMENT AND MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT.

Father Thomas Mueller reported that the committee, with the assistance of Joseph Kormos, reviewed and revised the Mission Guidelines, which are now ready to be posted on the diocesan web site. He noted that Priest Joel Weir and Gator Greenwald of Saint Stephen Church, Crawfordsville, IN, attended the 2015 OCA Mission School in Detroit. Priest Joel Wilson and Eric Hjelle will attend the 2016 Mission School, which will be held in August. He concluded by reporting that mission grants were distributed in December 2015.

XI. SAINT MACRINA INSTITUTE REPORT.

Father Elijah Mueller reported that enrollment remains steady with between 40 and 50 students across the diocese. The next annual event will take place in Kenosha, WI.

XII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPORT.

Father Kuchta and Mr. Graban had nothing to add to their written report.

XIII. 2016 ASSEMBLY, NEXT MEETING.

It was announced that the Diocesan Assembly will be held 10–11 October 2016 at Saint Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church and Hall, Lansing, MI. The next regular Diocesan Council meeting will be held 2 December 2016.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with the singing of the Pascha Hymn to the Theotokos at 3:42 p.m. upon motion by Father Kuchta, seconded by Father Elijah Mueller.

*Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest John Matusiak, Diocesan Secretary
Mr. Philip Sokolov, Secretary to Bishop Paul*

Report of Diocesan Metropolitan Council Representatives

Spring 2016 Metropolitan Council (MC) meetings took place from February 16-18 at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington (Long Island) NY.

Overall, the meeting can be characterized as being without any major controversies or issues. Instead of being reactive to past problems, the MC was able to look strategically to the future, particularly with regard to the four pillars of the Guiding Framework for the Orthodox Church in America entitled "*The Apostolic Work of the Church*", which was presented by Metropolitan Tikhon. The drafting of the framework is nearing completion, and brief videos will accompany its release. The 4 pillars are:

- I. The Spiritual Life
- II. Stewardship
- III. Evangelism and Outreach
- IV. External Relations: Long-Term Goals

Metropolitan Tikhon has requested a full-time Secretary to the Metropolitan, and plans and budget realignments are being put in place to support this.

Fr. John Jillions, OCA Chancellor, spoke about Autocephaly. While Autocephaly means different things to different people, he noted the importance of reclaiming our Church's vision and history, as well as to minister to the needs of the non-ethnic Orthodox. There was also discussion whether there should be an alternate path for prospective priests to be trained outside of the seminary, as well as the need to re-think the way we fund our seminaries. A motion was made that funds designated for seminaries in the 2015 and 2016 budgets be split equally among the three theological schools of the OCA. This amounts to a total of \$39,000 from 2015 being split.

Fr. Eric Tosi spoke about the importance of health insurance and other benefits for the clergy. There was an extended discussion about clergy health (spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial), and the need for clergy communications to support one another, as well as the creation of support mechanisms in each diocese.

The Evangelism and Outreach Pillar of the Guiding Framework includes a hoped for outcome of "To plant one new mission and revitalize one established parish in every deanery by the next All American Council".

In line with the forward-looking nature of the meeting, time was spent reviewing committee and departmental structures, along with improving processes.

Fr. Alexander Kuchta reported on the Charity Committee. A charity webpage with a "donate button" is being prepared for the OCA website, to be accessible from the OCA homepage. The balance on 1/12/16 was \$7,355. The 3 basic types of disbursements are (1) private requests, typically for clergy without adequate medical insurance coverage, (2) public requests, usually for natural disasters, sent to IOCC or perhaps FOCUS, and (3) grants, project-based proposals.

Finally, with regard to finances, for the year ended 12/31/15, there was a small net operating surplus (unrestricted funds) of \$8,074, resulting from revenues coming in ahead of budget and expenses being under budget, largely influenced by lower legal fees. When considering temporarily and permanently funds, the overall result was a deficit of \$79,932; however, the deficit was the result of unrealized investment losses in the permanent endowments.

Based on one month of remittances, treasurer Melanie Ringa had reported that it looks like diocesan remittances will be coming in about \$47k below budget. *[A subsequent treasurer's report shows the operating (unrestricted) fund had a net surplus of \$44,162 for the first quarter of 2016. Assessments were slightly lower, offset by an unrestricted bequest of \$39,941]*

The funding of the last All American Council resulted in a \$24,000 shortfall, due primarily to \$25,000 not being collected from a number of parishes. There was discussion about moving the funding of the next AAC to the diocesan level; how to accomplish this was not discussed.

Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest Alexander Kuchta
Bob Graban
May 26, 2016