

# Diocese of the Midwest of the Orthodox Church in America

## MINUTES OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Chicago, Illinois • 12 June 2012

### I. OPENING.

The meeting opened at 8:45 a.m. with the Prayer to the Holy Spirit led by His Grace, Bishop Matthias.

### II. ATTENDANCE.

Members present: His Grace, Bishop Matthias; Archpriests John Adamcio, Andrew Clements, Joseph Gibson, Nathan Kroll, Alexander Kuchta, John Matusiak, Secretary [arrived near end of meeting], Timothy Sawchak, Basil Stoyka, Andrew Yavornitzky, and John Zdinak, Chancellor; Priests John Baker, Stephen Hrycyniak, and Herman Kincaid; Mr. Sam D'Fantis, Mr. Michael Dorosh, Mr. Michael Herzak, Ms. Kitty Mabus, Mrs. Ann Marie Gidus Mecera, and Mr. Robert Koncel, Treasurer.

Also present was Mr. Philip Sokolov, Diocesan Chancery.

### III. SCRIPTURE READINGS.

The day's appointed readings – Romans 9:6-19 and Matthew 10:32-36; 11:1 – were read by Fathers Kuchta and Gibson respectively.

### IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

The minutes were accepted as presented upon motion by Mr. D'Fantis, seconded by Father Adamcio. *Passed.*

### V. REPORT OF BISHOP MATTHIAS.

Bishop Matthias offered a comprehensive report, highlights of which include the following.

**A. Diocesan Center.** Bishop Matthias noted that while the “operations” of Christ the Savior Church and the diocesan center have merged, the parish will maintain autonomy. This, he added, is “an issue of perception and the reality” with regard to that which already exists, inasmuch as the Bishop's chapel is also the home of a parish. The rector of the parish also is an employee of the Diocese as property manager and personal secretary to the Bishop, at present without remuneration, although this will be addressed in the proposed 2013 budget. Father John Baker has aided in office efficiency. The merger does not constitute a “takeover” of the parish, nor does it change the operating budgets of the Diocese or the parish. The parish will continue to pay assessments like every parish. The Diocese will pay for some of the improvements to the church building as well. In conclusion, Bishop Matthias said, “I see that it will be hard to keep the Chancery and the parish separate because they serve each other.” In light of his involvement with and knowledge of the Diocesan Chancery, Father Baker has been appointed to the Bishop's Council, the first of five additional members to be appointed.

**B. Seminarian Endowment Fund.** Bishop Matthias expressed his desire to increase the budget for the seminarian fund. Funds have been donated and those extra donations will be distributed this year. June has been designated as the month during which special collections are to be taken to assist diocesan seminarians. There remains the need to establish an endowment fund into which substantial contributions may be deposited. Bishop Matthias stated that the fund will be named in memory of the late Archbishop Job. Surplus funds in the Parish Development Ministry Department fund as of 2011 will be added to this fund.

**C. Diaconate Program.** The written report of Priest Elijah Mueller was discussed.

**D. Stewardship.** Bishop Matthias noted that a long process of education will be required if we are to move from assessments to stewardship and tithing. In short, “we need people ‘in the trenches’ who are practicing proportionate giving.” He indicated his desire to set up day-long visits to each deanery to meet with clergy and council members to discuss stewardship and provide education, as they need to be “on board” in order to communicate these matters to the rest of their respective parishes. “We need to be a Church of stewardship, but it's going to take time” he said, adding that he hopes to be involved personally in such efforts.

### VI. REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR.

Father Zdinak reported on several matters.

**A. Clergy Compensation.** Father Zdinak reported that clergy compensation is inconsistent throughout the diocese. The compensation guidelines will be revisited and a committee made up of Diocesan Council members will work to address this matter.

**B. Sexual Misconduct Compliance.** Efforts are being taken to ensure that all parishes are in compliance. Father Zdinak stressed the need to implement procedures in the event an accusation is made.

### VII. DEANERY REPORTS.

**A. Chicago Deanery.** Father Kincaid reported on the deanery summer camp 4-7 July; his desire to attend parish council meetings to gauge the pulse of deanery parishes; his visit to the parish in Royalton, IL; and related matters.

**B. Cleveland Deanery.** Father Clements reported on deanery mission services; lenten clergy retreat; the pastoral transition in Parma, OH; and related matters.

**C. Indianapolis Deanery.** Father Gibson reported on Saint John summer camp in August; Father Ted Bobosh's recent surgery and recovery; participation in the Cornerstone Christian music gathering; the recent visit of Bishop Matthias to Kokomo and Indianapolis; and related matters.

**D. Kansas City Deanery.** Father Sawchak reported on recent deanery seminary graduates; Bishop Matthias' visit to Madison,

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IL; and difficulties in holding meetings due to distances. He also shared his concern that the deanery has no representation on the Diocesan Council – a matter that Bishop Matthias and Father Zdinak will address.

**E. Michigan Deanery.** Father Yavornitzky distributed a written report, highlighting ministries and activities in which deanery parishes are engaged. He also reported on the deanery's late vocations program and FOCUS' "Outreach Detroit."

**F. Minneapolis Deanery.** No report was given due to Archpriest Paul Wesche's need to return to the Twin Cities.

### VIII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

Highlights of the written report included information on the OCA Chancellor's work with regard to sexual misconduct issues, the All-American Council which concluded under budget, the Strategic Plan, and the positive financial situation. The Honesdale loan is being paid down with money recently received from a bequest. On the matter of shifting Church funding from a head tax to tithing, it was pointed out by members of the MC Legal committee that the OCA Statutes, which assume the use of a per capita tax, would have to be suitably amended at an All American-Council.

### IX. REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

In addition to the written report presented by Mr. Koncel, the following were discussed and acted upon.

- A.** The previous vote to hold excess funds from parish/mission development in reserve has been changed. It was voted to move the current \$11,000.00 excess to the Auto Reserve Fund.
- B.** After submitting a 55 page loan request document, the existing loan was extended for another five years.
- C.** The Finance Committee, seconded by Mr. Dorosh, moved to change the name of the Maintenance Endowment Fund to the Maintenance Reserve Fund. *Passed.*
- D.** The Finance Committee, seconded by Mr. Koncel, moved to transfer \$20,000.00 of the Special Visit Reserve Fund (currently at \$26,000.00) to the Maintenance Reserve Fund. *Passed.*
- E.** Mr. Koncel reported that in December 2010, a motion had been passed to the effect that unused portions of the Parish Development/Mission budget were held in escrow. He, seconded by Ms. Mabus, moved to rescind that motion, designating "any surplus funds from the Parish Development/Mission Department from 2010 forward [\$11,191.79] will no longer be held in reserve: and will be transferred to the Auto Reserve Fund. *Passed.*
- F.** Ms. Mabus, seconded by Father Adamcio, moved to establish the Archbishop Job Memorial Seminarian Endowment Fund. *Passed.*
- G.** A discussion on the property walk-through by members of the Finance Committee and Father Baker identified potential repair and safety issues, including addressing leakage in the north wall, the need to provide plexiglass covers over stained glass windows, the replacement of inefficient double-hung windows at an approximate cost of \$18,000.00, tuckpointing and capping the chimney, replacement of the residence basement sump pump, trimming of trees, replacement of plumbing in the church, replacement of galvanized piping with copper piping, replacement of deck on the residence, etc. Discussion ensued, with Father Zdinak noting that a comprehensive proposal for the merger of the Chancery and Christ the Savior parish will be presented to the Diocesan Council before it is publicly announced.
- H.** Father Baker took steps to be designated "Loss Prevention Certified" which will save the Diocese approximately 10% on a portion of its insurance bill. His function will be to identify safety issues and bring them to our attention so that they may be repaired before accidents occur.

### X. DIOCESAN VISION.

The remainder of the meeting consisted of a report by Bishop Matthias in which he shared his vision for the Diocese. In his summary, he noted the following.

- A.** Trusting as he does in Christ and the Church, Bishop Matthias stated that the Church possesses all the treasures and charisms required for its ongoing growth and evangelization ministries. This, of course, requires that we rely on God's grace and strength, and that when we take our faith and spiritual life seriously, the grace of God spreads. Relying on human models cannot replace that with which the Holy Spirit has equipped God's People to accomplish. Hence, our vision must be centered in applying all that Christ has given us.
- B.** He concluded by acknowledging that indeed there are parishes that are dying, but at the same time, others are being established. God's will must be discerned in every instance. The Church must be built on the foundation of Christ, the "Cornerstone."

Bishop Matthias entertained questions and engaged the Council members in an open discussion with regard to the above. At the conclusion of the discussion, Bishop Matthias was presented with a *Grammota* signed by members of the Diocesan Council on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood.

### XI. COMMITTEES.

Father Zdinak noted that committees are being restructured, and asked Council members to decide on which committees they would like to serve.

- A. Major restructure with Parish Health/Development.** Bishop Matthias will be working on this matter.
- B. Stewardship/Diocesan Funding.**
- C. Seminarian endowment.** Father Zdinak will oversee this area, with the first task to develop guidelines for the endowment.
- D. Clergy compensation.** Bishop Matthias and Father Zdinak are already researching current policies with the view of revamping them.

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**E. Administration communication.** Council members were asked to consider good ways of maintaining and strengthening communications, the possibility of producing “fireside chats” and videos, etc.

**F. Diaconal vocations.** The aim in this regard is to make it an accountable ministry.

**XII. FUTURE MEETINGS.**

The Diocesan Council will meet 2 October 2012, during the annual Assembly, and 3-4 December. Thanks was expressed to Father Baker and the Christ the Savior parish community for hosting the meeting and preparing meals.

**XIII. CLOSING.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with prayer at 3:05 p.m. upon motion by Father Hrycniak, seconded by Mrs. Gidus-Mecera.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera in the absence of the Secretary of the Diocese of the Midwest*

*APPROVED*

*+ Bishop Matthias*