

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Chicago, Illinois • 19 February 2013

I. OPENING.

The meeting opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” led by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, at 10:00 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE.

Present were His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon; His Grace, Bishop Melchisidek; His Grace, Bishop Alexander; Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor; Archpriests John Matusiak, Secretary; Mr. Robert Koncel, Treasurer; Diocesan Council members Archpriests Alexander Kuchta, Basil Stoyka, and Christopher Wojcik; Priests Nicholas Finley, and Stephen Hrycyniak; Mr. Sam D’Fantis, Mr. Michael Dorosh; Mr. Dennis Garlick, Mr. Michael Herzak, Jr., Ms. Kitty Mabus, and Mrs. Ann Marie Mecera; Bishop’s Council members Archpriests Andrew Clements, Timothy Sawchak, Paul Wesche, and Andrew Yavornitzky; and Priests John Baker, Joseph Gibson, and Herman Kincaid. Also present was Mr. Philip Sokolov. His Grace, Bishop Matthias, was present for the afternoon session.

III. CHANCELLOR’S REPORT.

- A. Father Zdinak reported that generally things in the Diocese are calm, although there are a number of issues that need to be addressed and resolved.
- B. Numerous parish meetings have been held in recent weeks. Financial statements are being used for the ongoing stewardship study. Parish Council elections will not be approved until all required materials have been received.
- C. Father Zdinak reported on clergy transfers, his role as Synodal liaison, and related matters.

IV. ADDITIONS TO WRITTEN DEANERY REPORTS.

- A. **Columbus Deanery.** Father Gibson reported that things are tumultuous due to concerns with regard to His Grace, Bishop Matthias. A lot of energy has been spent on this. Otherwise, the deanery is growing.
- B. **Michigan Deanery.** Father Yavornitzky reported that Detroit’s Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral has been the center for the work of the Orthodox Diocese Outreach, providing dinners for neighborhood residents every Sunday. It is hoped that this ministry will be written up and posted as it may inspire others.

V. TREASURER’S REPORT.

- A. Mr. Koncel offered a detailed review of his written report. With regard to parishes that are in arrears in 2012 assessments, he noted that attempts are being made to receive payment. He referenced a list of parishes that are “in extreme arrears with assessments that won’t ever come in and should be written off. We did this one time before and there is a need need to do it again.” The Diocesan Council will consider this as a Council in the future.
- B. With regard to investment accounts, he reported that deposits had tripled in value during the past 13 years.
- C. He stated that he had a written report from the Finance Committee, portions of which can be obtained from him upon request from him. He would like to build up the maintenance fund. He noted that should Father John Baker pursue an on-line course provided by the insurance company, a 10% savings on premiums could be realized. He also recommended that money can be saved by raising the deductible from \$500.00 to \$2,500.00.
- D. He reported that the Audit Committee recommended investing in higher yield funds. The Finance Committee will consider various options.
- E. With regard to building maintenance, he noted that a list and photos of needs had been developed in June 2012 with the assistance of Father Baker. These were reviewed by the Finance Committee, the members of which will prioritize same and procure estimates.

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION WITH METROPOLITAN TIKHON AND OTHER HIERARCHS.

- A. Metropolitan Tikhon thanked those gathered for their presence and work and stated that the purpose of his visit and that of the other hierarchs was to address the current situation in the Diocese. He reviewed his meeting with the Deans on 18 February 2013 and noted that the same roundtable format would be observed by the Diocesan Council.
- B. He assured those present that the Holy Synod of Bishops had received and read a variety of correspondences, both signed and unsigned, and that the situation had been thoroughly discussed.
- C. Upon the request of Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Alexander presented an overview of the matters at hand, in which he reviewed developments since August 2012.
- D. Each member of the Diocesan Council in turn offered his or her opinions in an honest and open manner, after which Bishop Matthias was invited to join and address the gathering.
- E. After every member of the Diocesan Council responded, Metropolitan Tikhon stated that he will bring the matter before the members of the Lesser Synod during the next week and to the full Holy Synod for final disposition.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

- A. **Stewardship Study Report.** Father Hrycyniak reported that unrestricted and restricted income, reported membership, and the current assessment levels had been reviewed from a variety of vantage points to discern the overall impact should a percentage system be introduced to replace the current assessment system. Financial data was submitted by 26 parishes – the majority of parishes did not respond – had been studied. Consequently, it is not possible with limited data to gauge the impact of percentage giving vs. the current assessments. There is a need for the Diocese to ensure that all parishes submit data in order to generate a balanced and accurate study.

- B. Archbishop Job Seminarian Scholarship Fund.** Ms. Mabus asked for details on the fund and how it might be funded and expanded. Mr. Koncel suggested that a committee be formed to review this matter, adding that there was \$10,000.00 that had not been distributed last year. In response to a question as to the intent of the fund, Bishop Matthias stated that it was to be an annual appeal to increase funds available for diocesan seminarians, with the intention of establishing an endowment. After discussion, it was decided to designate a specific time frame – possibly August 2013 – to make a public appeal. Mrs. Mecera, Ms. Mabus and Father Matusiak agreed to develop an appeal for presentation at the next Diocesan Council meeting.
- C. 2013 Diocesan Assembly.** It was decided to hold the Assembly in early October in Chicago. The possibility of using a hotel near O’Hare International, with sessions at Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, was raised. A local committee will be formed, while Mary Jane Lucak will serve as Assembly manager.
- D. Letter of Archpriest Daniel Rentel.** After discussing a letter from Father Rentel concerning compensation for Father Zdinak in light of his additional duties as Diocesan Administrator – duties he normally would not oversee – it was decided upon motion by Father Wojcik, seconded by Father Finley, to give Father Zdinak an additional \$1,152.53 per month with corresponding adjustments for Social Security and pension, retroactive to 1 January 2013. The motion passed with two opposed. In a related matter, Father Rentel’s suggestion to reinstitute the position of Parish Health Coordinator was tabled, in light of the fact that Mr. Joseph Kormos had accepted a similar position within the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania.

IX. NEXT MEETING, ADJOURNMENT.

- A.** The next meeting of the Bishop’s and Diocesan Councils will take place in Chicago June 17-18, 2013.
- B.** Council members thanked Father Baker and parishioners for providing transportation, lunch, and other essentials.
- C.** The meeting adjourned with prayer at 2:45 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Garlick, seconded by Mr. Dorosh.

*Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest John Matusiak, Secretary, with Mrs. Ann Marie Mecera*