

1975

Minutes of the Diocesan Assembly

The Annual Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America was held on Saturday, 6 September 1975, at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

Following a Divine Liturgy in the Monastery Church, an opening Molieben was served by His Grace, Bishop Herman, assisted by Frs. Vladimir S. Borichevsky, Daniel K. Donlick, John Matusiak and Hieromonk Benedict. The delegates assembled in the Seminary auditorium after registration and the distribution of reports and papers.

His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian opened the Assembly after the singing of "O Heavenly King" at 11:00 a.m. and then transferred the Chair to His Grace, Bishop Herman.

The registration record of the delegates and Diocesan Council members in attendance is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof. The number of participants was as follows:

|    |                          |
|----|--------------------------|
| 2  | Bishops                  |
| 29 | Clergy                   |
| 18 | Lay delegates            |
| 8  | Guests                   |
| 2  | Diocesan Council members |
| 59 | TOTAL IN ATTENDANCE      |

Fr. Daniel Donlick, Secretary of the Diocese, opened the elections for the offices of Vice-presidents and Secretaries for the Assembly with the following individuals being elected to the indicated offices:

Fr. Vladimir S. Borichevsky, Clergy Vice-president  
Mr. Jerry Russin, Lay Vice-president  
Fr. John Matusiak, Clergy Secretary  
Mr. John Dudash Jr., Lay Secretary

The Agenda was approved as read, with the addition of the following two items under 'Other Matters' at the request of the Philadelphia Deanery: a). that the elderly, infirm, bedridden and institutionalized be exempt from National and Diocesan Assessments; and b). that funding be provided by the Diocese to assist parishes in their building programs. Fr. Joseph Gallick motioned to accept the Agenda with additions, seconded by Fr. Claude Vinyard, and unanimously approved. The Agenda is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.

The minutes of the last Diocesan Assembly, held on 22 June 1974, were read. Fr. Joseph Chupeck asked that his name, appearing on page 6 of the minutes, be changed to that of Fr. John Chupeck. John Teno motioned to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Michael Yeosock, and unanimously accepted.

Archbishop Kiprian asked that the Assembly pause to remember all the deceased of the Diocese, especially Hieromonk Roman Serdynski, Archpriest Basil Horsky, and Mr. Russell Rudowsky. All rose and sang "Memory Eternal".

The report of His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian was read and the report is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.



The report of the Secretary of the Diocesan Council, Fr. Daniel Donlick, was read and unanimously accepted upon motion of Fr. George Pawlush, seconded by Fr. Joseph Martin. This report is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.

The report of the Treasurer, Fr. Paul Ropitsky, was presented. Fr. Ropitsky stated that the listing of income from parish assessments is an unaudited report reflecting only what was received from each parish during the current year. In some cases, the figures cited reflected payments for previous years which were only lately received. Mr. Dudash inquired as to the financial situation of the Diocese for the current year. His Grace, Bishop Herman asked Fr. Ropitsky to prepare an unaudited report from 1 January 1975 to the present for the afternoon session. In response to questions from the floor, Fr. Ropitsky stated that while the Charity collection was taken in 1974, payments were not received by the Diocese until 1975, and clarification was made concerning the Mission Account and the Mission Savings account. Fr. Gallick asked if an audit for the first six months of the current year was possible. Fr. Borichevsky suggested that this be discussed under 'Budget.'

Mr. Yeosock presented the Auditor's Report, noting that it reflects the change of the fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year. He reported that all books were in proper order and balanced. Russell Tatusko motioned to accept the reports of the Treasurer and Auditors, seconded by Fr. John Chupeck, and unanimously approved. The Treasurer's report is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, reported for the Department of Missions, stating that only St. Mark's in Doylestown remained a Mission. Randy Freudig of St. Mark's reported on the progress of the congregation. Tessie Yarutskie asked why St. Herman's in Morton was receiving funds from the Mission Fund if it was no longer a Mission. His Grace stated that funds were given the parish out of charity. Fr. Dionysius Swencki of St. Herman's commented on the progress of the parish. His Grace reported that a petition was given to and accepted by His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian that St. Herman's in Morton be made a full parish, and that they supported a full time priest.

Fr. Rodion Kondratich reported that the Department of Religious Education had sponsored a Teacher's Conference in Wilkes-Barre in October 1974, that the Deanery representatives were appointed to the Department, and that future conferences were in the planning stages. Fr. Kondratich introduced Fr. John Matusiak, newly appointed co-ordinator of the Department.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, requested that the Assembly hear the Deanery reports at this time. The respective Deans presented their reports, which are attached to these minutes and made a part thereof. A correction was made on the Philadelphia Deanery report, to the effect that there is only one Mission within that Deanery, St. Mark's in Doylestown.

Fr. Swencki announced that a vacancy occurred in the Diocesan Council due to the resignation of Mr. Constantine Spyrou from the Orthodox Church in America. Fr. Donlick cited the necessity for the election of a Lay Representative from the Philadelphia Deanery for a one year term, and that this matter would appear on the Agenda under 'Other Matters.'

The Assembly adjourned for lunch at 12:20 p.m.



The Assembly reconvened at 1:25 p.m.

Mr. Russell Dugan reported that he investigated a new insurance program. Mr. Freuidig, having presented a proposed plan at the August Diocesan Council meeting, spoke on the new plan to the Assembly, noting that it included a life insurance policy. Following discussion from the floor, His Grace, Bishop Herman, suggested that it was impossible to discuss all the details at this time. Ms. Yarutskie recommended that a plan be presented on paper and sent to all parish councils for their consideration. Mr. Dugan said that this would be forthcoming.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, presented the report of the Department of Finances, noting that the financial condition, especially of the National Church, was critical, due to a failure of many parishes to pay their full assessments and inaccurate reporting of parish statistics. His Grace stressed that it is the parish, not the individual, which is assessed. Mr. Dudash suggested that everyone be made aware of the financial condition of the Church. His Grace stated that all parishes receive such information, but that it was not always properly disseminated. Mr. Tatusko suggested that the Diocesan assessments be raised. Fr. Fedoronko commented that the problem centered around those who weren't paying. His Grace again stressed that it is the responsibility of the parish to make sure that the proper amount is paid, adding that progress was being made. Fr. John Kuchta spoke against raising Diocesan assessments, while Mr. William Conco spoke in favor. Fr. Nestor Geeza inquired if paying full assessments would stabilize the financial situation of the National Church. His Grace answered affirmatively, while noting that it would meet the needs only of the present limited budget.

Fr. Joseph Martin presented the Diocesan Budget for 1976, noting that it is a deficit budget. It is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof. Certain points of the budget were clarified in response to questions from the floor. Fr. Borichevsky suggested that budgets be based on the number we expect to pay, and that the Diocesan assessment be raised to \$3.00. Fr. Fedoronko asked for clarification on the purpose of the Diocesan Center, to which His Grace, Bishop Herman responded that at this time, it was only his residence. Mr. Conco motioned to raise the Diocesan assessment to \$3.00 a year, seconded by Fr. Matusiak. Fr. Borichevsky spoke for the motion, John Wansuch and Frs. Kuchta and Geeza spoke against it. Fr. Borichevsky noted that some parishes refuse to report accurate membership figures. Messrs. Wansuch and Conco, and Frs. John Chupeck and Andrew Shuga spoke of the dire need for a new parish census. Nicholas Berdy emphasized the responsibility of pastors and parish councils to send in the proper amounts. Mr. Dudash asked that the motion be amended to read 'that the Diocesan assessment be raised to \$3.00 with the provision that the Diocesan Council use every means to insure that parishes present correct membership statistics, and that delinquent parishes will meet their full payments, and that the Diocesan Council present a clear picture of the needs of the Diocese to all parish councils.' There was no second to the amended motion. A vote was taken on the original motion, with 15 in favor, 16 against, and 4 abstentions. (Fr. Hatrak wished to explain that he abstained as he had no lay delegate from either parish he represented; Fr. Fedoronko said the motion was out of order, while Fr. Borichevsky said that it was not.)

Fr. Daniel Ressetar motioned that the Diocesan Assembly request each parish to make a donation to the Diocesan Center according to their size, the minimum being \$50.00. Fr. Alexander Fedoronko seconded the motion.



Frs. Ropitsky and Shuga emphasized that this should be a special collection for this year only. Mr. Wansuch suggested that it be either a donation or a collection, and that the words 'according to their size' be dropped. His Grace, Bishop Herman, suggested that each parish hold a "Diocesan Day" to raise funds. Fr. Ressetar reworded his original motion to read that the Diocesan Assembly request each parish to make a donation to the Diocesan Center this year, seconded by Fr. Fedoronko. The motion was passed with one vote against. Fr. Gallick motioned to accept the deficit budget, seconded by Mr. Michael Supko, and passed with one vote against.

Fr. Gallick motioned that an audit be presented to each Diocesan Assembly covering the period of the first of the year through the month prior to the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Steve Danko, and unanimously approved.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, stated that Diocesan Aims and Programs were taken care of through the Diocesan Council, and that unfortunately there are no real funds for much beside the normal Departments. Fr. Borichevsky reminded the Assembly that parish councils can make suggestions to the Diocesan Council.

A proposal was made by the Philadelphia Deanery that the Diocesan Assembly motion to exempt the aged, infirm, institutionalized and bedridden from National and Diocesan assessments. His Grace, Bishop Herman, stated that this was not within the competency of the Assembly. Fr. Borichevsky said that parishes, while able to exempt individuals from parochial financial obligations, cannot do so for the assessments. Fr. Fedoronko motioned that the Diocesan Assembly bring this up at the All-American Council from the floor, as it was too late to submit resolutions, seconded by Fr. Joseph Chupeck. Fr. Matusiak and Mr. Dudash spoke against the motion. His Grace, Bishop Herman suggested that the Philadelphia Deanery should bring this up from the floor of the All-American Council. Mr. Dudash motioned that the discussion be tabled, seconded by Mr. Wansuch. Motion to table passed with 23 in favor, 12 against and 1 abstention.

Fr. Joseph Chupeck motioned that a Diocesan fund be established to aid parishes in building projects, seconded by Fr. Fedoronko. His Grace, Bishop Herman, suggested that this be placed under the work of the Mission Fund. Fr. Geeza commented that even though funds were not available at present for such a program, that it should nevertheless be established as an ideal. Fr. Goidich commented that this is important in order to further stress to parishes that funds were necessary to provide new programs within the Diocese. The motion was passed unanimously.

Fr. Borichevsky asked for Resolutions for the All-American Council, which could be made at the Council from the floor. His Grace, Bishop Herman, asked for comments on changing the All-American Council from a biannual to triannual meeting. Fr. Fedoronko agreed, and suggested that perhaps the forthcoming All-American Council elect a new Metropolitan, in view of Metropolitan Ireney's health, and with the purpose of eliminating an Extraordinary Council. His Grace emphasized that the Metropolitan was in good health, and in fact has fully assumed leadership of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

Fr. Fedoronko commented on the actions of the Patriarchal Parishes since the granting of Autocephaly, and asked if any action was being taken on the part of the Orthodox Church in America. His Grace, Bishop Herman



stated that the problems which still exist are fully known, and that His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian and the Department of External Affairs were looking into the matter.

Concerning the replacements on the Diocesan Council and the Auditor's office, due to the resignation of Mr. Spyrou and the death of Mr. Rudowsky respectively, His Grace, Bishop Herman, asked that the Dean of the Philadelphia Deanery find someone to fill these vacancies, and submit their names to Archbishop Kiprian for confirmation and appointment, since this is not an election year. It was noted by Fr. Borichevsky that these would be interim appointments.

Fr. Fedoronko expressed his concern over an article in Novoye Russkoye Slovo reporting a convention of Orthodox Masons in Detroit, which included a vigil service in a Detroit parish. His Eminence, Archbishop Kiprian, said that he would report it to the Holy Synod, and refer the matter to His Eminence, Archbishop John of Chicago.

Fr. Goidich motioned that the Seminary and Monastery be thanked for the use of their facilities for the Assembly, seconded by Mr. Dugan, and unanimously approved.

Fr. Borichevsky motioned that the Assembly be closed, seconded by Mr. Paul Laytar, and unanimously approved. The Assembly closed at 4:25 p.m. with the singing of "It is truly meet."

Respectfully submitted,

Priest John Matusiak, Clergy Secretary

Mr. John Dudash Jr., Lay Secretary