

Minutes of the Twenty-Fifth Assembly  
of the  
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

The 25th Annual Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America was convened on Saturday, September 10, 1988 at St. Tikhon's Seminary/Monastery, South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, con-celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Molieben with clergy representing the three deaneries.

**MORNING SESSION**

Following the Divine Liturgy, the Assembly gathered in the Seminary dining hall for a continental breakfast, then proceeded to the Seminary gymnasium for registration. At approximately 11:30 a.m., the Assembly and Church School Teachers heard the keynote address by Mr. Larry Jenney, Chairman of the Department of Lay Ministries of the Orthodox Church in America. The topic of Mr. Jenney's address was, "*Lay Ministry, A Shared Responsibility.*"

**Assembly Session**

Following lunch in the Monastery dining hall, the Assembly gathered in the Seminary gymnasium where at 1:35 p.m. "O Heavenly King" was sung by the participants. His Grace, Bishop HERMAN welcomed all Assembly delegates, observers, and participants to the Diocesan Church School Teachers Conference, and declared the 25th Diocesan Assembly to be in session.

Fr. Daniel Donlick read the agenda. No changes were made on the agenda. The agenda, as read, was accepted by the Assembly.

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE:**

Fr. Michael Hatrak submitted the following report:

Hierarchy	1
Clergy	28
Laity	31
Alternates	3
Diocesan Council	3
Observers	3

for a total of 69 present at the Assembly.

His Grace, Bishop HERMAN declared the Assembly open and in session.

**ELECTION OF ASSEMBLY OFFICERS:**

Fr. Donlick submitted the following clergy and laity for Assembly Officers:

Clergy Vice-Chairman ---- Fr. Eugene Vansuch

Lay Vice-Chairman ----- Mr. Michael Gaston

There being no further nominations from the floor, Mr. Nicholas Horsky moved to close the nominations, seconded by Fr. Daniel Kovalak. The nominations were accepted by the Assembly.

For the office of Secretary:

Clergy Secretary ----- Fr. Valerian Dzury

Lay Secretary ----- Mrs. Marie Proch

There being no further nominations from the floor, Fr. David Lisko moved to close the nominations, seconded by Fr. Neal Carrigan. The nominations were accepted by the Assembly.

Nominating Committee Members:

Fr. Dimitri Voytilla

Fr. Michael Evans

Mr. John Zoransky

## *MINUTES OF THE 1987 ASSEMBLY:*

The minutes of the 1987 Assembly, which were part of the pre-conciliar packet sent to delegates were presented. There being no corrections, additions or deletions, Fr. John Kuchta moved and Dr. Pianovich seconded, that the minutes be accepted. The motion passed.

### *REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN BISHOP:*

His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, gave an oral report to the venerable clergy and lay delegates to the 25th Assembly. His Grace noted that the Diocesan Office has been very busy for the past two years. This was especially so in light of the plans and preparations for observance of the Millennium of the Baptism of Russia and the 50th Anniversary of St. Tikhon's Seminary.

His Grace told the Assembly that during the Spring Session of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, the Treasurer complimented the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania for the prompt manner in which transmittals are made. His Grace also commended our Diocesan Secretary/Treasurer, Archpriest Daniel K. Donlick, for the fine manner in which he fulfills his office.

His Grace said it would take much time to review all the special activities that were sponsored by the Diocese during the past two years in honor of the Millennium. An attempt was made to touch all the people of our Diocese in order to further develop their Christian lives and to strengthen them in their journey to salvation.

Among the many activities this past year were the Senior Citizens' Day, Church School Conference, and Parish Council Conference. Two Parish Council Conferences are yet to be held. They are in the Wilkes-Barre and Frackville Deaneries.

His Grace stated that there are many projects the Central Administration of the Orthodox Church in America would like to accomplish but they are hindered due to a lack of finances. He further advised that serious attention would be given to this matter during the forthcoming Fall Session of the Holy Synod and during the All American Council to be convened in 1989.

His Grace expressed pleasure at the past Parish Jubilees and noted that in the next few months following this Assembly consecrations of new Churches will take place in Harrisburg, Williamsport and in Buckingham/Wrightstown. St. Herman's Church in Wallingford has voted to go ahead with plans to build a new Church. Holy Trinity Church of Pottstown is constructing a new addition to the Church. The Bell Tower at St. Tikhon's Monastery will be completed shortly with the placement of the Cupola.

His Grace noted with great joy the increasing number of visitors to St. Tikhon's Monastery not only for the Annual pilgrimage but throughout the year. Among the visitors are many non-Orthodox who are interested in the Orthodox faith. The monastic brotherhood is to be commended for their fine work in caring for and developing this spiritual center for the Orthodox Church in America.

His Grace with great joy and thanks, commended and congratulated St. Tikhon's Seminary on their recent achievement of receiving the privilege to grant the Master of Divinity Degree.

Reflecting on his recent visit to the Soviet Union, His Grace said that His Holiness, Patriarch PIMEN offered his personal heartfelt thanks for our prayers and that the Orthodox Faithful in the Soviet Union ask for our continued prayers for them. His Grace commented that during his visit thanks was offered by the Church of Russia to the clergy and faithful of our Diocese for the love and hospitality that was extended to representatives of their church who participated in the Millennium Celebrations in America and especially at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary. His Grace also expressed the interest of the Seminaries of Russia for an exchange program to further build up the Orthodox Church. The visitors from Russia returned to their homeland with favorable impressions and a desire to further develop lines of communication and cooperation.

His Grace further commented that not only the Church of Russia but all Orthodox Churches outside of the United States look to the Orthodox Church in America for leadership and support in doing God's Holy Work. He encouraged all to give their full support and cooperation to all such attempts.

His Grace welcomed the following to their new pastoral assignments:

Fr. Andrew Nelko to Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown;

Fr. Gregory Horton to Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua;

Fr. John Perich to St. Herman of Alaska Church, Wallingford;

Fr. Valerian Dzury to St. Michael's Church, Old Forge.



His Grace concluded his report by noting the many fine compliments about our diocesan publication, *YOUR DIOCESE ALIVE IN CHRIST* both from within and outside of the Orthodox Church. He also made mention that several of the bishops of the Holy Synod complimented our excellent publication. His Grace also commended the Editor, Archpriest John Kowalczyk, for his fine work with the publication and his work in the area of Public Relations.

Fr. Eugene Vansuch thanked His Grace, Bishop HERMAN for his leadership.

#### *REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL SECRETARY:*

Fr. Eugene Vansuch, noted that the report had been included in the packet sent to the Assembly delegates and he entertained questions. There being none, Fr. David Shewczyk moved to accept the report, seconded by Fr. Michael Hatrak. Motion carried.

#### *REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN SECRETARY/TREASURER:*

Fr. Daniel Donlick reported that the financial reports of the diocese for the period January 1, 1987 to December 31, 1987 are included in the Assembly packet, and have been audited by the C.P.A. He noted that there are some parishes that may owe money to the National Church through the Diocesan Office. Financial reports for the period January 1, 1988 through June 30, 1988 were distributed, along with statements by the certified public accountant.

Fr. Donlick thanked all Parish Councils and Parish Treasurers for their promptness in responding to all financial matters.

Fr. Donlick told the Assembly that our Diocese was singled out by the National Church as being the most prompt in meeting its obligations.

Fr. Donlick stated that our 1988 budget was a realistic one and that the budget for 1989 will be discussed later. He also advised the Assembly that he would be glad to discuss questions pertaining to the parish transmittal schedules with individual parishes following the close of the Assembly.

It was moved by Fr. Neal Carrigan and seconded by Mr. John Zoransky to combine this report with the Auditor's Report for acceptance. Motion passed.

#### *REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN AUDITORS:*

The Auditor's Statement was passed out to the delegates at the Assembly. It was read by Auditor, Gene Haverlak. There being no questions, Fr. Michael Evans moved to accept the Diocesan Secretary/Treasurer's Report, seconded by Fr. John Kowalczyk. Motion passed.

#### *DIOCESAN DEANERY REPORTS:*

Fr. Vansuch referred the delegates to the reports of the Deans of the Wilkes-Barre, Frackville, and Philadelphia Deaneries. The reports of Fr. John Kuchta, Fr. Joseph Martin and Fr. Daniel Geeza were included in the packet. There being only one correction to the Frackville Deanery Report, Fr. Dimitri Voytilla moved, seconded by Fr. John Udics that the reports be accepted with the correction. Motion passed.

#### *DIOCESAN DEPARTMENT REPORTS:*

##### **A. Department of Missions**

Fr. Daniel Kovalak reported that Holy Cross Church in Williamsport will be consecrated on November 12th. He asked for support via shared ministry. The cupolas were just placed on top of the new edifice. He noted that final cost of the new Church will exceed the original estimate by \$10,000.00.

Fr. Stephen Karaffa said the new building for ST. Mark's Church in Wrightstown is under construction. The foundation is in and framing will start immediately. He is hopeful for completion of construction by the end of the year and consecration in 1989. The mission parish has been holding services in Buckingham. The new edifice is in Wrightstown in Bucks County, northeast of Philadelphia.

Fr. John Perich said St. Herman of Alaska Church in Wallingford plans to build. He noted that a buyer has expressed the desire to buy the property. He said he is planning another outreach in Valley Forge. A lay person is already handling the affairs.

Fr. Neal Carrigan said that Holy Trinity Church in Stroudsburg continues to work as a non-mission parish, but "is a parish with a mission," and they are looking to expand their property.

With regard to missions, His Grace, Bishop HERMAN said that he is pleased with the dedication of the pastors involved.

#### B. Department of Religious Education

Fr. Andrew Nelko noted that his report is in the delegates' packet. He told the Assembly that the Church School Teachers Conference was in session concurrently with the Assembly and that there are 32 persons in attendance.

#### C. Department of Publications and Public Relations

Fr. John Kowalczyk noted that his report is in the packet. He asked for Christmas and Pascha listings. He noted that 671 members of the diocese participated last year. He said he would like to see this doubled by asking all present to assume responsibility for this by promoting this during "coffee hour," etc. With regard to a Parish Directory, he said that His Grace, Bishop HERMAN is handling the matter and that it will need editing. The same applies to Church Histories.

Fr. Eugene Vansuch asked Fr. Kowalczyk if any publicity regarding diocesan activities could be sent to him in order that he may share in his area and deanery via local newspapers. Fr. Kowalczyk said he has a directory of all newspapers and sends material to them. He asked for names of newspaper personnel whom he may personally contact.

#### D. Department of Youth

Mr. Martin Paluch's report was not part of the packet but was handed out at the Assembly. He told the Assembly that Mark Stokoe, Youth Director of the Department of Youth and Campus Ministry of the Orthodox Church in America, wishes to use two Churches in our Diocese as models in increasing youth participation.

Marie Proch of St. Basil's Church in Simpson, commended Mr. Paluch for his dedication and fine work as Chairman of the Department of Youth.

Fr. Eugene Vansuch told the Assembly how valuable the Summer Camp is in providing an outlet for our young people to get to know each other.

#### E. Department of Lay Ministry and Stewardship

Fr. Claude Vinyard was unable to attend the Assembly. However, his report was included in the packet.

#### F. DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Mrs. Marie Hudock rendered a verbal report. She said that 1988 was a very active year so far.

1. *The Medical Insurance Program* realized a 70% growth. In April, the Pension Board accepted the Eastern Pennsylvania Diocese Plan for the National Church. Mrs. Hudock noted that there were 265 members in the Medical Insurance Plan as of September 1987. As of September 1988, there were 448 members. Current membership, including dependents, is over 1,000. Insurance costs for basic coverage for individuals were \$60.75 in 1984 compared to \$60.44 in 1988. For Family coverage for Blue Cross/Blue Shield/Major Medical it was \$159.90 in 1984 and in 1988, is \$155.02.

Mrs. Hudock noted that the Greeks and Antiochians have seen up to 50% increases in their premiums (over \$400.00 per month) and their deductibles are \$250.00.

She said she is looking into the possibility of monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual billing.

As of December, 1987, Vision Benefits were added to our Plan. Plan C coverage was entered into voluntarily by doctors themselves.

These plans are also available to other Orthodox Clergy and full-time church employees (Antiochian, Carpatho-Russian, etc.) Antiochian Village has expressed an interest in our Plan.

##### 2. *Life Insurance*



As of July 1, 1988, we can offer retired clergy \$5,000.00 Life Insurance to age 90 at \$5.05 per Quarter. As of January, 1989 an optional permanent plan in conjunction with term plan will be available. More information will be mailed out.

Mrs. Hudock said she is available to attend any meetings (Deanery, etc.) to answer questions. She also has an "800" telephone number at which she can be reached.

Fr. John Udics commended Mrs. Hudock and expressed the thanks of the Assembly for her reliability.

Fr. Andrew Shuga moved that all the departmental reports be accepted. The motion was seconded by Fr. Vladimir Petorak and was passed.

At this point, Fr. Vansuch turned the meeting over to Lay Vice-Chairman, Mr. Michael Gaston.

#### *DIOCESAN MILLENNIUM REPORT*

Fr. Daniel Donlick delivered a verbal report. He noted that most of the details were covered in Bishop HERMAN's report. However, he did state that the bells for the Millennium Bell Tower at St. Tikhon's Monastery were those that had been removed from the now-closed churches in Shenandoah and Centralia, Pennsylvania. To-date, \$16,137.55 has been collected for the Bell Tower Project. Expenditures on the Bell Tower to-date, have been \$22,000.00. The addition of the Cupola with a Cross will bring the total to \$32,000.00. He advised all present that we need continued funding. Fr. Donlick asked for a resolution calling for an added appeal for this project. He said our bell tower in South Canaan is a tribute to this millennium year and is "a message in itself and will assure that the bells from Shenandoah and Centralia will ring forever."

The General Account loaned \$6,000.00 in April to help pay the contractor. About \$10,000.00 is needed to complete the Bell Tower Project.

On a motion by Fr. Neal Carrigan and seconded by Fr. John Udics, the report of Fr. Donlick was accepted.

#### *METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPORT*

Fr. John Kowalczyk distributed copies of his report prior to convening of the Assembly. He said that a task force has been commissioned to underscore problems such as membership decline, underfinancing, and sources of revenue.

The Metropolitan Council moved to increase the National Assessment from \$25.00 to \$35.00 beginning in 1990. It was also moved that beginning in January 1990 "each parish of the O.C.A. shall remit 3% of the total previous year's income in 12 equal monthly installments directly to the National Chancery." A substitute motion called for each parish to remit the CAA and the National appeals directly to the Chancery. No final decision on these as yet.

On a motion by Fr. Eugene Vansuch and seconded by Fr. Vladimir Petorak, the report was accepted.

#### *PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 1989*

Fr. Daniel Donlick referred delegates to the proposed budget in the Assembly packet. He said it was a realistic budget and that a few increases were necessary, some of them being: Travel allowance for His Grace, Bishop HERMAN; increased insurance for the Diocesan Center; and increased C.P.A. expenses.

The budget for 1989 was accepted on a motion made by Fr. Vladimir Petorak and seconded by Mr. Nicholas Horsky.

#### *ASSEMBLY REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS*

A. Fr. John Kuchta moved that we adopt a fund-raising program for the completion of the Bell Tower Project similar to that of 1988. Fr. Neal Carrigan seconded the motion and it was passed.

B. On a proposal by His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, Mr. Nicholas Horsky moved that the Diocese make the presentations as a token of our support and appreciation to the following parishes and in the amounts specified. To Williamsport and Wrightstown, \$1,000.00 each; and \$500.00 to Harrisburg. The money is to be presented at the consecration of these Churches. The motion was seconded by John Zoransky and passed.

#### *ELECTION OF DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEMBERS*

The Nominating Committee submitted the following names for nomination:

Deanery	Clergy	Laity
Wilkes-Barre	Fr. John Kowalczyk	Marie Proch
Frackville	Fr. Michael Hatrak	Dr. Alex Pianovich
Philadelphia	Fr. Stephen Karaffa	Miss Paula Lahutsky
At-Large	Fr. Eugene Vansuch	Mr. John Zoransky

Fr. Michael Evans nominated the candidates for the Wilkes-Barre Deanery; Fr. John Kuchta moved, seconded by Fr. John Perich that nominations be closed. Motion passed.

Mr. John Zoransky nominated the candidates for the Frackville Deanery; Fr. David Lisko moved, seconded by Mr. Paul Malinchak that nominations be closed. Motion passed.

Fr. Dimitri Voytilla nominated the candidates for the Philadelphia Deanery; Mr. John Zoransky moved, seconded by Mr. Theodore Sovyrda that nominations be closed. Motion passed.

For Delegates at Large, Mr. Paul Malinchak moved, seconded by Mr. John Larchak that nominations be closed. Motion passed.

#### *Auditing Committee Nominations*

The Nominating Committee reported that Fr. Paul Borick and Mr. Gene Haverlak agreed to continue. However, a replacement is needed for Mr. Russell Lahutsky.

Mr. John Larchak nominated Mr. Paul Malinchak seconded by Fr. Paul Ropitsky. Fr. David Lisko moved, seconded by Fr. Neal Carrigan that nominations be closed. Motion passed. It was moved by Mr. John Zoransky and seconded by Fr. Neal Carrigan that the Auditing Committee be comprised of Fr. Paul Borick, Mr. Gene Haverlak and Mr. Paul Malinchak. Motion passed.

#### *OTHER MATTERS*

A. *Date of 26th Assembly:* The 26th Assembly will be held during the SS. Peter & Paul Fast. The date will be determined by the Diocesan Council with the blessing of His Grace, Bishop HERMAN. There being no other business, His Grace, Bishop HERMAN expressed gratitude to all present, He asked for their continued labor. His Grace expressed thanks to the outgoing Diocesan Council members and intoned "MANY YEARS."

#### *ADJOURNMENT*

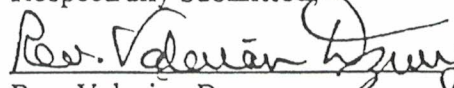
Priest-Monk, Fr. Michael (Thier) moved that the 25th Diocesan Assembly stand in adjournment. Fr. Vladimir Petorak seconded the motion. Motion carried.

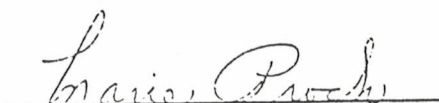
His Grace, Bishop HERMAN closed the Assembly at 4:03 p.m. with the singing of "It is truly meet..."

approved by:

  
His Grace, Bishop HERMAN

Respectfully Submitted

  
Rev. Valerian Dzury

  
Mrs. Marie Proch