

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH ASSEMBLY OF  
THE DIOCESE OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

The 26th Annual Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America was convened on Saturday, June 10, 1989 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 Moleben with clergy representing the three deaneries.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the Assembly gathered in the Seminary dining hall for a continental breakfast followed by the registration of clergy, delegates, and observers.

**ASSEMBLY SESSION**

The Session was begun with prayer and the blessing of Bishop HERMAN. His Grace welcomed the delegates and observers and declared the 26th Diocesan Assembly to be in session.

Fr. Daniel Donlick read the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda and it was accepted by the assembly.

Credentials committee:

Fr. John Onofrey reported the following:

Hierarch	1
Clergy	35
Laity	28
Alternates	3
Diocesan Council	5
Observers	4

for a total of 76 present at the Assembly.

Election of Assembly Officers:

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

Clergy Vice-Chairman --	Fr. Daniel Geeza
Lay Vice-Chairman --	Mr. Alan Pscolyar

For the office of the secretary:

Clergy Secretary --	Fr. David Shewczyk
Lay Secretary --	Mrs. Marie Proch

There being no further nominations on the floor, Fr. David Lisko moved to close nominations, seconded by Fr. Valerian Dzury. The nominations were accepted by the Assembly.

## MINUTES OF THE 1988 ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the 1988 Assembly were a part of the pre-conciliar packet sent to the delegates and were presented. There being no corrections, additions, or deletions, Fr. Neal Carrigan moved and Fr. Joseph Martin Seconded, that the minutes be accepted. The motion passed.

## DIOCESAN BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop HERMAN began his report by intoning "Memory Eternal" for the newly-departed Archbishop JOHN (Shahovskoy) and Archimandrite Sebastian (Gyza).

Bishop HERMAN reported that Metropolitan THEODOSIUS had requested that the Discussion Papers for the Ninth All-American Council be discussed at the Diocesan Assemblies. The Theme for the Council is: "Reflecting on the Past, Planning for the Future." His Grace encouraged each parish of the Diocese to be represented especially since parishes had three years to prepare their budgets for travel expenses.

Bishop HERMAN reported that the Diocese is running smoothly and that the assessments are being collected by the parishes and the money is being transmitted in timely fashion.

Fr. Deacon John Maxwell was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and assigned to Uniondale. Hierodeacon Gregory (Zaiens) was also ordained to the Holy Priesthood and is assigned to the Monastery.

The bishop gave a detailed report on his archpastoral visitations.

His Grace noted that the Paoli-Valley Forge Mission is being studied as well as a building project at St. Herman's, Wallingford.

Bishop HERMAN stated that a decision was made to go no further with the courts concerning the litigations because of the high costs. He will meet with the members of St. Basil's, Simpson on June 11, 1989 and with the parishioners of St. John the Baptist, Mayfield in the very near future.

His Grace spoke about the upcoming 200th Anniversary of Orthodoxy in North America to be held in 1994. A main celebration will be held at the Monastery and a committee will be appointed in the future.

His Grace reflected on the diminishing number of faithful both in the Diocese and the National Church. There are more and more funerals each year with no one to replace those who have fallen asleep.

Bishop HERMAN noted that the Diocese is active in all areas. On the Ecumenical level, there are contacts with Roman Catholics, Polish National Catholics and the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. The Seminary/Monastery receives many visitors from among the non-Orthodox Churches and especially those who are very unhappy with the state of their churches.

His Grace spoke about his travels to Russia and Poland. He will represent our Metropolitan THEODOSIUS in Japan in November as



the Church in Japan marks its 20th Anniversary of Autonomy.

His Grace concluded his report by encouraging those gathered to share their thoughts and ideas as to how we can work for the building up of the Church. He asked those gathered to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us in our efforts and also encouraged the delegates to get up and speak in the open discussion session that will comprise the second part of the assembly.

Fr. Daniel Geeza thanked Bishop HERMAN for his report and his leadership as we look forward to the 200th Anniversary of Orthodoxy in North America.

#### REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL SECRETARY

It was noted by Fr. Geeza that the report of the Diocesan Council Secretary had been included in the delegate packet. Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept the report seconded by Fr. Vladimir Petorak. Motion carried.

#### REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN TREASURER

Fr. Donlick acknowledged and thanked the parish council treasurers and secretaries for their timely transmittals especially for the month of May so that we could have an updated report for this assembly. He also commended the parishes for the consistency with which the transmittals were made. Checks are transmitted to the National Church on the last day of the month for assessments and appeals.

Fr. Donlick reported a \$14,000 deficit on the cost of the Millennium Bell Tower Project. The money was taken from the General Fund.

Fr. John Onofrey asked if it were possible to centralize all appeals because some parishioners feel that they receive too many at one time.

Fr. Donlick suggested that all National Church appeal monies be sent to the Diocese and the Diocese will transmit the money to the National Church so that the parish contribution will appear on the Diocesan report.

Fr. Daniel Kovalak asked for a clarification of the National appeals monies just travelling through the Diocese as it pertains to the budget.

Fr. Eugene Vansuch noted that the Diocesan Council ratifies the budget presented to it.

Questions arose as to the cost of the Diocesan magazine, YOUR DIOCESE ALIVE IN CHRIST. Fr. John Kowalczyk responded giving a detailed account on the publication including, purpose, cost, and accomplishments.

Fr. Neal Carrigan noted that other churches, and organizations have subscriptions or special assessments for their publications. He proposed a minimal parish assessment for the magazine.

Fr. Kowalczyk thanked the parishioners for their Christmas and Paschal listings. The publications should net close to \$7,000

worth of listing. Each issue costs \$1.00 per member. He reported that he checked other publishers for publishing costs for the magazine. Those proposals neared \$30,000 for one issue; our costs have been much less. He noted that the magazine synthesizes the Diocesan work-- education, mission, parish life, etc.

Bishop HERMAN noted the far-reaching effects of the magazine. His Grace stated that our publication answers the command to "go out to preach and teach." Many articles which appear in our publication have been translated into Polish and other languages. The Church of Russia has asked to translate articles. Faithful from the Church of Africa cut out the icons for use in their churches and prayer life. The publication does not leave anyone out as it covers Senior Citizens as well as the Youth of our Diocese.

A motion was made by Fr. Michael Evans to accept the treasure's report and seconded by Fr. John Kowalczyk. Motion carried.

#### REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN AUDITORS

Fr. Paul Borick reported that two auditors were absent. He reported that all seemed to be in order. No other reports were given.

#### DEANERY REPORTS

The Deanery reports were included in the delegate packet. There being no questions, additions, or corrections to the reports a motion was made by Fr. Vladimir Petorak to accept the reports seconded by John Zoransky. Motion carried.

#### DIOCESAN DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

##### A. Religious Education.

Fr. Daniel Ressetar noted that the Orthodox Church in America will not fund Matushka Theodora Ressetar's travel expense to the All-American Council because of the financial situation. She will not be going to the Council.

##### B. Department of Missions.

Reports from the Diocesan missions were included in the delegate packet.

As per their request, Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Williamsport asks for a reduction in monthly mission stipend from \$400.00 to \$300.00 per month starting in June 1989.

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

Fr. John Kowalczyk noted that his report is part of the delegate packet. Six thousand copies of ALIVE IN CHRIST are



printed. Fr. Daniel Kovalak asked if there had been any progress on the proposed Diocesan directory of parishes. Fr. Kowalczyk answered that a column will appear in the magazine which will cover the history of each parish.

#### D. Department of Insurance.

Bishop HERMAN commended Marie Hudock on her work with the insurance program for the diocese. It was reported that the pension fund has gone over the 5 million dollar mark in assets. Marie Huddock presented a written report to be included in the packet. She reported that in September 1974 there were 10 members in the medical insurance plan. As of June 1, 1989, there are 551 members. Our medical insurance is one of the lowest cost and most flexible available. Our membership continues to grow.

She also reported that a Group Permanent option of the Life Insurance program will be offered as of July 1, 1989. During the past year, our membership in the Life Insurance program increased 30% from 240 members in July 1988 to 352 members as of June 1989.

Fr. Gregory Horton moved to accept all reports seconded by Fr. Valerian Dzury. Motion Carried.

The assembly broke for lunch at 12:30 p.m.

The Assembly reconvened at 1:45 p.m. with Mr. Alan Pcsolyar chairing the session.

Mr. Martin Paluch presented his written report for the Department of Youth.

Fr. Claude Vinyard's report for the Department of Lay Ministries was a part of the delegate packet.

Fr. John Kowalczyk presented his report for the Metropolitan Council.

Mr. Steven Kundrat moved to accept all reports given, seconded by Fr. John Udics. Motion carried.

#### **PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 1990**

The delegates were now referred to the proposed Budget for 1990. It was reported that the budget was drawn up by the Diocesan Council with preliminary figures provided by Fr. Donlick.

Fr. John Kuchta moved to accept the proposed budget seconded by Mr. Ted Sovyrda. Motion carried.

At this point in the Assembly, a special Program was arranged to discuss the working papers for the Ninth All-American Council. The first part of the two-part program included the discussion of Pastoral, Liturgical, and Worship issues and was chaired by the three deans of the Diocese, Fr. Daniel Geeza, Fr. Joseph Martin, and Fr. Vladimir Fetcho. The second half of the program included a discussion on Finances and was chaired by Fr. Eugene Vansuch and Mr. Alan Pcsolyar.

Fr. Gregory Horton spoke on the issue of a central clergy compensation. In the dialogue that continued with Bishop HERMAN



it was also noted that it would be good to be able to assign the right priest to the right parish situation. This ideal situation is always kept in mind, but sometimes this is not possible for various reasons.

A recommendation was made by Fr. Eugene Vansuch that the Parish Council Conferences continue on a Deanery level and that the discussions begun today be continued at those Conferences.

Bishop HERMAN spoke on the issue of the lack of attendance at the Parish Yearly Meetings. He also said that the Pastor should see to it that at every parish meeting the agenda should include discussions of the issues that were examined today. Parishioners should also be invited to attend these meetings to be a part of these talks.

Fr. Eugene Vansuch then chaired a discussion on Witness and Service.

Mr. Alan Pcsolyar chaired the discussion of Finances and Church Administration. He noted that after study by the Financial Task Force of the OCA, it was found that the financial situation within the Church is a symptom of other problems. There was found to be a difference between what was being said behind the scenes and what was being said officially. The structure of the All-American Council will be changed to an open forum rather than a structured Council. Working papers have been published for everyone, not just the delegates. The publication of the working papers long before the Council will allow delegates to come to the Council informed and prepared.

Mr. Pcsolyar noted an attempt to get away from "living from hand to mouth" to a more adequate system of funding. He noted the aging, declining membership base. We do not know our population. Some of the other issues dealt with by the Financial Task Force included the inadequate funding of departments, the poor and unequal compensation of clergy, the duplication of work created through de-centralization, the Chancery Staff, the need to strengthen the National Church, Ethnic Dioceses, cashflow, a 5-year plan (moving from a year-to-year approach to a long-range approach) and insufficient growth of National Church income.

An increase in the assessment from \$25.00 to \$35.00 was proposed as a stop-gap remedy. One idea was a more vigorous move to proportionate giving. Still another idea proposed is the establishment of a 5 million dollar endowment to be in place by 1994 to provide a steady source of funding. Other alternatives and "non-traditional" forms of giving were also studied.

#### RESOLUTIONS TO THE NINTH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Fr. Vladimir Borichevsky proposed a resolution (text provided) that the 11th All-American Bicentennial Council be convoked in 1994 to gather in Sacred Council at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary. The resolution was seconded by Fr. Eugene Vansuch. Motion carried.

#### OTHER MATTERS

Fr. Joseph Martin moved, seconded by Fr. Andrew Nelko to pay the transportation for Matushka Theodora Ressetar to the Ninth All-American Council as a representative of the Department of Religious Education from the Diocese. Motion carried.

Fr. Donlick noted Bishop HERMAN's 25th Anniversary to the Priesthood on September 24, 1989. He presented a resolution to the assembly seconded by Fr. Joseph Woodill wishing health and God's Blessings to His Grace.

Bishop HERMAN closed the Assembly noting that it was one of the better Assemblies and this shows much interest and love for the Church. He exhorted all to continue these good discussions in the parishes. His Grace offered to be present with any parish or group of parishes to sit and talk informally about the issues discussed at the Assembly.

Fr. Dimitri Voytilla moved, seconded by Fr. Gregory Horton to adjourn. Motion carried.

The Assembly was closed with prayer and the blessing of Bishop HERMAN at 4:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Priest David Shewczyk*

Priest David Shewczyk

*Marie Proch*

Mrs. Marie Proch

Approved by

*+ Bishop Herman*  
His Grace, Bishop Herman