

Diocese of Philadelphia & Eastern Pennsylvania

Diocesan Council Meeting - May 5, 2009

Present: His Grace, Bishop TIKHON, Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Archpriest Daniel Kovalak, Archpriest John Onofrey, Priest Nicholas Solak, Priest Martin Browne, Priest Timothy Hojnicky, Doug Yates, Elsie Herman, Mary Sernak, Maria Proch

Absent: Archpriest John Kowalczyk, Chancellor, Archpriest Vladimir Fetcho, Archpriest John Udics, Reader Peter Bohlender.

The meeting opened with the singing of "Christ is Risen!" at 11:10 am.

Fr. Kovalak reminded the council that more should have been done in terms of public relations as discussed in the last meeting for Orthodox Nativity.

Fr. Kovalak moved to accept the minutes

Fr. Hatrak Seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Bishop's Report:

His Grace greeted the council with the joy of Pascha

The strategic plan for the OCA will take time to unfold. There have been many legal challenges and resolutions. There is the necessity to preserve the hierarchical structure of the Church, and deemphasize the centralized model. The central administration in Syosset is there to assist the diocese. Not to run them.

Within the diocese His Grace would like to have diocesan By-laws. He expressed his desire to examine the physical structure, boundaries, and a reassessment of the deaneries. His Grace proposed 3-6 new deanery alignments, the purpose of which would be smaller groups, more personal contact, and more responsibility to the local dean. The hope is that there could then be more cooperation, more clergy brotherhood and mentorship. The Chancellor would preserve his role as assistant to the bishop and overseer of the chancery office. His Grace stressed that this was not something being imposed onto the diocese, but rather a proposal.

His Grace spoke on the importance of communication. The Diocesan magazine "Alive in Christ" will now be a once a year publication (1 issue), smaller (40 or so pages) and focus more on the life of the diocese. The idea is to keep it smaller and more directly relevant to people. The website and the newsletter will follow up with other things through the year.

It was suggested that we would possibly be implementing a time table for the realignment of the Diocesan Deanery boundaries at the next Diocesan Council meeting for the Next Diocesan Assembly. A discussion was had on the idea of diocesan realignment that has been talked about for many years, and

if this did happen any deanery realignment would be affected by this if the National Church follows through with this.

Mat. Sandy Kopestonsky gave a report on the Diocesan Magazine, "Alive in Christ". It would be approximately 40 pages, for distribution at the end of April, before Memorial day at the latest. Discussion followed.

More discussion was had on the issue of deanery realignment. It was suggested that each deanery should be cut in half to create smaller groups to work pastorally at development of our inter clergy/faithful working in the diocese, a "Pastoral Configuration of the Diocese."

Fr. Daniel Kovalak presented the resolution:

The Diocese council of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania expresses to the Holy Synod our urgent desire for the determining of the governing authority for the parcel of St. Tikhon's Monastery upon which our Diocesan Center is situated to expedite the procurement of said parcel by our diocese at the earliest possible time

Seconded by Fr. Michael Hatrak, the resolution was adopted UNANIMOUSLY

Fr. Martin Browne presented the Financial Report of the Diocese. A motion was made by Fr. Michael Hatrak to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit, seconded by Fr. Nicholas Solak – UNANIMOUS approval.

There was no Chancellor's report as Fr. John Kowalczyk was not able to attend.

Fr. John Onofrey gave a report on the workings of the Metropolitan Council since their February meetings. He spoke of the work of the Strategic planning committee. He updated the Council on the various legal actions that the Church is involved in with financial costs escalating. He also spoke about the concern for sexual liability insurance options and how to properly implement them in a parish setting.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

It was decided that the next Diocesan Assembly would be held on Friday-Saturday December 4-5, at St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem. It was suggested that we start the business proceedings earlier on Friday, rather than later, to be able to end the meeting on Saturday to then be able to return to the parishes to begin the feast of St. Nicholas.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Fr. Dan Kovalak asked about the status of the various Task Force programs in the diocese. The Bishop mentioned that several of the tasks forces have met, but he feels it is more effective if they could meet on a local level.

Mrs. Marie Proch asked about the probability of a Women's retreat. Marie would speak to her daughter Maria Proch, who would speak to the Bishop to schedule one.

A discussion was had on Stewardship within the diocese. Fr. Nicholas Solak suggested we identify those who do tithe in our parishes, and gather them together and seek input. The best conviction to tithe would be from other tithers.

Fr. Dan Kovalak's article on stewardship was discussed at length, and it was decided by the council to have someone edit the article by half to be able to post the whole thing in the next issue of the Alive in Christ. It was suggested that His Grace would write an introduction for that.

A motion was made to adjourn by Marie Proch, seconded by Fr. Michael Hatrak. The meeting closed with the singing of "Shine, Shine!" at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priest Timothy Hojnicky