

DIOCESE OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (DOEPA)

Diocesan Council Meeting

May 16, 2019

Meeting opened with a prayer. Archbishop Mark welcomed both the new and returning members of the Diocesan Council (**DC**) saying that he hoped the new council would work as well together as the previous council had.

Minutes of the previous meeting as presented by Fr. Stephen were presented. A motion put forth by Deacon Peter Skoog proposed that the minutes be accepted as written. The motion was seconded by Deacon John Shingara. Motion was approved.

Archbishop Mark

- Archbishop Mark reviewed a list of necessary repairs for the diocesan center along with the accompanying costs. Cost estimates were just under \$16,000. Since these costs could be covered by funds from the sale of the diocesan center in South Cannan, PA and would fall in line with the understanding that the total cost of new diocesan center would not exceed the funds generated by the sale of the old diocesan center, the **DC** encouraged His Eminence to proceed.

Chancellor's Report

Fr. Martin Browne

- Fr. Martin reviewed his report which had been distributed earlier. Key points were:
 - Dedicated service to the diocese by members of the clergy is appreciated and helps fulfill the mission of the Church. At the annual diocesan assembly, retiring clergy or clergy that have retired since the last diocesan assembly should be recognized.
 - The All American Council (AAC) is an opportunity for the national church to gather, learn from one another, exchange ideas, and experience the fellowship that is the church. All parishes in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, even those without permanently assigned priests, should set aside funds so that at least 1 delegate can be sent to the AAC.
 - Because of the importance of the AAC and because delegates from various Diocese vote on resolutions as a block, Fr. Nicholas Solak suggested:
 - that parishes select their delegates to the AAC early and that all delegates from DOEPA meet prior to the AAC.
 - DOEPA delegates would be able to discuss key topics from the upcoming AAC and see how the delegates are planning on voting.
 - Discussion of how DOEPA in general feels about upcoming AAC topics could be shared.
 - Voting strategies could also be a topic for the meeting of delegates.
 - All in attendance agreed with the above AAC strategy would be a good idea moving forward.

Treasurer's Report

Mark Linnehan

- Mark Linnehan has taken over the responsibilities as treasurer for DOEPA.
- Mark presented various financial reports detailing the financial situation within the diocese.
- It was reported that St. Tikhon's summer camp has \$22,000 that is now being overseen by DOEPA. A meeting that includes the camp directors and representatives of DOEPA is needed to review all accounts and account activity. Reporting responsibilities and account signees need to be established.
- A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and seconded by Sebastian Crews. Motion was passed unanimously.

Reports from Diocesan Deans

- Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk – Philadelphia Deanery
 - All parishes are being serviced by a full time priest.
 - There are currently 2 students in the Deaconate Program working at their own pace. No ordination dates have been set as studies need to be completed.
- Fr. Timothy Hojnicky – Frackville Deanery
 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in St. Clair has discussed merging with Sts. Peter & Paul in Minersville. This will be an ongoing discussion / investigation to best serve the souls involved.
 - Fr. Silouan Burns has expressed interest in being assigned to Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in McAdoo, PA. Note: Archbishop Mark commented that Fr. Silouan was ordained in Mechanicsburg, PA and that parishes are glad to see ordinations. This brings the fullness of the church closer to the people.
- Fr. Nicholas Solak – Wilkes-Barre Deanery
 - There are currently 2 open parishes in the Wilkes-Barre Deanery. They are being covered by various priests.
 - Various challenges have arisen in the recent past including having the deanery bank account locked by the financial institution. This has been resolved.

Internship Program

Archbishop Mark

- There are currently 5 students from St. Tikhon's Seminary in the DOEPA Internship Program. Four of those students are from DOEPA and 1 is from outside the diocese.
- Internships are typically limited to weekends (primarily Sundays).
- Interns are to participate in all liturgical services and assist the host priest whenever and wherever possible.
- The objective is to prepare newly ordained priests and seminarians nearing ordination to serve in a parish setting.
- Fr. Nicholas Solak has met with these interns 8 times over the past school year as a peer group to discuss experiences and challenges that each of them has faced.

Clergy Peer Learning

Fr. Nicholas Solak

- Fr. Nicholas gave a brief introduction and update on the clergy peer learning and the support it offers DOEPA clergy and matushki. This was primarily for the new members of the **DC**.
- Archbishop Mark spoke about the positive results of Thriving in Ministry and its expansion outside of the OCA. DOEPA has been doing groundbreaking work in this area and it's being copied by other Orthodox jurisdictions.

Summer Camp

Archbishop Mark

Fr. Martin Browne

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky

- There is now much better communication between the camp administrators and the clergy directly involved with the camp.
 - Councilors are sending applications and letters of recommendation to the appropriate parties for review and approval.
 - Camp offers DOEPA access to the youth of the diocese as well as youth from other Orthodox jurisdictions.
 - A meeting was proposed that would include Mark Linnehan, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, and Fr. Martin Browne and older camp attendees that would allow us to ask:
 - What's it like to be a teenager today?
 - What are your stressors?
 - How do you view the church?
 - What do you need from the church?
 - Does your church meet your needs?
 - How do you use social media?
 - Could social media be important in the church?
 - A report on the meeting with the youth at camp will be discussed at the next **DC** meeting.
 - Camp dates are 7/7 – 13/ 2019

Metropolitan Council

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky

- Fr. Timothy gave a brief rundown on the newly adopted organizational structure of the chancery office in Syosset, NY. He discussed how this new structure is different from the previous organizational structure and gave so insight into how things are now supposed to function.
- The next AAC will be held in Baltimore.

Liturgical Life

Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk

- Father Victor has been working on a modified vigil service to replace vespers in parishes that might be open to change.
- The new service, while abridged, captures the essence of vigil.
- Goal is to have the modified vigil service available – one booklet for each of the 8 tones - on the DOEPA web site.
- Because of the volume of work required progress may be slow.

Clergy Continuing Education

Fr. Martin Browne

- Fr. John Edward is now in charge of Continuing Education. Fr. Martin Browne has assumed a mentoring role with Fr. John.
- Upcoming topic for Continuing Education is pastoring those with addictions.
- Objective for Continuing Ed. Is increased frequency and increased regularity of course offerings.
- There have been requests for more advanced notice of Continuing Ed. Programs.

New Business

- Archbishop Mark – Matushka Ashley duties will be shifting from administrative assistant and “gal Friday” to being the DOEPA financial Secretary. A new administrative assistant will need to be hire. Requirement will be 15 hrs. / week. A search for a suitable candidate will begin in the near future.

Charity

- **OCC** of Greater Harrisburg - \$100
- **St. Michael’s Church**, Mount Carmel diaper charity- \$450
- **Holy Trinity**, - Stroudsburg – 2 x \$450 for soup kitchen
- For Fr. Michael Demko - \$1167.45 – Clergy assistance for Ph.D. studies
- **Scholarships** - \$500 each for Fr. Silouan Burns and Fr. Vjekoslav
- Motion to move forward with these charitable contributions made by Deacon Peter Skoog; 2nd – Russ Charowsky

There was a secondary e-mail from Fr. Martin Browne dated 17 May 2019 with the subject line “Action Items from Yesterday’s Meeting” That also cover topics from the **DC** meeting.

Respectively submitted,



Deacon Peter Skoog