

# **Report of the Chancellor Diocesan Assembly October 7, 2014 Cleveland, Ohio**

As in last year's report, the Diocese continues to function under the Omophorion of Bishop Alexander, our *locum tenens*. We are blessed to have a *locum tenens* that was, not long ago, a part of our diocese.

## **Special Assembly**

At the winter meeting of the Bishop's Council last year, I reported to Bishop Alexander and the Deans that, because of the size of our Diocese and the fact that Bishop Alexander is our *locum tenens* and has a diocese of his own, we were in need of a to visit the parishes for the many and various sacramental and pastoral needs. Our thought, at that time, was that the Holy Synod could elect and consecrate an Auxiliary Bishop for the Metropolitan and assign him as Administrator of the Diocese of the Midwest. From the time of the retirement of Bishop Matthias, I was serving as the Administrator by Synodal appointment. Assigning a Bishop Administrator would have given us an Episcopal presence and provided for the various sacramental and pastoral needs in the Diocese.

Bishop Alexander informed us at that time that his desire was to put forth the name of Fr. Paul Gassios for this position. Bishop Alexander reported the discussion of the Bishop's Council at the Diocesan Council meeting the following day. The Diocesan Council supported the action and a letter was sent to the Metropolitan requesting the action from the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod at it's spring meeting was not willing to consecrate and appoint an Auxiliary Bishop as our Administrator. They did, however, appoint Fr. Paul Gassios as the Administrator of our Diocese. This, in reality, did not provide a solution to our problem, i.e. the need for an Episcopal presence for the sacramental and pastoral needs of the diocese.

At the summer meeting of the Bishop's and Diocesan Council, Bishop Alexander announced that he was summoning a Special Assembly for the purpose of nominating a candidate for Bishop of the Diocese of the Midwest. He then stated that it was desire to put forth the name of Fr. Paul Gassios to the assembly for consideration. Both the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Council concurred with his request.

## **Activities of the Chancellor**

Prior to the appointment of Fr. Paul as our diocesan administrator, I was asked to visit the Kansas City Deanery and the Minneapolis Deanery for specific parochial issues in both deaneries. While visiting in those deaneries, I was able to meet with the Clergy of those deaneries and answer any questions they might have regarding the life of the Diocese of the Midwest. I always enjoy the opportunity meet with my brother Priests and Deacons. The time to share is often few and far

between. I was truly impressed with the vibrancy of the life in our Church. Much of the time I have to deal with the down side of diocesan life. Visiting a parish when there is no crisis and seeing the results of steadfast evangelical efforts is truly a joy.

We have had several retirements announced in the diocese in the past year. Fr. Myron Manzuk and Fr. Peter Bodnar both retired this past summer. Fr. Basil Stoyka is retiring as of the end of this year. Fr. Justin Foster is also retiring on November 1, 2014. In addition to these retirements Fr. John Wehling requested release from his appointment in Livonia, MI and canonical release to the Diocese of the South. Fr. John's request was unforeseen but was precipitated by personal family needs. Needless to say, we now have to fill the resulting vacancies. Though many times I have heard that there is a glut of priestly candidates, my experience in the past few months, working with the respective deans, has revealed that there are not as many priestly candidates as I thought. We are still trying to find candidates for two of our vacant parishes.

### **Appointment of Fr. Paul Gassios as Administrator**

Fr. Paul began his duties as diocesan Administrator on August 1, 2014. From the time of his appointment, Fr. Paul is in the office everyday addressing the various needs presented. Fr. Paul and I speak very frequently. I, along with our staff, am doing all that we can to bring him up to speed on the life of the Diocese of the Midwest. His daily presence in the Chancery office has been a blessing and has improved the day-to-day operation of the Chancery. We conduct a weekly "Skype" meeting to review and discuss any issues at hand. Our meetings usually last about an hour and a half. Fr. Paul is quickly grasping the challenges and complexity of the Diocesan life.

### **LaSalle Evaluation**

The evaluation of the property on LaSalle continues. We are having the deed reviewed by an attorney. We have also initiated dialog with the Parish of Christ the Savior. We wish to be as thorough as possible. We hope to have a report by the summer meeting of the Diocesan Council.

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank Fr. John Memorich and the Parish of Archangel Michael for their hospitality and work in preparing for this Assembly. I especially want to thank Mary Jane Lucak and her associates for organizing this assembly. Mary Jane has served as our "Assembly Manager" for many years and certainly has made our lives less complicated at this time every year.

As always, I thank His Grace Bishop Alexander and Fr. Paul Gassios for their trust and support. Above all, I thank the venerable Deans of our diocese for their support and trust and for the work they do at the deanery level. I thank our Priests and Deacons for their labors in the vineyard. I thank the Diocesan Council, especially the lay members who often must take vacation time to participate in meetings, etc. These fine people truly offer their gifts of time and talent for the service of our Church. I have served as Chancellor of our Diocese for ten years and I think that we

have the finest of Clergy and Laity her in the Diocese of the Midwest. It is truly a blessing to be able to serve with all of you.

Lastly, but by no means least of all, I thank my wife Cindy who, next week, has been my love and support for 40 years.

God bless of all of you for your devotion and love for His Holy Church and my He grant all of us many blessed years!

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest John Zdinak  
Chancellor