

MINUTES • SPECIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Broadview Heights, Ohio

7 October 2014

I. OPENING.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Church, Broadview Heights, OH, the Special Assembly of the Diocese of the Midwest for the purpose of nominating a candidate for the vacant Episcopal See of Chicago and the Midwest was convened. His Grace, Bishop Alexander, Locum Tenens, opened the Assembly in the church with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit” at 8:33 a.m. Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor, chaired the session, with Mr. Philip Sokolov serving as Recording Secretary.

II. CREDENTIALS.

One Bishop, 48 clergy delegates, 54 lay delegates, and five observers, for a total of 108 attendees, of whom 103 were eligible to vote.

III. PROCEDURES AND VOTING.

Father Zdinak reviewed the nomination procedures, noting that 69 votes would be required to reach a 2/3 majority for nomination. There being no questions, ballots were distributed and tallied as the assembly sang the troparia of Pentecost, of Saint Herman, and of Saint Innocent.

Archpriest Paul Gassios received 88 votes out of a total of 102 ballots. One ballot had been disqualified.

Upon motion by Archpriest Andrew Clements, seconded by Archpriest Basil Stoyka, Father Gassios was nominated by acclamation.

IV. ADJOURNMENT.

Following congratulatory remarks by Bishop Alexander, the Assembly adjourned at 8:50 a.m. with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

*Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Philip Sokolov*

MINUTES • 53RD ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Broadview Heights, Ohio

7 October 2014

I. OPENING.

The Assembly opened with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and prayer at 9:30 a.m., after which His Grace, Bishop Alexander, Locum Tenens, called the Assembly to order.

II. CREDENTIALS.

One Bishop, 48 clergy delegates, 59 lay delegates, and seven observers, for a total of 115 attendees.

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, APPOINTMENTS.

After introductory remarks, Bishop Alexander turned the podium over to Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor, who moved, on behalf of the Diocesan Council, that Archpriest John Matusiak, Mr. Philip Sokolov and Mrs. Ann Marie Mecera serve as the secretariat; that Archpriest Andrew Clements, Priest Nicholas Finley and Mr. Barry Gluntz serve on the nominating committee; and that all deacons, under the direction of Archpriest John Memorich, serve as tellers. He also reviewed openings on the Diocesan Council.

IV. REPORT OF THE LOCUM TENENS.

Bishop Alexander spoke briefly of his tenure as Locum Tenens, adding that with the nomination of Archpriest Paul Gassios, Diocesan Administrator, whom he anticipates will be elected by the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, his tenure will draw to a close. He expressed his conviction that in Father Gassios, the delegates “chose wisely... a man of integrity, fundamental decency, and even an overactive conscience.”

Bishop Alexander expressed his deep satisfaction with the Diaconal Vocations Program under the direction of Priest Elijah Mueller, “who has assembled stables of doctorates” to facilitate the program, especially in the Chicago and Kansas City deaneries. The program is not only of value to those aspiring to serve the Church in the diaconate, but to lay persons intent on expanding their theological knowledge and understanding.

V. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

In brief remarks, Father Gassios thanked the members of the Diocese of the Midwest for their patience, adding that in the short time since he has been in Chicago, he has found “tremendous warmth, kindness and hospitality” in the parishes he has visited. He also expressed his appreciation for the work of Father Zdinak, Priest John Baker, and Mr. Sokolov. He concluded by noting that he would be tonsured to the rank of riassophore monk on Monday, October 20, 2014.

VI. REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR.

In addition to his written report, Father Zdinak noted that much time has been devoted to finding candidates to fill parishes that had become vacant due to retirements and transfers, and that two parishes – the Protection of the Virgin Mary, Merrillville, IN and Saint Nicholas, Joliet, IL – remain vacant. He also spoke of Father Gassios’ presence in the office daily and the positive adjustments this has raised.

VII. DEANERY REPORTS.

A. Chicago Deanery. In addition to his written report, Archpriest Thomas Mueller announced that, in addition to the vacancies in the Merrillville and Joliet parishes, a vacancy will occur at the Protection of the Holy Virgin Church, Royalton, IL, with the November 1, 2014 retirement of Priest Justin Foster. He also noted that Holy Apostles Mission, Bloomington-Normal, IL, had been granted parish status.

B. Indianapolis Deanery. In addition to the written report of Archpriest Theodore Bobosh, who was unable to be present due to his recuperation after a recent surgery, it was noted that Archpriest Joseph Gibson of Saint John Church, Indianapolis, IN, had retired, and that Priest Zachariah Trent had been named rector of the parish.

C. Kansas City Deanery. In addition to his written report, Archpriest Timothy Sawchak asked that prayers be offered for Archpriest Moses Berry, who had been admitted to a Cleveland hospital with pneumonia.

D. Michigan Deanery. In addition to his written report, Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzky announced that a rector for Detroit’s Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral was being sought.

E. Minneapolis Deanery. In addition to his written report, Archpriest Paul Wesche requested prayers for Archpriest Nathan Kroll, who was unable to be present due to bouts with bronchitis and pneumonia.

F. Cleveland Deanery. There were no additions to the written report of Archpriest Andrew Clements.

VIII. REPORT OF THE MISSION DIRECTOR.

Father Thomas Mueller reported that about one dozen individuals participated in a meeting on Monday, 6 October 2014, to revive the work of the Mission Department. He shared plans to develop a policy with regard to the planting of new missions. Assisting in the revitalization of Detroit’s Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral demonstrates that a diocese indeed can revive an established parish, despite the odds.

IX. REPORT OF THE DIACONAL VOCATIONS PROGRAM DIRECTOR.

Father Elijah Mueller spoke about the very successful conference held at Saint Andrew’s House, Detroit, in August

2014, which attracted many late vocations students. He also noted that the program recently established in the Kansas City Deanery has attracted 11 students, who will pursue one class per semester.

X. REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES.

There were no additions to the written report of Archbishop Alexander Kuchta.

XI. REPORT OF THE TREASURER.

Mr. Robert Koncel offered a comprehensive review of his written report and fielded a number of questions.

In response to an enquiry by Mr. Rick Tymoc of Detroit's Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral regarding whether mission funds could be earmarked for a FEMA loan for the cathedral, Father Zdinak and Mr. Koncel replied that the Finance Committee would consider this upon receipt of a written proposal.

In response to an enquiry by Carston Wagner of Minneapolis, MN regarding the resolution passed at the 2012 Assembly concerning tithing, Father Zdinak responded by stating that, as a result of the resolution, a committee had been formed. He added that in the past, less than 30% of the parishes had responded to requests for financial information required to study the matter further. However, thanks to a survey mandated by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA in 2013, we now have numbers for all parishes. He expressed hope that the matter will be ready for discussion at the spring 2015 meeting of the Diocesan Council, adding that the OCA is studying the matter of tithing as well, and that this could affect the position of the Diocese on the matter.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented by Mr. Dennis Garlick, seconded by Kevin Lytle.

XII. REPORT OF THE AUDITORS.

There were no additions to the printed report.

In response to questions concerning the use of the Diocesan credit card and receipts, Mr. Ron Royhab, seconded by Archbishop David Lis, moved that *those using a credit card must submit receipts for reimbursement or they will no longer have access to the card, while those making cash purchases must submit receipts or they will not be reimbursed.* The motion carried after substantial discussion.

The Auditors' Report was accepted as presented upon motion by Mr. Sam D'Fantis, seconded by Deacon Thomas Keith.

XIII. PRESENTATION OF THE 2015 BUDGET.

Mr. Koncel presented the proposed budget for 2015. Father Elijah Mueller noted that the correct amount for his stipend should read \$12,000.00, not \$6,000.00 as noted in the report. Mr. Koncel acknowledged this correction and made the necessary adjustment. It was proposed that the escrowed funds be used to cover the budget deficit for the next two to three years, at which time an assessment increase in the range of \$7.50 per capita be considered. Discussion ensued, after which the budget was passed as presented.

XV. ELECTIONS.

Father Alexander Kuchta was elected clergy representative to the Metropolitan Council. Archbishop Mark Hodges will serve as alternate.

Elected as clergy members of the Diocesan Council were Archbishop Emil Hutnyan and James Dank. Archbishop John Adamcio will serve as alternate.

Elected as lay members of the Diocesan Council were Ms. Christine Hoover and Mrs. Daria Petrykowski. Mr. Simeon Morbey will serve as alternate.

Upon motion by Mr. D'Fantis, seconded by Mrs. Mecera, Sam Jacob was elected to the position of auditor by acclamation.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT AND INSTALLATION.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Father Adamcio, seconded by Mr. D'Fantis, the Assembly adjourned at 12:58 p.m. with a Service of Thanksgiving and the installation of elected officers.

*Respectfully submitted by the Secretariat,
Archbishop John Matusiak
Mr. Philip Sokolov
Mrs. Ann Marie Mecera*