

Report to Midwest Diocesan Assembly 7/20/15

St. Macrina Orthodox Institute

Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. Elijah Mueller, Director.

What We Offer and Why

- 1) **What:** 7 relatively low price courses, seminar-style, taught by qualified instructors, with live interaction
Why: to have informed, helpful ministers, who have gone through a process like seminary w/o having to leave community and spend as much. We attempt something analogous to what other denominations have through greater numbers of colleges and seminaries with continuing ed programs.
- 2) **What:** at vocational formation in cohort.
Why: inculcating cooperation in education (and ministry), and evaluating listening and open-ness to learning necessary for ministry.
- 3) **What:** emphasis on open-ended reading and ability to preach and conduct catechesis.
Why: to develop ministerial leaders with humility about knowledge of the faith, and a continuing sense of the need to go back to the sources, while still taking responsibility in liturgy and education.
- 4) **What:** a qualified and diverse faculty of instructors.
Why: to ensure a rounded education and formation, from a variety of instructors with many skills and views within the Orthodox faith. Also to support the development and harnessing the community relevance of the very scholars who teach within the context of regular diocesan Church life!

Accomplishments:

- Dayton (including some priests taking class for continuing ed), Detroit, Lincoln NE, Southern IL, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Chicago & Milwaukee. Established Deanery Faculties for KC & Chicago. Completion of 3rd semester in Kansas City. Approximately 50 Students diocese wide. Presently largest classes are in Dayton and KC.
- Expanding faculty, development of Deanery Faculties
- Live internet participation for remote locations/ small groups
- Meeting arranged with Cleveland Deanery for August.

Going Forward: Broader Participation

- Need to meet with Deanery clergy and interested lay people to set faculties to run programs locally.
WHY: 1) ease of running classes
2) to create broader interest in learning
3) development of a sense of local resources for education
4) use of significant numbers of Orthodox scholars who don't live on the East coast, but here...

Job Description *Director* (Fr. Elijah Mueller):

- contacting prospective students
- Finding and evaluating credentials of instructors
- Arrangement for instructor travel

- Gathering student names, applications, recommendations.
- Maintaining of student and diaconal files.
- Preparation of publicity for program—each class
- Preparation of web-site and materials
- Scheduling instructors for each location.
- Gathering syllabi and bibliographies.
- Arranging for the evaluation of local and national exams.
- Coordinating with national Diaconal Vocations Program.
- Planning for “practicum” for diaconal liturgical preparation.
- Arrangement of faculty meetings.
- Evaluating transcripts and wide variety of other programs previously done by candidates within the diocese.
- Checking on potential ‘unusual cases,’ people with other educational background that may suffice for the diaconate.
- preparing names and files for submission to synod.
- Ensuring that all diaconal petition/ catechist certificate requirements are met by each student.
- Teaching some classes in concert with travel to meet and inaugurate program (travel thus covered by class session cost).
- Arranging and explaining fees, keeping track of payments.

Upcoming:

+ August 7-8, 2nd Annual St. Macrina Conference at St. Andrew's House, Detroit

Bishops Paul and Alexander, Fr. Bogdan Bucur, Fr. Michael Butler, Rebecca Luft, Mark Roosien, Anna Strelka, Fr. Stephen Frase, Sami Sweis, Fr. Elijah Mueller and Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak will do the teaching. Bishop Paul will be present to meet and go over potential diaconal candidacy with Midwest students; Bishop Alexander will meet with candidates from the Bulgarian Diocese. We are now making this a standard yearly opportunity for education, fellowship, and a programmatic way to meet the Bishop and Diocesan authorities.

Last year's Conference, our first, was very successful, we filled the St. Andrew's retreat center, Over 40 participants from all over the Diocese and from the Bulgarian Diocese as well.

+ elective courses in the works.