

# MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Chicago, Illinois • 13 January 2015

## I. OPENING.

The meeting, convened at the Holiday Inn Midway, opened with the singing of the troparion of Theophany, led by His Grace, Bishop Paul, at 10:21 a.m.

## II. ATTENDANCE.

Present were Bishop Paul; Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor; Archpriest John Matusiak, Secretary; Mr. Robert Koncel, Treasurer; Archpriests Alexander Garklavs, Emilian Hutnyan, Alexander Kuchta; Priests James Dank and Nicholas Finley; Mr. Samuel D’Fantis, Mr. Dennis Garlick, Mr. Barry Gluntz, Ms. Christine Hoover, and Ms. Daria Petrykowski.

Also present were Archpriests Theodore Bobosh, Andrew Clements, Thomas Mueller, Timothy Sawchak, Andrew Yavornitzky, and Paul Wesche, Bishop’s Council; and Mr. Philip Sokolov, Bishop’s Secretary.

Absent were Priest Elijah Mueller and Mr. Michael Herzak, Diocesan Council members.

## III. SCRIPTURE READINGS.

Father Hutnyan read the day’s selection from the Epistles – James 3:1-10 – while Father Finley read the day’s Gospel reading – Mark 10:2-12. Bishop Paul and others offered reflections.

## IV. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

The minutes were accepted as presented upon motion by Father Garklavs, seconded by Father Finley.

## V. BISHOP’S REPORT.

Bishop Paul thanked everyone for their prayers and concern. He reported that he had already made 35-40 parish visitations, and that the most fruitful visits are those in which he arrives on Thursday and returns late Sunday, as this provides an opportunity to visit with each priest in a local area. He expressed gratitude to those who participated in his consecration and said that he would be spending some time at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery for “boot camp,” so to speak. Bishop Paul went on to identify five “stewardship issues” that need to be addressed.

**A. The sexual misconduct guidelines of the OCA.** Bishop Paul said that it is necessary to develop a plan to implement them fully over the next three years. Parishes must not be vulnerable to liability. More on this matter will be considered at the May 2015 Clergy Convocation.

**B. Stewardship and finances.** Bishop Paul said that he has always been a believer in percentage giving and that he would like to move away from the “head tax.” A committee should be formed in the next six months to consult with the Diocese of the West, which is moving in the same direction. There are many in our diocese who are comfortable with a head tax, so the transition to percentage giving will not be easy.

**C. Mission Committee.** This should be reconstituted, hopefully within the next three months, to develop an understanding of guidelines for starting missions.

**D. Christ the Savior Church.** Within the next year to year and a half, decisions regarding the relationship between Christ the Savior Church and the Diocese should be clarified. Bishop Paul said he would like to see such efforts accelerated in 2015 as meaningful options are developed. After offering additional observations, Bishop Paul said that he perceives two options – selling the property to Christ the Savior parish or entering into a rental relationship.

**E. Liturgical directives.** Bishop Paul noted that he will not be issuing any “blanket” liturgical directives in the near future as he wishes to visit more parishes to observe current practices. Any questions on specific liturgical matters may be addressed to him.

## VI. CHANCELLOR’S REPORT.

Father Zdinak spoke positively about Chancery operations and the high degree of communication and direction shared on a day-to-day basis.

He presented background information with regard to a meeting he and Mr. Garlick had with representatives of Christ the Savior Church. In short, he noted that given the age of the building and the need for constant maintenance, the property will continue to require significant financial expenditures. He also spoke about the possibility of renting the property to the parish. An informal enquiry has been made with an attorney concerning restrictions on the property. In the end, a plan needs to be developed for presentation to the Diocesan Assembly for approval.

Father Zdinak fielded a lengthy discussion on various issues and scenarios with regard to the disposition of the property.

**MOTION:** *Mr. D’Fantis, seconded by Mr. Koncel, made a motion that the Diocesan Council authorize that up to \$10,000.00 in expenses be allocated to look into whatever professional opinions, evaluations, and appraisal are needed to expedite the sale of the properties, as needed. After lengthy discussion, the motion carried.*

With regard to the 2015 Diocesan Assembly, Fr. Zdinak proposed that since the All-American Council will convene in Atlanta in July, the Assembly be held concurrently in order to cut expenses for parishes.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Gluntz, seconded by Mr. D’Fantis, motioned that the Assembly be held in conjunction with the AAC. After additional discussion, the motion carried.*

**MOTION:** *Fr. Finley, seconded by Mrs. Petrykowski, motioned that elected terms of office be extended by one year due to the timing of the Assembly. The motion carried.*

The session closed at 12:40 p.m. and resumed at 1:46 p.m.

**VII. DEANERY REPORTS.**

- A. Chicago Deanery.** Fr. Thomas Mueller reported on a number of transitions. Priest John Russin is being assigned to Holy Virgin Protection Church, Merrillville, IN, while Priest John Beal has already been assigned to Saint Nicholas Church, Joliet, IL. Effective Holy Week, Priest Fred Janacek will be assigned to the Protection of the Holy Virgin Church, Royalton, IL, pending his move there. Fr. Matusiak will be retiring at the end of January, but will remain at Saint Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL as pastor emeritus. The deanery’s winter youth camp will be held 15-17 February.
- B. Cleveland Deanery.** Fr. Clements reported that Archpriest Basil Stoyka recently retired from Saints Peter and Paul Church, Lorain, OH. Priest Joseph McCartney has been transferred from Archangel Michael Church, Broadview Heights, OH to Lorain.
- C. Kansas City Deanaery.** Fr. Sawchak asked for prayers on behalf of Archpriest Moses Berry, who had been hospitalized in Cleveland during the most recent Diocesan Assembly. His health continues to decline.
- D. Michigan Deanery.** Fr. Yavornitzky reported that “Zoe For Life” has opened a chapter in Livonia, MI. He also reported that FOCUS Motor City will have a resident director by March 2015 and will be renting space at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit. The cathedral is seeking the services of a full-time rector, while the diocese will provide development funding.
- E. Minneapolis Deanery.** Fr. Wesche reported that the members of Holy Cross Mission, Chisago City, WI voted to disband on 30 November 2015. A letter of petition was received by Bishop Paul asking that the mission be closed. Assets will be passed on to the diocese. Priest Bill Neumann believes that after all the fees associated with the mission’s different bank accounts are paid, the diocese should receive about \$100,000.00. [According to the Bylaws, the first priority is that said sum should be distributed within the deanery.] He added that discussions between himself, Fr. Neumann and Bishop Paul indicate that said funds could be used at the Bishop’s discretion to support developing missions in the Minneapolis Deanery.  
Fr. Wesche added that two other deanery missions – Christ the Savior, Anoka, MN, and Saint Andrew Chapel, Minocqua, WI – have closed in the past two years. A fourth mission – Holy Myrrhbearers, St. Cloud, MN – continues to struggle. With the transfer of Priest Oliver Herbel to the chaplaincy, Holy Resurrection Church, Fargo, ND, will be seeking a new rector.  
Saint Nicholas Church, Chisholm, MN, is now officially closed. The deanery is working with Attorney Simeon Morbey towards constituting three individuals who grew up in Chisholm as a 501c3 – the “Saint Nicholas Preservation Society.” All assets of Saint Nicholas parish – about \$8,500.00 – were placed in a new account under the name of Saint Nicholas. Fr. Wesche pointed out that Attorney Morbey’s work was pro-bono and suggested that a note of gratitude be sent to him on behalf of the Diocesan Council.

**VIII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES’ REPORT.**

In light of the fact that the Metropolitan Council will meet 10-12 February 2015, Fr. Kuchta noted that there is nothing to report at this time.

**IX. TREASURER’S REPORT.**

Mr. Koncel highlighted the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual for 2014. He reported that at the most recent meeting of the Finance Committee, members attempted to determine a fair market value for Bishop Paul’s 2012 Ford Fiesta. The average of various estimates is \$8,851.00,

**MOTION:** *Mr. Koncel moved, second by Fr. Matusiak, that the diocese purchase the Fiesta for \$9,000.00. Motion carried.*

Mr. Koncel further reported that \$453,000.00 in accounts receivable is due from parishes that owe the diocese assessment funds. The Finance Committee recommended that Mr. Sokolov or Mr. Koncel print a list of parishes that owe money and that Bishop Paul and the deans make recommendations with regard to each parish, which then will be presented to the Diocesan Council.

**X. MISSION/PARISH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.**

Fr. Thomas Mueller presented an overview of the committee, which had been disbanded in 2011 but recently reconstituted. A meeting of representatives from mission parishes was held during the Diocesan Assembly, and there was a strong consensus among the 15-20 attendees that something should be done to encourage mission priests and to support their families. At the end of 2014, he and Bishop Paul approved stipends of \$500.00 to all mission priests. Combined with related disbursements, a total of \$25,000 was made available.

He reported that the OCA is setting up a mission training program – a week-long “Mission School” slated to be held in Detroit in April 2015. Bishop Paul has designed one priest and layperson from our diocese to participate. He further reported that the Mission Committee is being reconstituted and will meet by phone conferences. Priorities include developing guidelines for establishing missions and disbursement of budgeted funds, such as the parish project grants [\$12,000.00], mission grants, and the parish revival/matching grant for Detroit’s Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral to sustain a priest for three to four years. Funds also should be earmarked for participation in the Small Parish Conference to be held during the summer of 2015.

**XI. OLD BUSINESS.**

**A. Clergy Psychological Evaluations.** Fr. Zdinak reported that there is a need to determine how evaluations will be paid for. He noted that Mr. Koncel and Mrs. Polly Walker will be asked to include a line item in the budget for said evaluations with the diocese and parishes splitting the cost.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. upon motion by Fr. Clements, seconded by Mr. D'Fantis.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Archpriest John Matusiak with Mr. Philip Sokolov.*