

57TH ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Archangel Michael Social Center, Lansing, Illinois • 9-10 October 2018

I. OPENING

The Assembly opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 10:40 a.m., after which His Grace, Bishop Paul, called the Assembly to order.

II. PLENARY SESSION ONE CREDENTIALS.

One Bishop, 49 clergy delegates, 38 lay delegates, two observers, three attached deacons, and one guest, for a total of 94 participants.

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, APPOINTMENTS.

Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor, moved, on behalf of the Diocesan Council, that the following appointments be made:

- Presidium: Bishop Paul and Father Zdinak.
- Secretariat: Archpriest John Matusiak, Ellyn Gillette, and Philip Sokolov.
- Nominating Committee: Archpriests Dusan Koprivica and Andrew Clements and Carrie Sabourin.
- Resolutions Committee [no resolutions submitted]: Archpriest Theodore Bobosh, Priest Nicholas Finley and Robert Graban.
- Tellers: Deacons, chaired by the senior Deacon. The Deacons also will be responsible for Credentials.

IV. ADDRESS OF BISHOP PAUL.

Bishop Paul delivered his address, in which he focused on three main areas: support of clergy, parishes and missions; family support; and youth events.

In response to enquiries about the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA, Bishop Paul expressed concern that the most recent meeting had the lowest attendance in nine years and, with only 25 bishops in attendance, failed to achieve the quorum of 27. In addition, Bishop Paul was discouraged by the fact that of the 14 Assembly committees, 10 are non-functioning. He also noted that one of the major obstacles for the committees is securing sufficient funding for their activities. He added that we need to continue to strive for unity at the episcopal and congregational levels.

In response to a question regarding Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon, Bishop Paul responded that this had not been brought up for discussion.

V. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT.

Father Zdinak stated that 2018 marks his 15th year as Chancellor, having been appointed by Archbishop Job. He enjoys working with Bishop Paul because “things get done.”

He announced that Father Koprivica is now Dean of the Michigan Deanery, while Archpriest Alexander Kuchta now serves as Dean of the Chicago Deanery.

With regard to Christ the Savior Church, Chicago, he noted that progress continues to be made with regard to the parish taking over the property from the Diocese.

VI. DEANERY REPORTS.

There were no additions to the reports submitted by the Chicago, Indianapolis, Kansas City and Michigan Deaneries. Father Clements, Dean of the Cleveland Deanery, added that Bishop Paul visited the clergy at Saint Vladimir's FOCA Camp in Green Township, OH, and that Guide One Insurance delivered presentations to Deanery parishes on ways to deal with terrorists on Church premises. He also noted that Priest Jacob Van Sickle had moved out of the Deanery and is now Acting Rector of the Protection of the Virgin Mary Church, Merrillville, IN.

Archpriest Paul Wesche, Dean of the Minneapolis Deanery, added that Archpriest Vladimir Lecko is suffering from terminal cancer.

VII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

The report stands as submitted. Mr. Graban thanked Father Alexander Kuchta for his participation on the Metropolitan Council as his term expires this year.

VIII. MISSION DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Archpriest Thomas Mueller reported that Priest Esteban Vazquez is initiating outreach to the Spanish-speaking community through Saint Panteleimon Church, Summit, IL, of which he is Rector. Mission funds are being used to provide full compensation for Father Esteban, who is a native of Puerto Rico. Making the parish more visible to the wider community is a priority, and the regular celebration of Vespers in Spanish will commence in late October. Father Esteban requested support in this ministry from Spanish-speaking Orthodox Christians in the Chicago area.

IX. CATECHETICAL AND DIACONAL VOCATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

In addition to his written report, Archpriest Elijah Mueller encouraged enrollment in the Saint Macrina Institute program.

X. DIOCESAN BYLAWS REVISION PRESENTATION.

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs opened by identifying and correcting typographical errors in the Bylaws Committee's written report. After a brief discussion on the use of the phrase “at the pleasure of,” he recommended that the use of this phrase be retained. Father Zdinak moved and seconded, on behalf of the Diocesan Council, that the proposed revised Bylaws, as amended to correct the typos, be adopted by the Assembly. The motion carried unanimously.

XI. REVIEW OF ELECTION PROCESS.

Father Zdinak reviewed the election process, noting the need to elect two clergy and two laypersons to the Diocesan Council, one clergy representative to the Metropolitan Council, and one Audit Committee member. He explained that the two individuals receiving the most votes will be elected, while the individuals receiving the third highest number of votes would serve as alternates. He added that candidates must be present at this Assembly and that individuals may nominate themselves.

The first plenary session concluded at 12:03 p.m.

XII. PLENARY SESSION TWO CREDENTIALS.

One Bishop, one guest Bishop, 49 clergy delegates, 37 lay delegates, two observers, three attached deacons, and one guest, for a total of 94 participants.

XIII. PRESENTATION BY HIS GRACE, BISHOP NEOPHYTOS OF NYERIA AND MOUNT KENYA.

His Grace, Bishop Neophytos, thanked the Diocese for its generous donation of motorbikes for the clergy of his Diocese. He explained that they are the primary means of transportation for his 55 priests who serve 64 parishes. He shared a variety of anecdotes describing the life and needs of the Church in Kenya, and asked for ongoing prayers, love and support.

XIV. PRESENTATION BY THE ORTHODOX CHURCH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND [OCCIF].

John Della Monica, OCCIF Board President, and Matushka Kitty Vitko, OCCIF Board Director, presented a video about the Capital Improvement Fund and explained how the program works to the benefit of parish communities. The video and a wealth of information on OCCIF's offerings is available online at www.occif.org.

XV. RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT.

On behalf of the committee, Father Zdinak reported that there were no resolutions.

XVI. OPEN DISCUSSION.

Bishop Paul requested feedback regarding the length and format of this year's Assembly and invited questions and comments from the floor.

Several questions were addressed to Bishop Neophytos regarding medical needs in his Diocese. He stated that one of his goals is to raise funds to establish a medical clinic, which would cost an estimated \$200,000.00. Some delegates opined that this would be a possible fundraising opportunity for our Diocese. Bishop Paul observed that should he bless this proposal, someone must be willing to oversee the fundraising and to develop creative ways to secure donations without relying on parishes as the primary source of funding. Priest Jonathan Lincoln volunteered to lead a fundraising team, for which there were several interested individuals. Subsequently, Bishop Paul gave his blessing to the effort and requested that a plan be presented at the next meetings of the Bishop's Council and Diocesan Council November 28-29, 2018. He reemphasized that the effort to raise funds should reach an audience beyond our parishes. He asked that the fundraising team define the scope of the medical clinic, and recommended that they engage Archpriest Christopher Rowe of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center as a consulting resource person.

Dennis Garlick suggested that a collection be taken at the Assembly to replenish the \$3,000.00 Bishop Neophytos reported to have expended for the surgery of a priest's wife in his Diocese. By the end of the day, \$1,962.00 had been collected.

Bishop Paul announced that Carrie Sabourin and her committee will submit a proposal at the next Diocesan Council meeting with regard to redesigning the Diocesan website so that it is more "user friendly." Earlier, a summary of the messaging strategy had been delivered to the Diocesan Council.

The second plenary session concluded at 4:46 p.m.

XVII. PLENARY SESSION THREE CREDENTIALS.

The third plenary session opened on Wednesday, October 10, at 9:37 a.m. In attendance were one Bishop, 46 clergy delegates, 35 lay delegates, and three attached deacons, for a total of 85 participants.

XVIII. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Robert Koncel, Treasurer, reviewed financial highlights for 2017 and January through June 2018, as reflected in his written report. Upon motion by Archpriest Paul Jannakos, second by Father Rowe, the report was accepted as submitted.

XIX. AUDITORS' REPORT.

The written report stands as submitted. Upon motion by the Audit Committee, seconded by Robert Graban, the report was accepted as submitted.

XX. 2019 BUDGET.

Mr. Koncel offered a detailed review of forecasted expenses by category, noting that the position of a *keleinik* to assist Bishop Paul had been added to the budget. In addition, he noted that the Special Projects Fund in the proposed budget will allow Bishop Paul to implement new programs and ministries.

Simeon Morbey, Stewardship Committee Chair, reviewed the forecasted income, which is based on proportional giving. The proposed percentage – 13% of each parish's adjusted income – replaces the former parish per capita assessment system. The 2019 budgeted income is based on the 2017 year-end data submitted by parishes. Moving forward, the

proportional giving income for each fiscal year will be based on the parishes' annual financials one year behind. The Diocese will continue to invoice parishes on a monthly basis as computed in the 13% proportional giving amount. Parishes unable to meet their payments may appeal to the Finance Committee, the members of which will review all appeals and provided facts to Bishop Paul, who will make all final decisions in this regard.

Father Zdinak added that the 2019 balanced budget is based on the best data available and that we really will not know the final income until 31 December 2019 since the extent of any appeals remain unknown at this time.

Father Zdinak moved and seconded on behalf of the Diocesan Council to accept the 2019 budget, which passed unanimously.

XXI. ELECTION RESULTS.

Archpriest James Dank and Priest Benjamin Tucci were elected as clergy members of the Diocesan Council, with Priest Andrew Bartek serving as alternate.

Mary Ann Bobulsky and Simeon Morbey were elected as lay members of the Diocesan Council, with Will Romanchek serving as alternate.

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs was elected as representative to the Metropolitan Council, with Archpriest Elijah Mueller serving as alternate.

Bishop Paul appointed Sam Jacob to the Audit Committee in light of the fact that there were no nominations for the position.

XXII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Frank Tkacz, second by Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzky, the Assembly adjourned at 11:33 a.m. with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

Respectfully submitted by the Secretariat,

Ellyn Gillette

Philip Sokolov

Edited by Archpriest John Matusiak, Secretary