

# Diocese of the Midwest • Orthodox Church in America

## Minutes • Diocesan Council Meeting • wednesday, 7 june 2006

### **I. Opening Prayer and Call to Order.**

His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago opened the meeting with a prayer at 10:13 10:37 a.m.

**Members present:** Archbishop Job, Fr. John Adamcio, Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky, Fr. Andrew Clements, Mr. Sam D'Fantis, Fr. Stephen Hrycyniak, Mr. Robert Koncel, Mr. Joseph Kormos, Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak, Fr. Michael Matsko, Fr. John Matusiak, Mr. John Sedor, Fr. Basil Stoyka, Dr. Richard West, and Fr. John Zdinak, Chancellor.

**Deans present:** Fr. Thomas Mueller, Fr. Peter Pawlack, Fr. Daniel Rentel, Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Fr. Thaddeus Wojcik, and Fr. Andrew Yavornitzky.

### **II. Readings from SCRIPTURE**

Fr. Hrycyniak read the day's reading from Acts 23:1-11, while Fr. Matsko read the day's Gospel reading from John 16:15-23. A brief discussion followed.

### **III. Minutes.**

The minutes of the January 2006 meeting were accepted as presented by consensus upon motion by Mr. Sedor, seconded by Fr. Adamcio.

### **IV. Reports.**

#### **A. Diocesan Hierarchy.**

Archbishop Job reported on the following.

1. The 20 January 2006 meeting of the Lesser Synod was a difficult one, as the Diocese of the Midwest had been criticized for holding meetings to update clergy on the allegations levied against the Central Church Administration. Archbishop Job was forced to defend himself and the Diocese in this context.
2. For the first time in years, he was unable to attend the DC March for Life, due to the Lesser Synod meeting.
3. Among the parishes he visited were St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH; St. Nicholas Church, Kenosha, for the formal retirement of Fr. Alexis Fedec; St. Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN, for the ordination of David Kostik to the diaconate; St. Peter the Aleut Church, Minot, ND; St. Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL; Protection of the Virgin Mary Church, Merrillville, IN, for the ordination of Christopher Serafin to the diaconate; and others.
4. On 23 February he lectured on the nature of the episcopacy at Hillsdale College near Albion, MI. Holy Ascension parish in Albion has a growing number of converts. On the Great Feast of the Ascension, he again visited Albion, at which time he ordained John Wessner to the diaconate.
5. He attended the Holy Synod special session in March, which also was very difficult as some bishops accused him of wishing to create a schism in the Church. While two bishops called for his resignation, the others were supportive. Despite polarization within the Holy Synod, he offered his support for the actions taken by Metropolitan Herman with regard to the audit, investigation, and statements issued. He also attended the Lesser Synod meeting held on Bright Thursday, which was positive and pleasant and revealed how the situation with regard to allegations levied against the Central Church Administration had changed dramatically. Despite tension, the change was also evident at the Holy Synod spring session in May. While there was no report on the investigation, which was initiated by Metropolitan Herman without consulting with the other bishops, he acknowledged that the Metropolitan's actions were courageous, although still a bit irregular.
6. He shared his past experiences with campus Orthodox Christian Fellowships at a Bright Saturday retreat for OCF members at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
7. He participated in an Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, IN and hosted by St. Thomas parish, Kokomo, IN.
8. He attended the very productive Columbus Deanery assembly, after which he received the former Roman Catholic priest Kevin Greenwood into the Orthodox Church.
9. He visited Holy Trinity Academy, Warren, OH, and St. Nicholas School, Akron, OH.
10. He met with diocesan seminarians at St. Tikhon and St. Vladimir seminaries. Four diocesan

seminarians -- Jacob Hatch, Parma, OH; Eric Iliff, Bloomington, IN; Deacon Joseph Matusiak, Wheaton, IL; and Deacon William Neuman, St. Paul, MN, who will be ordained to the priesthood in July 2006.

12. Igumen Vladimir [Wendling], administrative assistant at the diocesan chancery office, will be consecrated to the episcopacy as the auxiliary to Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South. His last Sunday as rector of St. George Cathedral, Chicago will be 9 July, after which he will be relocating to Syosset, NY through the end of 2006.

13. He attended the annual Memorial Day pilgrimage to St. Tikhon Monastery, at which he was asked to preach at the Divine Liturgy.

14. He plans to visit the deanery summer camps.

Archbishop Job entertained a variety of questions in response to his report.

### **B. Chancellor's Report.**

Fr. Zdinak reported on a number of issues.

1. He noted that he pursues whatever is essential to support Archbishop Job.

2. During Great Lent, he was unable to spend much time at the diocesan chancery office, handling much of the day-to-day concerns by telephone.

3. He reported that Fr. Paul Gassios will serve Archangel Michael Church, St. Louis, and the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Desloge, MO, with the hope of revitalizing both communities.

4. He met with mission clergy in the Minneapolis Deanery.

5. He announced that Deacon Joseph Matusiak will replace Igumen Vladimir as administrative assistant at the diocesan chancery office.

6. Noting the decline in diocesan membership, he emphasized that every parish must be a mission parish. He spoke about the need for a "parish health facilitator" to address the needs of established parishes.

7. He reported that Fr. John Baker is developing a list of needs with regard to the LaSalle St. properties.

### **C. Deans' Reports.**

Written reports from the Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Michigan, Minneapolis, and St. Louis deaneries were distributed and read, with no additions.

### **D. Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report.**

Dr. West and Fr. Berzonsky reported on the recent Metropolitan Council teleconference during which members voted to accept the \$1.7 million loan offer from the Honesdale, PA National Bank. They voted in favor of the loan in order to consolidate the OCA's debt. They felt that for a long time, members of the Metropolitan Council were being deceived with regard to the situation of the Central Church Administration, but felt that Metropolitan Herman's openness was a positive sign. They reported that the forthcoming meeting will span two days, which will make it possible to review the situation in greater detail.

### **E. Diocesan Department Reports.**

1. *Communications.* Fr. Matusiak is completing the current issue of *The Vigil*. Changes to the diocesan web site will be effected once Deacon Joseph Matusiak begins his duties.

2. *Missions.* It was noted that Fr. Basil Aden had resigned as diocesan mission director.

3. *Parish Health Facilitator.* Fr. Zdinak recommended that Mr. Kormos be appointed to fill this position in order to assess the needs of established parishes in an effort to provide effective resources for growth. He noted that the finance committee will restructure the budget proposal to support this program. It was proposed that Mr. Kormos visit each deanery to assess parish needs and enquire as to what the parishes feel they need from the diocese in maintaining and expanding their ministries. This program would not conflict with programs offered by Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff, which are not official programs of the OCA or its Department of Evangelization. With regard to remuneration, Mr. Kormos will receive one-third of the rate he normally receives for consultation work. His duties would include coordinating efforts with the diocesan Mission Department. Mr. Kormos will attempt to visit every deanery before the diocesan assembly in October 2006 to evaluate needs and wants in each area.

Upon motion by Mrs. Lucak, seconded by Fr. Berzonsky, it was decided that Mr. Kormos would serve as Parish Health Facilitator for the initial period of assessment and fact finding.

#### **F. Building Improvements.**

It was reported that, since the acquisition of the properties on LaSalle St., major and minor repairs have been approached in "band-aid" style. Fr. Baker continues to gather estimates on necessary major repairs. While some funds are available in the maintenance endowment fund, it was reported that a \$250,000.00 loan would make it possible to make all major and minor repairs at once, and that work could begin within eight weeks. Fr. Baker will oversee the projects. It was stated that there would be no increase in parish "fair share" to cover these expenses or the loan. Upon motion by Mr. Sedor, seconded by Fr. Stoyka, it was decided to take a \$250,000.00 loan to finance all projects.

#### **V. TREASURER'S Report.**

Mr. Koncel, diocesan treasurer, presented a written report and offered appropriate commentary. He noted that the property of the former St. Theodore of Tarsus Church, Independence, MO, had been sold for \$78,311.84. A meeting to develop the 2007 budget will be held in Cleveland on August 25, 2006. Mr. Koncel highlighted balances on various accounts and reviewed funding of the administrative assistant at the diocesan chancery office.

The report was approved as presented upon motion by Mr. Sedor, seconded by Fr. Adamcio.

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS.**

**A. 2006 Diocesan Assembly.** The assembly will be held 10-12 October 2006, hosted by Holy Resurrection Church, Palatine, IL. The diocesan and bishop's councils will meet at 6:00 p.m. on 10 October at the hotel.

**B. Expression of thanks.** Fr. Wojcik expressed thanks to Archbishop Job for his recent efforts with regard to the financial situation of the OCA.

**C. All-American Council.** Dr. West spoke about convening the 15th All-American Council in 2008, rather than 2010, as recommended at the January 2006 diocesan council meeting. It was decided that the original motion calling for convening the All-American Council in 2008 be presented at the forthcoming meeting of the Metropolitan Council.

**D. Chalice set.** Archbishop Job noted that the diocese has possessed an oversized chalice that had only been used once since 1993. He recommended that it be donated to the OCA. Upon motion by Fr. Berzonsky, seconded by Fr. Matsko, the set will be donated to the OCA.

**E. Consecration of Igumen Vladimir.** Upon motion by Mrs. Lucak, seconded by Fr. Matusiak, it was decided that the diocese will present Igumen Vladimir with a cross and panagia set upon his consecration. Upon motion by Fr. Berzonsky, seconded by Fr. Adamcio, it was decided that Fr. Zdinak will accompany Archbishop Job to Igumen Vladimir's consecration to the episcopacy.

#### **VII. ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSING PRAYER.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m. upon motion by Fr. Clements, seconded by Fr. Stoyka, with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

Respectfully submitted 7 June 2006/ *Father John Matusiak, Diocesan Secretary*

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