

MINUTES
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST DIOCESAN COUNCIL
10 JUNE 2008

The regular meeting of the Midwest Diocesan Council opened with prayers offered by His Eminence, Archbishop Job, at 10:30 a.m.

I. ROLL.

A. Members present. His Eminence, Archbishop Job; Archimandrite Vladimir [Wendling]; the Very Revs. John Adamcio, Andrew Clements, Stephen Karaffa, Michael Matsko, John Matusiak [secretary], Basil Stoyka, and John Zdinak [chancellor]; and Mr. Sam D'Fantis, Mr. Joseph Kormos; Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak, Ms. Kitty Mabus and Mr. John Sedor.

B. Deans present. The Very Revs. Thomas Mueller, Timothy Sawchak, and Andrew Yavornitzky; and the Rev. Joseph Gibson.

Also present was Deacon Joseph Matusiak, assistant to the Archbishop.

II. SCRIPTURE READINGS.

Mr. Sedor read the day's appointed reading from the Epistles, while Fr. Gibson read the appointed reading from the Gospels. A brief discussion followed.

III. ARCHBISHOP'S OPENING REMARKS AND REPORT. Before turning the chair over to Fr. Zdinak, Archbishop Job welcomed the council members and deans. In his report to the council, Archbishop Job noted the following.

A. He reported that, in the past six months, he visited 22 parishes.

B. He spoke of his recent visit to Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN, and the situation there concerning the marked decline in reported membership and assessment payments.

C. He noted that most of the members of the now-closed Saint Clement Church, Merrillville, IN, now attend the Protection of the Virgin Mary Church in the same city. The Rev. Elijah Mueller, who had been pastor of Saint Clement's, would be reassigned.

D. He reported on the establishment of a mission parish in Ames, IA. The Rev. James Dank has been visiting the community regularly. The community possesses its own church building.

E. On Saturday, 17 May 2008, he consecrated Christ the Saviour Church, Chicago, IL. The choir of Saint Tikhon Seminary sang the liturgical responses. Attendance was excellent, with many deanery clergy concelebrating. A festive banquet followed services.

F. The following day, Sunday, 18 May, he presided at a combined Divine Liturgy marking the 10th anniversary celebration of Saint Gabriel Community of Saint Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL, during which Readers Jerzy Pietrowski and Igor Khlinov were ordained to the subdiaconate and Mark Klinski was tonsured to the order of Reader. The seminary choir sang the responses.

G. On behalf of Bishop NIKON He ordained Deacon Nicholas Finley to the holy priesthood at Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL.

H. The newly ordained Rev. Gregory Brunner has been attached to Holy Ascension Church, Albion, MI, and will serve as a supply priest for the Michigan Deanery.

I. Prior to the beginning of Great Lent, he visited diocesan seminarians at Saint Tikhon Seminary and Saint Vladimir Seminary, with whom he dined.

J. At present, the diocese boasts 12 seminarians. Over a dozen potential seminarians have also been identified.

K. He reported on the three Holy Synod meetings that had been held within the past three months.

L. Concerning the Romanian Episcopate, which has been in dialogue with the Patriarchate of Romania with the intention of effecting a merger of the Episcopate and the Patriarchate's Archdiocese in America under the Patriarchate, he reported that nothing had been known of this until the spring 2008 session of the Holy Synod, at which His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, and four Episcopate priests distributed and discussed the statement of the bi-lateral commission conducting the dialogue. The proposed merger has the blessing of His Holiness, Patriarch Daniel of Romania. It was reported that, by uniting under the Patriarchate, "another step in the unification of Orthodoxy in on this continent" will be realized. He observed that he failed to see how this would be the case, adding that the statement, oddly, made no mention whatsoever of the OCA, which is rather bizarre inasmuch as the Episcopate had enjoyed the OCA's autocephaly for 38 years. He felt that the proposed merger reflects the phylitism that currently is in vogue in many corners of the Orthodox world.

M. He reported that regular services are being held at Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH, even though a permanent priest has yet to be assigned.

N. He reported that, because he drives to Holy Synod meetings and other official OCA functions instead of flying, he saves the OCA tens of thousands of dollars. The diocese has been absorbing these expenses. He proposed that his driving expenses should be submitted to the OCA for reimbursement.

O. "Town hall meetings" in preparation for the 15th All-American Council will be held in Burr Ridge, IL; Indianapolis, IN; and Cleveland, OH.

P. He will participate in the annual pilgrimage to Holy Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, MI on the Great Feast of Dormition.

IV. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT.

A. Diocesan Census. Fr. Zdinak reported that the most recent diocesan census indicates a total adult membership of 5,278. This is problematic since the 2008 budget was based on an anticipated membership of 6,000 submitting assessment payments at the rate of \$81.00 per adult member. This has created a multitude of problems, even though at present, cash flow remains solid. Spending has been frugal, while the budget had to be adjusted downward to reflect the reported loss of nearly 800 members.

B. Delinquent parishes. He reported that several parishes are far behind in submitting their assessment payments, while others have stopped making assessment payments altogether. Still others submit diocesan assessments while withholding OCA assessments. He opined that the diocese should no longer submit assessment payments to the OCA for parishes that are withholding said payments, as this creates a major cash flow problem for the diocese. He reported that the aforementioned parishes will be contacted with regard to their future intentions.

V. DEANS' REPORTS.

A. Chicago Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Mueller reported that the Very Rev. George Gulin, former rector of Holy Protection Church, Royalton, IL, had been released from duties and the diocese and transferred to the Diocese of the West; that the deanery post-Pascha clergy gathering was well attended; that the deanery camp is anticipating its largest enrollment in history; that services are being celebrated periodically in Lake Geneva, IL; and that a petition had been submitted to Archbishop Job to initiate a mission community in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago.

B. Michigan Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Yavornitzky explained the serious financial problems facing Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI.

C. Columbus Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Gibson commented on the recent celebration of the 25th anniversary of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church, Columbus, OH; ongoing meetings with Archbishop Job and deanery clergy in light of difficulties being experienced due to differing views on the OCA financial scandal; and Saint John Camp, Indianapolis, IN.

D. Kansas City Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Sawchak noted that he had met recently with the faithful of Saint James Mission, Kansas City, which is in need of a new rector as a result of the upcoming retirement of the Very Rev. Gregory Dye, and that there will be two ordinations to the diaconate at Holy Trinity Church, Kansas City, KS.

VI. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

Fr. Matsko presented a written report, offering no additions.

VII. PARISH HEALTH MINISTRY REPORT

Mr. Kormos presented a written report, offering no additions.

VIII. COMPENSATION POLICY REPORT AND PROPOSAL

Mr. D'Fantis shared the following observations and reacted to various comments.

A. Clergy salaries should never be adjusted downward.

B. Stipends for supply priests who serve when an assigned priest is on vacation vary. Should these be standardized?

C. Fr. Zdinak suggested that perhaps it should be noted that, if a parish is unable to meet the minimum compensation requirements, its priest may seek outside employment. Fr. Yavornitzky felt that this should not be highlighted.

D. The "equity allowance fund" was added.

Mr. D'Fantis motioned, seconded by Mr. Sedor, that the diocesan council endorses the compensation proposal and that it should be presented at the forthcoming assembly in October 2008. Passed by consensus.

IX. PENSION PLAN REPORT.

Mr. Sedor reported that the OCA pension plan is in excellent condition.

X. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Mr. Koncel was unable to be present, Mr John Sedor presented on his behalf.

A. the decline in reported membership has resulted in a \$70,000.00 deficit in the 2008 budget. Mr. Sedor added that the budget was scoured carefully and that numerous

reductions were ordered.

B. the status of parishes in arrears and/or withholding have been reviewed. Failure to remit assessments in a timely manner and withholding has resulted in a further \$20,000.00 deficit, thereby raising the overall deficit to \$90,000.00.

In response to a discussion on Archbishop Job's stipend, Ms. Mabus, seconded by Mrs. Lucak, motioned that "in view of the fact that Archbishop Job no longer receives a stipend in the amount of \$650.00 from the OCA, as in years past, the diocese will assume the stipend by increasing his salary accordingly." The motion passed with one abstention.

In response to a discussion on the deficit, Fr. Adamcio, seconded by Fr. Clements, motioned that "the diocesan council authorizes the use of restricted funds to cover the deficit if necessary." Passed by consensus.

Once again, it was stated that parishes that are in arrears and/or withholding must be confronted and dealt with in an expeditious manner.

XI. DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY.

With regard to the diocesan assembly, slated to be hosted by Archangel Michael Church, Burbank, IL, 6-7 October, it was noted that the Bishop's Council will meet 6 October at 9:00 a.m., while the diocesan council will convene at 1:00 p.m. The first plenary session will be held on the evening of 6 October.

XII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos at 3:45 p.m. upon motion by Fr. Clements, seconded by Fr. Matsko.

Respectfully submitted,
Father John Matusiak, Secretary

-- END --