

The regular meeting of the Midwest Diocesan Council, held November 14, 2008 at Archangel Michael Church, Burbank, IL, opened with prayers offered by His Eminence, Archbishop Job, at 10:12 a.m.

I. ROLL.

A. Members present. His Eminence, Archbishop Job; Archimandrite Vladimir [Wendling]; the Archpriests John Adamcio, Andrew Clements, Stephen Karaffa, Michael Matsko, John Matusiak [secretary], and Basil Stoyka; and Mr. Sam D'Fantis, Mr. Christopher Eager [alternate], Mr. Joseph Kormos, Ms. Kitty Mabus, Mr. John Sedor, Mr. Michael Strelka [alternate], and Dr. Richard West.

B. Deans present. The Archpriests Thomas Mueller, Timothy Sawchak, John Steffaro, and Andrew Yavornitzky.

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

II. SCRIPTURE READINGS.

Ms. Mabus read the day's appointed reading from 2 Thessalonians, while Fr. Clements read the appointed reading from the Gospel of Saint Luke. A brief discussion followed.

III. ARCHBISHOP'S OPENING REMARKS AND REPORT.

Archbishop Job welcomed the council members and deans and thanked the clergy and faithful of Archangel Michael Church, Burbank, IL, for hosting the meeting. In light of the illness of the Archpriest John Zdinak, chancellor, he asked Fr. Mueller to chair the meeting. In his report to the council, Archbishop Job noted the following.

A. He presided at the consecration of Holy Trinity Church, Overland Park, KS.

B. He presided at the 90th anniversary of Saint John the Baptist Church, Campbell, OH.

C. He attended the fall session of the Holy Synod of Bishops and the joint meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council.

D. He participated with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, in the consecration of the altar at Saint Andrew Church, Maple Heights, OH.

E. He presided at the Vigil and Liturgy for the feast of Saint John of Chicago at Holy Trinity Cathedral. His Grace, Bishop Peter of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, concelebrated at the Vigil.

F. He participated with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, at the 90th anniversary of Saint Nicholas Church, Mogadore, OH.

G. He presided at the 100th anniversary of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI.

H. On the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, he will meet with the clergy of the Columbus Deanery in Dayton, OH, at which time a new dean will be appointed. Fr. Zdinak has been overseeing the deanery since the resignation of the Archpriest Daniel Rentel.

I. He will attend the special session of the Holy Synod of Bishops, slated to be held December 12-13, 2007, to render a final decision on the appeal of the former OCA chancellor. He fielded a number of questions with regard to the appeal and related matters.

J. He met with diocesan seminarians attending Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, and Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA.

IV. DEANS' REPORTS.

A. Chicago Deanery. There were no additions to the written report presented by Fr. Mueller.

B. Cleveland Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Steffaro noted that a full time priest will be appointed to Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH, in the immediate future.

C. Michigan Deanery. There were no additions to the written report presented by Fr. Yavornitzky.

D. Kansas City Deanery. In addition to his written report, Fr. Sawchak noted that the Very Rev. Thomas Succarotte, rector of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL, is experiencing ongoing health issues and is undergoing dialysis.

E. Minneapolis Deanery. No report.

F. Columbus Deanery. No report.

V. LATE VOCATIONS REPORT.

The question was raised as to whether it would be possible to issue certificates to those who successfully complete the program.

VI. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

Fr. Matsko presented a comprehensive written report in which he summarized the recent joint meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council. In the interest of objectivity, he distributed a number of documents that were presented at the Metropolitan Council meeting and fielded numerous questions on the proposed 2008 OCA budget, the establishment of the new special investigative committee, and a wide variety of related matters.

VII. FINANCE COMMITTEE AND TREASURER'S REPORTS.

Mr. D'Fantis presented three recommendations of the finance committee.

A. That visits be made to Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI, and Saint Andrew Church, Maple Heights, OH, for the purpose of addressing issues with regard to these parishes' failure to remit OCA and diocesan assessments. It was felt that face-to-face meetings are necessary to clarify these matters.

B. That other parishes experiencing legitimate difficulties in meeting their assessment commitments should be visited by their respective deans, who will be updated on each parish's situation in advance. The results of these meetings should be reported to the diocesan council and

finance committee for further action.

C. That a process for parishes unwilling or legitimately unable to remit assessments, in whole or in part, be developed. Documentation is essential in creating a "paper trail" in reviewing each parish's circumstances.

While Mr. Robert Koncel, treasurer, could not be present, it was reported that at present, \$151,000.00 in OCA assessment payments received by parishes has been placed in escrow.

D. A lack of clarity and confusion exists with regard to the census figure for 2008. The matter will be discussed further during the afternoon session.

A discussion was held with regard to signatures on diocesan checks. Upon motion by Mr. Sedor, seconded by Dr. West, it was decided that checks written for \$10,000.00 or more must be signed by hand, rather than with a signature stamp. Checks for \$10,000.00 or more must bear Archbishop Job's signature. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. DISCUSSION ON 2008 CENSUS.

Sessions resumed after lunch with a discussion on how to determine the 2008 diocesan census. After considerable discussion, Fr. Clements, motioned, seconded by Dr. West, that parishes are to submit membership statistics for 2008 no later than January 15, 2008. The motion passed with six votes in favor, five against, and one abstention.

In related matters,

A. the financial statement was accepted as presented by consensus.

B. the \$10.00 special assessment for the parish health ministry project will be listed separately on the 2008 assessment statements sent to parishes. It was noted that delegates to the diocesan assembly passed the special assessment for a two year period, although it is subject to review after the first year.

IX. DISCUSSION ON WITHHOLDING, BENCHMARKS.

In response to whether the benchmarks outlined at the June 2007 meeting of the diocesan council in Chicago, IL. had been met, Archbishop Job noted that two of the three benchmarks have been met – (benchmark 1. special meeting of the Holy Synod; benchmark 3. announcement of 2008 All American Council). He added that a change in attitude is necessary before the others can be met, opining that the stand taken in 2007 by the diocese should be upheld. He further opined that three essential questions still need to be answered in a satisfactory manner, but that these do not constitute new benchmarks:

A. What happened, and why did it happen? B. What is the responsibility of those who allowed what happened to happen? C. What can be done to ensure that what happened does not happen again in the future?

In response to a question with regard to the report on the investigation that had been posted on -- and summarily removed from -- the OCA web site, Archbishop Job stated that the report accurately reflected the complete, 700-page report, adding that not all of Proskaur Rose's findings had been released.

Further discussion ensued, after which it was affirmed that assessments will continue to be placed in escrow until all of the benchmarks put forth in June 2007 are met – namely the release of the Special Commission report. It was noted that the new committee plans to complete its work in February 2008.

Upon motion by Fr. Clements, seconded by John Sedor, it was decided that a communiqué be sent to the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, Fr Alexander Garklavs, on behalf of the Diocesan Council reminding the central church administration of the bench marks set by the council. The motion passed unanimously.

X. CLERGY CONVOCATION

Fr. Mueller shared with the council the decisions of the Bishop's Council to devote the entire clergy convocation in February to discussing and drafting a paradigm for restructuring the OCA. Fr Mueller explained that the hope is that this paradigm will provide a basis for thought and discussion leading up to next year's All American Council. *(The project is further defined in the attached memo, Appendix I)*

XI. CLERGY COMPENSATION

Fr. Yavornitzky reported that the clergy compensation group are soliciting feedback on the clergy compensation guidelines through the diocesan council meeting in May. A dedicated email address has been set up for this at: clergycompensation@midwestdiocese.org.

XII. PARISH HEALTH PROGRAM

Mr. Kormos, Parish Health Facilitator, lead a discussion on the possibility of instituting Parish Grants. The parish health grant initiative is an activity geared to stimulate parishes in the Diocese of the Midwest to begin new ministries or further develop existing parish ministries. Modest cash grants will be provided to a few parishes as an incentive to begin internal and external efforts designed to strengthen their parish.

The council reacted favourably to the idea and Archbishop Job asked Mr Kormos to draft a memo on the project. *(see memo on Parish Grants attached, Appendix II)*

Mr. Kormos also reported that he has completed, with the assistance of Fr. Matusiak, the first in a series of videos, the first being on evangelization. Other topics reported on and discussed were; Financial Audit Manual, Miscounduct Materials, Financial Stewardship and Evangelization. *(see Appendix III for detailed information on these topics)*

XIII. NEW MEMBERS

Archbishop JOB introduced the new council members and welcomed them. The new members, as elected by the Diocesan Assembly are Christopher Eagler and Mike Strelka, both council alternates.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Diocesan Council will be on Friday May 16, 2008 in Chicago.

Respectfully submitted,
Father John Matusiak, Secretary
26 November 2007

APPENDIX I - MEMO ON CLERGY CONVOCATION

Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
Office of the Archbishop

Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified
December 5, 2007
No. 233

MEMORANDUM

From: Deacon Joseph Matusiak
To: Diocesan Clergy
Re: 2008 Clergy Convocation – February 11-13, Darien, Illinois

At the Bishop's Council meeting on Nov. 13th, a decision was made to devote the entire clergy convocation in February to discussing and drafting a paradigm for restructuring the OCA. We hope that this paradigm will provide a basis for thought and discussion leading up to next year's All American Council. We hope to plant a seed that will germinate and bear fruit in the revitalization of our Church.

In order to prepare for the convocation, we are asking each deanery to review Articles 2, 3, 4, & 5 of the OCA Statute, and to discuss how these articles can be implemented – or altered if necessary – to restructure the Orthodox Church in America. This will involve structural, procedural, logistical, financial, and personnel matters. We want to emphasize that the restructuring paradigm we are seeking will not be just theoretical but as practical and specific as possible. (For example: location of OCA chancery, size of staff, necessary departments and staff positions, funding basis, central vs. diocesan responsibilities and prerogatives, etc., etc.)

Each deanery should prepare a summary of its discussions and suggestions. This is to be submitted in a text of no more than 10 pages to the diocesan chancery no later than 1/6/08. This presupposes some very timely communication over the next month in each deanery.

The submissions from the deaneries will be summarized and compiled in one document, which will be presented at the convocation. There the assembled brotherhood will break up into small groups to work on parts of the paradigm document relating to the various sections of the Statute which are under consideration.

Please cooperate with this plan put forward by the Bishop's Council with His Eminence Archbishop JOB's active collaboration and blessing. Thus, when we assemble together in February, our time can be efficient, creative, and productive in the hope and expectation that we can begin to effect change for the better in the life of the Orthodox Church in America.

APPENDIX II – MEMO ON PARISH GRANT PROGRAM

MEMO

To: His Eminence, Archbishop JOB

From: Joseph Kormos, Diocesan Parish Health Facilitator

Re: Parish Health Grant Initiative

Your Eminence,

Master Bless.

Per your request this letter summarizes the proposal for Parish Health Grants that I recently discussed with the Bishop's Council and Diocesan Council. I look forward to any suggestions you may have for implementing this effort.

What

The parish health grant initiative is an activity to stimulate parishes in the Diocese of the Midwest to begin new ministries or further develop existing parish ministries. Modest cash grants will be provided to a few parishes as an incentive to begin internal and external efforts designed to strengthen their parish.

Background

Many parishes have an idea or three --something that the priest or the parish council or a collection of parishioners have wanted to try but they never quite pulled it together. Perhaps lack of funds was a barrier. Perhaps encouragement was needed. Many parishes assuming "we could never do that" even lack a good set of ideas. The Parish Health Grant initiative can, at least in small part begin to overcome these barriers.

Grant Funding Goal

I would like to raise \$10,000 (or more) to be used for these grants in 2008. I envision offering modest sized grants -- between say \$1500 and \$5000 -- to parishes who apply, are in good standing and have a "good idea" that they are willing to pursue with zeal. This would allow us to begin with probably three to five grants the first year. Raising more money will allow us to offer more grants or provide larger grant amounts.

Administration

To give some initial structure to the initiative here are a few key points

concerning administration of the grants:

- * I would hope that the first grants can be made in the first 3-4 months of 2008. As we wait too many parishes are in decline.
- * The new activities/ministries that are the object of the grant can fall into various parish areas. Charitable outreach. Adult Education. Worship. Evangelization. Campus Outreach. No legitimate area of healthy, vibrant parish life is, per se, out of bounds for consideration.
- * Parishes would be required to do real work as part of the grant. The grants are not simply cash awards to support struggling parishes. Instead they are designed to stimulate action and effort on the part of parishes that desire to begin a cycle of renewed vibrancy. The grants provide financial incentive and may underwrite actual costs associated with beginning and operating the ministry.
- * The decision on who receives grants would be made by a committee of clergy and laity, perhaps from the Diocesan Council, based on submission of a specific Parish Health Grant Proposal form.
- * The grant committee would apply appropriate criteria in making their decision. Among the possible criteria are:
 - * I would foresee the grants being administered by my office. Parishes will be required to provide periodic updates on the grant project. How are they doing? What is working? What is not?
- * The names of parishes receiving grants would be made public but not the amounts.

Impact on the Diocese

I foresee this initiative as having the following impact on the Diocese:

- * With the incentive of even a modest grant, numerous parishes will begin a conversation on "what we can do to become a more vibrant parish".
- * Parishes receiving grants will be required to take action - they will begin to "turn the crank" on otherwise static parish situations.
- * Some parishes not receiving grants may become inspired to enact their project anyway -- using internal or parishioner funds.
- * Feedback -- "lessons learned" harvested from parishes receiving grants -- can be used to stimulate new efforts in other parishes that heretofore decided to watch from the sidelines.
- * In a small way the Diocese can begin to be perceived as giving something back to parishes.

* We may actually have some fun.

Please let me know if you have suggestions on improving this initiative. I plan to begin efforts to raise the funds and publicize the initiative.

In Christ,
Joe Kormos
Parish health Facilitator

APPENDIX III – PARTICULARS ON PARISH HEALTH PROGRAM

1. Financial Audit Manual – Positive feedback has been received to date on the new financial audit manual . Deans were asked to communicate the importance of using this manual to their parishes and that parishes should feedback questions and improvement suggestions to Joe Kormos
2. Parish Grants - The idea of parish grants, awarding parishes small grants of say \$1000-3000 to begin a new project or ministry in the parish, that could have learning value for other parishes in the diocese was discussed and received favorable feedback. Joe will explore feasibility.
3. Misconduct Materials – The availability of new materials identifying good practices for implementing misconduct was discussed. Joe Kormos was asked to prepare recommendation on what information the Diocese should request from parishes related to their compliance with the policy. The recommendation should indicate frequency of reporting.
4. Financial Stewardship – This continues to be an important topic for strengthening parishes. Joe was asked to prepare information for the parish Pulse newsletter, Diocesan webpage and other communication vehicles about practical aspects of Christian financial stewardship in parishes. Practical aspects of pledge programs—what is it how to set it up how to make it run better, tips etc.? Do Orthodox Christians tithe? Joe indicated he had already begun collecting some stewardship data from parishes with operating stewardship on pledging vs. dues systems.
5. Evangelization - The evangelization video project will be continuing. The activity will have two basic segments. Information on personal skill and foundation building to prepare persons to share their faith in a genuine and effective manner. Second area of focus will be parish level activities to help the parish and parishioners to develop fluency in sharing the Good News. Joe Kormos and Fr John Matusiak are looking for persons (clergy or lay) desiring to assist with this activity. Assistance is welcomed in defining content, content review and feedback, production and parish implementation.