

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

Holiday Inn Midway, Chicago, Illinois

18 June 2013

## I. OPENING.

The meeting opened with the singing of the Ascension Troparion led by His Grace, Bishop Alexander, *Locum Tenens*, at 8:34 a.m., after which the day's readings from Acts and the Gospel of Saint John were read by Michael Herzak and Priest Nicholas Finley.

## II. ATTENDANCE.

Bishop Alexander, Archpriest John Zdinak, Archpriest Nathan Kroll, Archpriest Christopher Wojcik, Samuel D'Fantis, Michael Dorosh, Michael Herzak Jr., Dennis Garlick, Priest Nicholas Finley, Archpriest Alexander Kuchta, Kitty Mabus, Archpriest Basil Stoyka, Archpriest John Matusiak.

Also present was Philip Sokolov.

## III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

Reading and acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting were postponed until later.

## IV. BISHOP ALEXANDER'S REPORT.

Bishop Alexander offered introductory remarks concerning his appointment as *Locum Tenens*, noting that he sees his function as one of a "placeholder" until such time as an election of a new diocesan bishop is deemed appropriate. He spoke of the importance of a time of healing in the diocese in the effort to building up the Body of Christ. He fielded a number of questions and comments.

## V. CHANCELLOR'S REPORT.

- A. Father John Z. reported that he had met with Priest John Baker, who had served as His Grace, Bishop Matthias' personal secretary in addition to his duties as diocesan property manager and rector of Christ the Savior Church, noting that since we do not have a ruling bishop there is no need for a secretary. He discussed Father John B.'s remuneration, proposing that he continue to receive \$500.00 per month, which passed unanimously upon motion by Father Christopher W., seconded by Father Nicholas F..
- B. Ongoing issues with the leaking roof over the dining room of the bishop's apartment, the need for extensive tuckpointing, and issues with one of the chimneys on Christ the Savior Church were noted. A bid for \$128,000.00 was received for tuckpointing both buildings. Additional property issues include sewer lines, which recently backed up and left raw sewage in the residence basement, and a number of trees that need to be trimmed.
- C. With regard to the merger between Christ the Savior parish and the diocese, Father John Z. proposed that an engineering company be engaged to assess the feasibility of the entire facility, after which an acceptable, agreeable mutual arrangement between the parish and diocese, indicating clearly who is responsible for what, be developed. After discussion, it was suggested to allocate \$5,000.00 for use by a committee charged with addressing these tasks which passed upon motion by Father Basil S., seconded by Dennis G.
- D. With regard to the Parish Development and Missions Committee, Father John Z. observed that it should be reconstituted for the purpose of reviewing and establishing grants. Possible committee members include Father Thomas M., chair, and Father Paul W., Ann Marie M., Archpriest Daniel Rentel, Priest Maximus Cabey, Simeon Morbey, Alexa Geeza, Jan Labun, Michael Tabling, and Sean Cunningham. Upon motion by Father Nicholas F., seconded by Dennis G., it was decided unanimously to reconstitute the committee.
- E. Questions were fielded by Bishop Alexander and Father John Z. with regard to the status of liturgical directives that had been put in place in recent years; the status of Saint John Monastery, Hiram, OH; and the diocesan archives stored in the basement of Christ the Savior Church.

## VI. DEANERY REPORTS.

- A. **Chicago Deanery.** Father Thomas M., Dean, reported that he was elected Dean to succeed Priest Herman Kincaid. He spoke of the most recent basement flood at Saint Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL – the parish's fifth since 2002. He also reported that Priest Danial Doss has been appointed priest-in-charge of Holy Apostles Mission, Bloomington-Normal, IL.
- B. **Cleveland Deanery.** Father John Z., in the absence of Archpriest Andrew Clements, Dean, reported that the latter had been unanimously reelected Dean. As an expression of solidarity, deanery clergy asked Priest Matthew Moriak to host the next deanery meeting. The clergy also decided to invite Priest Elijah Mueller, Late Vocations Coordinator, to offer a deanery-wide presentation on the program and address questions and concerns. The 100th anniversary of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Lorain, OH and the 30th anniversary of Saint Innocent Church, Olmsted Falls, OH, were noted.
- C. **Indianapolis Deanery.** Father John Z., in the absence of Archpriest Joseph Gibson, Dean, reported on the latter's health issues. He also reported that Archpriest Ted Bobosh had been elected Dean, effective 1 July 2013.
- D. **Kansas City Deanery.** Father Timothy S. reported that he also had been reelected Dean. He noted that Father Elijah M. had visited Kansas City, where there are four individuals capable of assisting with instruction. The

missions in Rolla, MO [Deacon Joel Wilson] and Joplin, MO [Priest Michael Kuzara] are doing well. Saint Nicholas Mission, Lawrence, KS, is in the midst of purchasing property.

- E. **Michigan Deanery.** Father John Z., in the absence of Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzky, Dean, reported that the latter is recovering from back surgery.
- F. **Minneapolis Deanery.** Father Paul W. reported that he had been reelected Dean. He noted that the deanery clergy had requested that the Holy Synod review the policies and procedures for sexual misconduct when a bishop is involved; that the few remaining members of Saint Nicholas Church, Chisholm, MN, had voted to close the parish; that the possibility of closing the missions in Anoka, MN and Chisago City, WI is being explored, along with the possibility of establishing a new mission; that Archpriest Vladimir Lecko and Priest Gregory Grivna are retiring; and that Saint Herman Church, Minneapolis, has had a new influx of parishioners, some of whom had donated an icon of Saint John Maximovitch to the parish.

**VII. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.**

The following corrections were noted.

- A. Concerning the February 2013 minutes, Kitty M. asked that, on page 2, we make it clear that we had voiced our concerns and opinions “to Bishop Matthias.”
- B. Concerning the March 2013 minutes, Father Christopher W. asked that we simply publish a redacted set of minutes that only list the decisions in section IV. Further, It was noted that an e-vote had been taken to extend benefits for two additional years.

There being no additional corrections or revisions, the minutes were accepted upon motion by Father Christopher W., seconded by Father Alex K.

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

The representatives’ written report is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof. Father Alex K. added that the most recent meeting was very positive and that the Metropolitan Council committees have taken on a lot of work, and are approaching it with seriousness. He noted that the next All-American Council has been postponed until 2015. After sharing ideas with regard to background checks, it was the general consensus that we should pursue background checks of all priests and deacons, with similar checks for subdeacons and readers undertaken by their respective parishes.

**IX. TREASURER’S REPORT.**

Father John Z., in the absence of Treasurer Rob Koncel, gave the Treasurer’s report, nothing that at present the diocese is solvent. He reported that the financial report will be sent to everyone via e-mail.

**X. “SUPPORT OUR SEMINARIANS” APPEAL.**

Father John M. reported on the work he, Ann Marie M., and Kitty M. have done in this regard and distributed sample resources to be posted on the diocesan web site and mailed in hard copy to all parishes for distribution. It was the consensus that the appeal will be pursued in August, with 25 August designated as “SOS Sunday.” It was noted that the seminarians are receiving “grants,” not “scholarships. All is in place for a successful appeal.

**XI. LATE VOCATIONS REPORT.**

Father Elijah M. and Presvytera Rebecca Luft oversee the program. It was noted that the Bishop’s Council had agreed that Father Elijah should be compensated for travel.

**XII. 2013 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY.**

It was the consensus that the Assembly be a one-day event on Tuesday, 8 October 2013 in the Chicago area. The Diocesan Council will meet on Monday, 7 October. Additional information will be distributed as it becomes available.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with prayer at 2:23 p.m. upon motion by Sam D., seconded by Dennis G.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Father John Matusiak, Secretary*

## Metropolitan Council Report – Spring 2013 Meeting

Meetings of the Metropolitan Council (MC) which took place February 26 – 28 were the first to take place since the election of Metropolitan Tikhon in November of 2012 and after the February meeting of our Diocesan Council, at which we spoke with the Metropolitan, and Bishops Alexander and Melchisedek about Bishop Matthias. The atmosphere of these meetings was markedly different from previous MC meetings where there was a great deal of tension associated with our former Metropolitan Jonah. It was obvious to all who had been present for those earlier meetings that we were now being blessed with a normalcy and lack of strife absent for so long. This new reality was commented on by Frs. Jillions and Tosi. There is definitely a more pleasant and relaxed atmosphere at the chancery.

An effort to make the MC meetings more efficient and productive is under way. An atmosphere of trust seems to be taking hold and because of this, it is hoped that some committees can be streamlined. For example: the Internal governance and Council development committees will be merged. There will be more of an effort to do more of the essential work of the MC at a committee level so that so that more developed recommendations might be brought to the full council for ratification rather than protracted discussion on each issue. A Reorganization Work Group is also studying what church work is being done in the Church at large. The goal is to determine which tasks are best done at what level in the Church: centrally or locally. The group hopes to publish their findings this month.

Postconciliar work of the 16<sup>th</sup> AAC in 2011 continues. One result of this work has led to continuing education for our clergy. The Holy Synod of Bishops recently mandated 20 hours per year of education for priests. This is very new for us and it's not completely understood how this will be done. However, I can report that continuing education was one topic of the most recent Chicago Deanery meeting with ideas as to how we can work towards fulfilling the mandate.

The Office of Response to Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA) is now functioning and directed Ms Cindy Davis who has a social work background and experience in this area. Her efforts will involve dealing with allegations of misconduct brought to the attention of the Chancery and also with prevention. There is still much to be worked out with respect to coordinating the work of ORSMA, the MC's legal committee, OCA General Council, the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee and the Crisis Management Team. I should mention that when the MC met in February, there were only a few open active misconduct cases where at the September 2012 meeting there were some 19 open cases.

A discussion on the 18<sup>th</sup> AAC was held. Because of extraordinary expenses to our parishes due to the November 2012 Council and lack of clarity on how to deal with our most current financial challenges, a motion by the MC to postpone this Council until 2015 was passed. (The Holy Synod later ratified this decision.)

The OCA is facing very difficult financial issues. Because of the resolution from the 16<sup>th</sup> AAC to reduce annual assessments, and some unforeseen expenses we are running a rather large deficit, projected to be nearly \$189K for 2013. Also contributing to the deficit are reduced census figures with OCA membership having dropped by 1000. The financial development committee is working to revive a stewardship program (something along the lines of FOS, but definitely not called 'FOS') that would help with this issue. Chancellors and Diocesan treasurers have been meeting with OCA officers to clarify issues and to map out a plan to move to a proportional giving/stewardship model to fund the OCA. All involved with this process have stated their support for it, but it's not entirely clear as to how this will finally work out. I am getting the impression that some of the newest members of the MC who were the

loudest supporters of the assessment reduction resolution may be seeing things a bit differently, being present in the Chancery and realizing how few people are doing so much work. This is not the OCA of the 90s and 00s when there were in excess of 30 full and part time Chancery employees. To summarize, when it comes to the subject of funding the OCA, there are presently more questions than answers.

One of the last items of MC agenda had to do with a presentation of our General Council, Thaddeus Wojcik. I asked a question of our GC and MC that I've asked here, regarding background checks of clergy. We were told by one of the bishops present at the MC meeting that in his diocese these background checks are done every two years and that files are maintained at his chancery. I've long felt that this is something that should be done by our Diocesan Authority with files maintained here. I would recommend that this would also be our policy and that our Diocesan Council would ask our chancellor and chancery staff (and perhaps other capable and trustworthy persons) to create restricted personnel files for background checks that can only be accessed by the Chancellor and Bishop. It's essential that we begin to do these checks and also essential that confidentiality for all diocesan clergy be maintained. When this policy is in place we will be able to say without qualification that we are doing our due diligence and have a reasonable amount of confidence that our diocesan parishes are safe places to be.

*Archpriest Alexander Kuchta*  
Clergy MC Representative