

58TH ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Archangel Michael Woodside Event Center, Broadview Heights, Ohio • 7-8 October 2019

I. OPENING.

The Assembly opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 10:15 a.m., after which His Grace, Bishop PAUL, called the Assembly to order.

II. PLENARY SESSION ONE CREDENTIALS.

One Bishop, 49 clergy delegates, 45 lay delegates, and 4 observers, for a total of 99 participants.

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, APPOINTMENTS.

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

- Presidium: Bishop PAUL and Father Zdinak.
- Secretariat: Priest Herman Kincaid, Ellyn Gillette, and Philip Sokolov.
- Nominating Committee: Archpriest Dusan Koprivica, Mary Ann Bobulsky, and Carrie Sabourin.
- Resolutions Committee [no resolutions submitted]: Priest Nicholas Finley, Priest Alessandro Margheritino, and Robert Graban.
- Tellers: Deacons, chaired by Protodeacon George Potym. The Deacons also will be responsible for Credentials. Motion carried.

IV. ADDRESS OF BISHOP PAUL.

Bishop PAUL read his address, as posted on the website. In answering the question, *How is the Diocese Doing?*, Bishop PAUL focused on the following areas: Christ the Savior/Diocesan relationship, and the proposed move of Diocesan offices and Bishop’s residence to the Rectory of Archangel Michael Church in Burbank, Illinois; Improvements related to our Website and Parish Reporting; the addition of Keleinik/Office Assistant Mason Baker; Family and Youth Ministry; 50th Anniversary of our Autocephaly; Parish Visitations; and the St. Macrina Program. Bishop PAUL also expressed his concerns regarding the following: Percentage giving plan; Recruitment for candidates for seminaries; Vision for missions; and the recent falling asleep of Archpriest John Matusiak, which created openings for the Director of Communications and the Diocesan Secretary. Bishop PAUL announced that he appointed Priest Herman Kincaid as the Diocesan Secretary effective immediately. With him vacating his elected seat on Diocesan Council, Fr. Andrew Bartek, alternate, has taken his seat. The position of the Director of Communications for the Diocese will be filled after the new website is up and running. Archpriest Paul Wesche will prepare news releases until a Director of Communications is appointed. Memory Eternal was intoned for Father John Matusiak. *Memory eternal!*

V. CHANCELLOR’S REPORT.

Father Zdinak stated that Chicago’s Christ the Savior Church and the Diocese have reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding for the Chicago parish to take over the property from the Diocese; such Memorandum of Understanding will be voted on by this Assembly. Father Zdinak also mentioned that Priest Joel Weir is the new Dean for the Indianapolis Deanery to replace retired Archpriest Theodore Bobosh. Following ordination to the Holy Priesthood, Deacon Gregory Ealy will be assigned as Acting Rector of the Dayton parish. Father Zdinak also commended St. Paul the Apostle Church in Dayton, Ohio, for following the clergy compensation guidelines for their new priest.

VI. DEANERY REPORTS.

There were no additions to the reports submitted by the Chicago, Cleveland, and Indianapolis Deaneries. Archpriest Timothy Sawchak, Dean of the Kansas City Deanery, added that the parish

in Desloge, Missouri has petitioned to close. Archpriest Dusan Koprivica, Dean of the Michigan Deanery, encouraged youth groups to participate in outreach with the Detroit parish by contacting Priest Paul Albert. Archpriest Paul Wesche, Dean of the Minneapolis Deanery, noted that there is an opening for a mission priest in Bismarck, North Dakota, who would also serve at the parish in Minot, North Dakota.

VII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

In addition to the written report, Archpriest Alexander Garklavs encouraged people to consider becoming Stewards of the OCA (Orthodox Church in America) and mentioned that Syosset is considering the possibility of moving the OCA Chancery to reduce operating costs. Archpriest Elijah Mueller will serve as Clergy Delegate to the Metropolitan Council following the resignation of Archpriest Alexander Garklavs.

VIII. MISSION DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

In addition to his written report, Archpriest Thomas Mueller noted that grants were approved for 8 mission priests in addition to a \$10,000 grant for Ss. Peter and Paul church in Detroit, Michigan and \$12,000 for St. Panteleimon church in Summit, Illinois to support Priest Esteban Vazquez with his Spanish language outreach to the community. Mission funds were also used to support Joe Kormos' (facilitator and consultant) expenses and the Parish Forum.

IX. ST. MACRINA LATE VOCATIONS PROGRAM REPORT.

The report stands as submitted.

X. MOTHER MARIA OF PARIS CHARITABLE MINISTRY REPORT.

Priest Jonathan Lincoln presented a \$10,000 check to Bishop PAUL. The donation was from an anonymous donor with no restrictions. Father Lincoln stated that they are looking for their first fund-raising project, to use as a model, since the previously selected one, St. Herman's in Cleveland, Ohio, is already generously supported by the Cleveland area parishes.

XI. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Robert Koncel, Treasurer, reviewed the financial highlights for 2018 and January – June, 2019, which are all included in his report. He noted that the 2019 budget was based on the 13% tithing percentage and that 9 parishes requested relief for a total of \$37,511, which came out of the budgeted dollars of \$40,000 under the Special Projects Fund line item.

XII. AUDITORS' REPORT.

Judith Weinclaw, Audit Committee, emphasized the importance of receiving the "correct" financial records in a timely manner from the accounting firm so that the auditors can complete their work. Robert Koncel, Treasurer, stated that the accounting firm has now been given direct access to the financial records. Robert emphasized that the accounting firm was not given the ability to change any of the records. Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzsky made a motion to approve the Auditors' Report and it was seconded by Dennis Garlick. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. ELECTIONS.

Ballots were cast for one Clergy member for the Diocesan Council, two Lay members for the Diocesan Council, one Lay member for the Metropolitan Council, and one member for the Audit Committee.

XIV. CHRIST THE SAVIOR CHURCH IN CHICAGO/DIOCESAN PROPERTY AND 2020 BUDGET.

Upon motion by the Diocesan Council, Father Zdinak presented the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Christ the Savior Parish in Chicago and the Diocese concerning the transfer of ownership and acceptance of full financial responsibility for the LaSalle property, as reported in the Delegate Handbook. Father Zdinak thanked Archpriest John Baker for handling

the improvements made to the property and said that if the Assembly votes to pass the MOU, then that is also a vote for the 2020 Budget. Robert Koncel, Treasurer, pointed out one correction to the proposed 2020 Budget in the Delegate Handbook. The forecasted income was off by \$1,638 and has been corrected in the Treasurer's Report–Addendum, which is located on the Midwest Diocese website. The budget is still balanced. It was noted that eleven parishes asked for relief in 2020 with respect to the tithing percentage of 13%. Five of the eleven parishes asked for relief the first time and six are repeats from 2019. Robert also pointed out that the line item, “Special Projects Fund”, was changed to “Financial Reserves” to better describe its purpose. The budgeted amount of \$40,000 did not change. When the vote was called, there was one opposition and no abstentions. The motion carried for the MOU and the 2020 budget with the Addendum was adopted. A break was taken by the Assembly at 11:35am and ended at 12:10 p.m.

XV. OPEN DISCUSSION.

Bishop PAUL asked for feedback regarding the Percentage Giving formula. There was a combination of positive and less than positive feedback, especially from parishes whose total assessment dollars increased. Father Zdinak reported that the Diocese gained 216 new members after switching from the per head assessment to the tithing percentage. Simeon Morbey reminded everyone to apply restricted funds appropriately because these funds can be subtracted from the Adjusted Gross Income in the formula. Bishop PAUL stated that the tithing percentage could be reduced in the future if there is not a legitimate reason for keeping it the same from year-to-year.

XVI. 50TH AUTOCEPHALY CELEBRATION.

Bishop PAUL said that the Letter (No. 142) he released on October 1, 2019, Celebrating Fifty Years of Autocephaly, outlines the celebration. He encouraged each Deanery to include a youth activity and to consider what Autocephaly means to our recent church members, for example, those joining the church since 2000. Bishop PAUL said the celebration should be modest, joyful, and simple with an emphasis on America.

The first Plenary Session concluded for lunch at 12:57 p.m.

XVII. PLENARY SESSION II CREDENTIALS.

The second plenary session opened following lunch at 1:50 p.m. One Bishop, 50 clergy delegates, 43 lay delegates, and 3 observers present for a total of 97 participants.

XVIII. RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT.

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

XIX. OPEN DISCUSSION.

Bishop PAUL asked Priest Joel Wilson and Carrie Sabourin to provide the Assembly with an update on improving the Diocese's website. The theme of the redesign is “Equipping the Saints for Ministry”. Father Wilson said they've been working on standardizing the format of the content by moving it to Word Press. They are considering several ideas such as, centralized giving, on-line learning, on-line WebEx, and centralized project management. Father Wilson and Carrie welcome any feedback from the Diocese on how to make the website more user friendly. While waiting for the Election results, Bishop PAUL reminded the Assembly that if every parish honored the resolution passed at the 16th All American Council in 2011, specifically, “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this All-American Council encourages each OCA parish and mission to support the seminary of its choice through a sacrificial gift of 1% minimum of its annual operating budget”, the Diocese would have enough funds to support its seminarians. Bishop PAUL believes that we are missing an opportunity to ask our people to include the Diocese in their wills. He opined over the fact that ideally, we would need a Development Officer, which would require spending money to collect money. Bishop PAUL appointed Father Jonathan Lincoln to chair an

Exploratory Committee on establishing an Endowment Fund as a long-term approach. Bishop PAUL asked Father Christopher Rowe to serve on this committee in an advisory role. Bishop PAUL also asked that the topic, Candidates for Priesthood, be on the agenda for every upcoming Deanery meeting so that future candidates may be identified. Fr. John Kennerk gave a presentation on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd church school system.

XX. ELECTION RESULTS.

The following individuals were all elected to three-year terms: Father Jacob Van Sickle as Diocesan Council Clergy Delegate with Father Esteban Vázquez as Alternate; Kenneth Herman & Ellyn Gillette as Diocesan Council Lay Delegates with Linda Shafer as Alternate; Robert Graban as Metropolitan Council Lay Representative with Linda Shafer as Alternate, and Frank Tkacz to the Auditing Committee.

XXI. ADJOURNMENT AND INSTALLATION.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Dennis Garlick, seconded by Priest Herman Klarr, the Assembly adjourned at 3:09 p.m. Bishop PAUL presided over the “Service of Installation” following adjournment for those appointed and elected to diocesan offices.

*Respectfully submitted by the Secretariat,
Ellyn Gillette
Philip Sokolov
Edited by Priest Herman Kincaid, Secretary*