

REPORT OF THE MINNEAPOLIS DEAN to the Diocesan Assembly of the Midwest, at the All-American Council in Baltimore, Monday, July 18, 2022

Thirteen ‘outposts’ of the Church are scattered throughout the four states (ND, MN, WI, IA) in the ‘Minneapolis Deanery,’ from a barely active parish to a chapel to a mission to fully active parishes. Two of these ‘outposts’ are active parishes in North Dakota: St Peter the Aleut in Minot, and Holy Resurrection in Fargo. St Peter in Minot has been without a priest for a good two years now, maybe longer; I’m getting to be an ‘old’ man and time doesn’t move as slowly as it used to, even though I do. It could be more than two years that has gone by since Minot was served by a priest and his family. Currently, St Peter is served about twice a month by the deanery, mostly by a priest we’ve borrowed from the Antiochian jurisdiction, who is attached to the Antiochian parish in West St Paul, MN.

I focus on Minot not only because of the length of time the parish has gone (patiently) without a priest but also because I believe the entire state of North Dakota is a ‘field ripe for harvest,’ and I see Minot playing a key role in evangelizing the state of North Dakota. With a good strategy, and with the ‘right’ man, working together with Fr William of Holy Resurrection parish in Fargo, and with the newly ordained Fr Damian of the Antiochian mission recently established in Bismarck, the entire state—and I would extend the territory into northern Minnesota—the whole of this ‘Northern Lights’ territory could be an adventure in evangelism, centered on these three evangelical ‘centers’ and administered by the triumvirate of these three priests under the direction of the Diocesan Hierarch. As I envision the possibilities of this evangelical opportunity, I see it presenting the ‘right’ man with rewarding and meaningful experiences that would far outweigh all the challenges such an adventure would bring! And possibly be a fast road to sainthood!

I, together with our chancellor, Fr Paul Jannakos, and our Diocesan Hierarch, and the rest of the bishop’s council have only begun to look at this field ripe for harvest, and have begun piecing together what for now is but a ‘pipe dream’ that would surely be a competitor for any contest of thinking outside the box. The pipe dream is still way up in the sky; but the above-mentioned have begun talking to consider all that would need to be done to incarnate this dream firmly in the flesh on the ground.

If any young and/or hardy man looking for a life of meaning and adventure, with ‘balls of steel,’ reading this report feels a bit of a tug stirring in his gut—that may be a sign that such a man may be the ‘right’ man; and, even if it’s done tentatively, with hesitation, let him approach me, or Fr Jannakos, or our Diocesan Hierarch to find out more about this evangelical adventure that may be just beginning to poke its head above the horizon of reality!

Archpriest Paul Wesche  
Rector, St Herman’s Orthodox Church (Minneapolis, MN)  
District Dean, Minneapolis Deanery