

MEETING OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
St. Peter & St. Paul Orthodox Church, Burr Ridge, Illinois • 1 December 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER.

The meeting opened with the singing of “O Heavenly King” and blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop DANIEL, at 10:05am.

II. OPENING PRAYER.

His Eminence mentioned the falling asleep of Protodeacon Nicholas Jannakos and Archpriest Michael Oleska. Memory eternal was sung by all for Archpriest Michael and Protodeacon Nicholas. His Eminence also welcomed newly elected members Mark Philip and Basil Kochan. Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky will be the new dean of the Cleveland Deanery. Fr. William Rettig, as clergy alternate, will fill out the remainder of Fr. Nicholas’ term on the diocesan council. His Eminence thanked Fr. Andrew Clements for his many years of dedicated service.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING.

No changes or amendments.

IV. ATTENDANCE.

A. Officers: His Eminence, Archbishop DANIEL; Archpriest Paul Jannakos, Chancellor; Priest Esteban Vazquez, Vice Chancellor; Archpriest Herman Kincaid, Secretary; Robert Koncel, Treasurer.

B. Delegates: Archpriests Christopher Rowe, Zachariah Trent, Nicholas Wyslutsky; Priests Jacob Van Sickle, Basil Ferguson; Angela Zekios, Elizabeth LaMaster, Mary Ann Bobulsky.

C. Metropolitan Council Representatives: Basil Kochan.

D. Deans: Archpriests Alexander Kuchta, Andrew Clements, Dusan Koprivica, Paul Wesche, Timothy Sawchak, Steven Kostoff.

E. Absent: Archpriests John Baker & Steven Kostoff; Lisa Franks.

F. Guests: Fr. Alexander Koranda.

V. ARCHBISHOP’S REMARKS.

A. His Eminence has visited just over half the 81 communities of the diocese and feels, thanks to the feedback of the priests and deans, that he has a good pulse of the diocese. His Eminence’s travel schedule will reduce to two weekends per month going forward.

B. His Eminence offered gratitude to Fr. Alexander Koranda and the faithful of Holy Trinity Cathedral for hosting the annual clergy retreat divine liturgy. His Eminence also offered reflections on the annual OCA clergy retreat.

C. The All-American Council in 2028 will be held in Chicago.

D. The diocese has been asked to host the St. Moses the Black conference in 2024. Please keep Fr. Moses Barry in your prayers.

E. His Eminence also mentioned the Suprasl World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth in June of 2024 and the 20th anniversary of the return of the Tikhvin Icon to Russia.

F. Great sense of outreach and care for the local community in parishes. The outward focus is important and demonstrates healthy parish life.

G. There are two areas within the diocese which are lacking: adult education and youth ministry. His Eminence emphasized the need for ongoing adult education within parish life and committed youth ministry beyond the wonderful camps. Also, the ongoing health of our clergy and clergy wives is important. His Eminence would like the

Finance Committee to review diocesan clergy compensation guidelines and discuss ongoing clergy health benefits.

- H. His Eminence has been reviewing an administrative structure blessed by +Archbishop JOB, but never implemented. Alice Woog, Simeon Morbey and Joe Kormos are reviewing the plan with His Eminence.
- I. There is a need for revitalization of our mission department. Planning for the future is important using demographic studies.
- J. His Eminence is looking for a full-time kalenik to especially assist him with traveling throughout the diocese.
- K. Seminarians: There is regular communication with the seminarians. There are 11 seminarians attending St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's. There is positive feedback from the faculty regarding our diocesan seminarians. Ordinations to the priesthood: Deacon John York on 12/20, Dn. Philip Day on 1/6/24, Dn. Jordan Kingery on 12/31, and Dn. Peter Reece after Pascha. Two additional candidates for ordination to the priesthood from within St. Macrina program.
- L. His Eminence was asked to step down from the OCA pension board and will chair the canonization commission for Mat. Olga of Alaska.

VI. OPERATIONAL REPORTS.

A. Chancellor:

1. Fr. Paul expressed gratitude for all the prayers and continued support for himself and family during the time of caring for his late father, Protodeacon Nicholas.
2. One opening in the diocese in Minot, North Dakota.
3. No canonical courts open.
4. Special thanks for Fr. Paul Wesche for his work with the Dakota ministry.
5. Good progress on the strategic plan where ministries will be assigned to departments, which would include the diocesan council.
6. His Eminence met with Cardinal Cupich on November 3, 2023. A line of communication is open. This communication will help facilitate a possible diocesan pastoral school within the Chicago area.

B. Vice Chancellor:

1. Confident the diocesan administration has moved out of the "triage" state, meaning centralization has been accomplished. Procedural manuals are being prepared to address ongoing operations and roles. Although the ongoing work of the chancery never ends, two part-time positions are needed: one secretarial in nature (keeping office hours), and an in-office bookkeeper. The two positions will be more financially tenable than the past model of all both roles residing within a single position. The bookkeeper will work at the office one or two times per week to review and issue reimbursement requests and handle other accounts payable issues.

C. Metropolitan Council: Mr. Basil Kochan offered highlights from the written report.

D. Treasurer: Mr. Robert Koncel offered highlights from his written report.

E. *Lunch Break: 12:30-1:15pm* Special Recognition: His Eminence presented Archpriest Andrew Clements with the St. John of Chicago pectoral cross for his many years of service to the diocese and for his parish ministry. All joined in wishing Fr. Andrew Axios!

F. Outreach & Ministry Reports: (As submitted.) Fr. Jacob Van Sickle offered a verbal report on Suprasl housing and planning. St. Xavier University was selected based on

price and quality of housing. Motion to allocate \$10,000 seed money from the diocese for Suprasl: Jannakos/Bobulsky. PASSED. A discussion about schedule and logistics took place. From Mother Alexandra: The arrival of a nun from Chile is anticipated, as well as a laywoman observer discerning future vocation. Support is always appreciated.

VII. DEANERY REPORTS.

- A.** Chicago. See written report. Fr. Alexander expressed gratitude to Fr. Thomas Mueller for his many years of organizing the deanery youth camp ministry.
- B.** Cleveland. See written report. Addition: His Eminence attended the deanery meeting.
- C.** Indianapolis. No report.
- D.** Kansas City. See written report. Addition: two ordinations, one in Rolla, Missouri, the other in Overland Park, Kansas.
- E.** Michigan. See written report. His Eminence elaborated on the ministry of St. Peter & St. Paul in Detroit, noting they are a small, eucharistic community on Sundays and some feast days, but are ministering to the needs of the local community. Dn. Philip will be assigned as priest following his ordination and graduation from seminary.
- F.** Minneapolis. See written report. Fr. Paul spoke on the Dakotas Missions District (DMD). An October meeting in Minot was held with 33 clergy and laypeople to discuss logistics and demographics. Looking for a “circuit rider” priest to serve the DMD. A sponsor has offered the salary for this position, but a candidate needs to be identified.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS.

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS.

None.

X. DATE OF NEXT DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING.

June 6 & 7, 2024, at St. Peter & St. Paul in Burr Ridge, Illinois.

XI. ADJOURNMENT & PRAYER.

His Eminence thanked all gathered for their discussion and dedication for the benefit of the life of the diocese. His Eminence also wish everyone a blessed Nativity to all and asked prayers for those being ordained to the priesthood. There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Fr. Jacob. The meeting was adjourned at 2:16pm with the singing of “It is truly meet” and a blessing by His Eminence.

Respectfully submitted,
Archpriest Herman Kincaid, Diocesan Secretary