

MINUTES
THE 47th ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST
OCTOBER 6-7, 2008
BURR RIDGE, ILLINOIS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2008

The Bishop's Council, Archpriest John Zdinak, chancellor; and the six diocesan deans, met on the morning of Monday, October 6, 2008. A combined luncheon meeting of the Diocesan Council and Bishop's Council was held under the chairmanship of Archbishop Job to review the agenda and consider resolutions. Archbishop Job was absent due to illness.

I. PLENARY SESSION 1

The 47th Assembly of the Diocese of the Midwest of the Orthodox Church in America opened by Archbishop Job with the singing of "O Heavenly King" at 7:37 p.m. The chair was turned over to Archpriest John Zdinak, chancellor.

A. Election of Presidium. The diocesan council, seconded by Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak, nominated Archimandrite Vladimir [Wendling] to serve as clergy vice-chair and Mrs. Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera to serve as lay vice-chair. *Passed by consensus.*

B. Election of Secretariat. The diocesan council, seconded by Archpriest John Steffaro, nominated Archpriest John Matusiak, Archpriest Michael Butler, and Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak to serve as the secretariat. *Passed by consensus.*

C. Committee appointments.

1. Nominating Committee: Archpriest Thomas Mueller, chair; Archpriest Michael Matsko and Mrs. Kitty Mabus, members.
2. Resolutions Committee: Archpriest John Steffaro, chair.
3. Tellers: The deacons will serve as tellers.

D. Credentials. It was reported that there were 120 clergy and lay delegates and observers present.

E. Report of the Chancellor. Archpriest John Zdinak delivered a written report, which is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. There were no additions to the report.

F. Address of Archbishop Job. Archbishop Job delivered his address to the Assembly, a written copy of which is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. He noted that the ongoing scandal in the Orthodox Church in America has "cast a shadow" over life in the Diocese of the Midwest; nevertheless, the life of the Diocese remains vibrant, especially on the parish level. At the conclusion of the report, Archbishop Job entertained a number of questions.

I. Reports.

1. Chicago Deanery. The written report of Archpriest Thomas Mueller, dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. As an aside, Father Mueller noted that references to the number of individual parish "communicants" were inaccurate, inasmuch as they merely reflect the total number of parishioners for whom assessments are remitted and not the number of individuals actually ministered to.
2. Cleveland Deanery. The written report of Archpriest John Steffaro, dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof.

3. Columbus Deanery: The written report of Archpriest Joseph Gibson, acting dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof.
4. Kansas City Deanery: The written report of Priest Timothy Sawchak, dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof.
5. Michigan Deanery: The written report of Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzky, dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof.
6. Minneapolis Deanery: The written report of Archpriest Paul Wesche, acting dean, is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof.
7. Metropolitan Council Representatives. The written report of Archpriest Michael Matsko and Dr. Richard West is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. In summarizing actions taken at the most recent Metropolitan Council meeting, Father Matsko expressed thanks to Archbishop Job, Archpriest Vladimir Berzonsky, Mr. John Kozey, Mr. Mark Stoke, Dr. West, and others within and beyond the Diocese of the Midwest who spoke up courageously during the crisis and insisted that the right thing be done. Echoing Archbishop Job's address, he noted that we are experiencing a crisis of leadership, adding that members of the Metropolitan Council must not be afraid to speak. A number of questions were entertained, specifically on the Special Investigation Report. Upon motion by Father Wesche, seconded by Mr. Christopher Eager, it was moved that the assembly move through the remainder of the agenda at this session and to allocate time tomorrow for further discussion of issues relative to the upcoming All-American Council.
8. Monastery Reports. Written reports from Saint John the Theologian Monastery, Hiram, OH, and the Presentation of the Holy Virgin Monastery, Marshfield, MO, are appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. It was noted that the chapel at the latter was recently completed and consecrated; concurrently, Mother Mary Ann was tonsured to the lesser schema with the name Mother Sergia.
9. Parish Health Ministry. Mr. Joseph Kormos, facilitator, presented a written report, which is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. He thanked everyone for their involvement in this ministry, especially those parishes and missions that hosted him for presentations and workshops, and he spoke on the grants available for a variety of unique parish ministries, which were offered in 2008 for the first time.
10. Clergy Compensation Review Committee Report. Mr. Sam D'Fantis highlighted various sections of the committee's written report, which is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. After brief discussion, Father Yavornitzky moved, seconded by Ms. Mabus, that the clergy compensation recommendation be adopted as diocesan policy. Passed with one nay vote.
11. Diaconal Vocations Program. Father Butler's written report is appended to these minutes with no additions and made a part thereof.
12. Treasurer's Report. The written report of Mr. Robert Koncel, treasurer, was presented, and is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. Discussion ensued in conjunction with the presentation of the 2009 Diocesan Budget.
13. Auditors' Report. Mrs. Polly Walker presented a written report, which is appended to these minutes and made a part thereof. She read an addendum to the audit report in which she presented a number of recommendations for improving accounting practices and procedures. The report was accepted upon motion by Priest Christopher Wojcik, seconded by Mr. Dennis Garlick.

14. Budget Presentation. In light of the fact that his presentation was moved to this session, rather than tomorrow's as originally scheduled, Mr. Koncel offered a verbal presentation highlighting a number of revisions for the purpose of presenting a balanced budget. He noted that funds could be withdrawn from the Fidelity Investment Account if the need arose. He added that documentation will be provided at tomorrow's session. Mr. Kormos, seconded by Father Christopher Wojcik, moved to accept the budget as presented.

Considerable discussion ensued, after which Priest Andrew Moore, seconded by Mr. Lee Kopulos, moved to table the budget. The motion was defeated.

The original motion made by Mr. Kormos and Father Wojcik passed with a few nay votes.

J. Adjournment. The session adjourned at 11:40 p.m. with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2008

Archbishop Job presided at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Burr Ridge, Illinois.

II. PLENARY SESSION 2

The Assembly reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

A. Credentials. It was reported that there was a total of 119 attendees [one archbishop, 63 clergy delegates, 49 lay delegates, and 6 observers].

B. Nominating Committee. Archpriest Thomas Mueller reported that the following names had been placed in nomination: 1. Metropolitan Council lay delegate: Mr. Sam D'Fantis, Mr. Mark Stokoe, and Mr. Michael Strelka.

2. Diocesan Council clergy member: Archpriests John Adamcio and Stephen Karaffa; Priest Mark Hodges.

3. Diocesan Council lay member: Mrs. Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera, Mr. Samuel Jacob, Mr. Joseph Kormos, and Mr. John Sedor. Mrs. Alexa Geeza was nominated from the floor.

4. Diocesan auditors. Mr. Frank Tkach.

Upon motion by Mrs. Mabus, seconded by Priest Bartholomew Wojcik, nominations were closed.

C. Elections. Elected to the following positions were

1. Mr. Stokoe was elected lay representative to the Metropolitan Council; Mr. D'Fantis serves as alternate.

2. Fathers Adamcio and Karaffa were elected Diocesan Council clergy members for three-year terms; Father Hodges serves as alternate.

3. Mrs. Geeza and Mrs. Gidus-Mecera were elected Diocesan Council lay members for three-year terms; Mr. Sedor serves as alternate.

4. Upon motion made by Archpriest Andrew Clements, seconded by Mr. Sedor, Mr. Tkach was elected to the position of auditor by acclamation.

D. Other business.

While waiting for the Resolutions Committee to complete their work, Father Christopher Wojcik asked that we invite outgoing members of the Metropolitan Council to offer views on possible budgets to be presented at the All-American Council. Father Matsko

described what a \$50.00 per person assessment budget and a \$90.00 per person assessment budget would provide to the Central Church Administration. Brief discussion followed.

E. Adjournment. The session adjourned at 11:55 a.m. with the singing of the Hymn to the Theotokos.

III. PLENARY SESSION 3

The Assembly reconvened at 1:05 p.m.

A. Credentials. It was reported that there was a total of 111 attendees [one archbishop, 53 clergy delegates, 47 lay delegates, and 10 observers.

B. Resolutions Presented by the Resolutions Committee.

1. Resolution 1. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, the following resolution was presented and moved by Father Steffaro, seconded by Mr. Joseph Shaluha.

“Whereas according to Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, he who desires to be a bishop must of necessity meet the qualifications including, among others, being above reproach; and

“Whereas elevation to the episcopacy is acknowledged by the whole Church for one who is found worthy; and

“Whereas the vetting process has heretofore been based solely on an opinion of one individual and not necessarily on the standard of Holy Tradition;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Metropolitan Council within the next triennium be directed to develop and publish a set of guidelines for the vetting of the episcopacy. This process of vetting for the candidacy of the episcopacy shall include and invite public and episcopal comment. All candidates will be reviewed by a joint meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council. This list will be made available to a Diocese in need of episcopal candidates. This process will be written as Statute.”

After discussion and comments offered by Archbishop Job, the motion was withdrawn.

2. Resolution 2. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, the following resolution was presented and moved by Father Steffaro, seconded by Father Hodges.

“Whereas there was in the recent SIC report total silence regarding the subject of lands/monies of the Diocese of Alaska; and

“Whereas there are reasons to believe that financial malfeasance has occurred in Alaska;

“Be it resolved that the Metropolitan Council be directed to initiate an audit of the financial records of the Alaskan Diocese to discover what is owned by the Diocese, to ensure that all assets be used for the upbuilding of the Church; and

“Be it further resolved that all transactions regarding leases and land transactions for the past 20 years be made public.”

Following discussion, Father Hodges, seconded by Mr. Kormos, moved to amend the third paragraph to read, “Be it resolved that *this diocesan assembly requests* the Metropolitan Council to initiate an audit of the financial records of the Alaskan Diocese to discover what is owned by the Diocese, to ensure all assets be used for the upbuilding of the Church....”

Resolution 2 passed as amended.

3. Resolution 3. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, the following resolution was presented and moved by Father Steffaro, seconded by Mr. Shaluha.

“Be it resolved that the All-American Council, the highest legislative body in the

Orthodox Church in America, demands the return of any and all reports and documents now held by the law firm of Proskauer and Rose.”

Following discussion Father Christopher Wojcik, seconded by Father Hodges, moved to amend the motion to read, “Be it resolved, that the All-American Council, the highest legislative body in the Orthodox Church in America, demands the return *to the Metropolitan Council* of any and all reports and documents now held by the law firm of Proskauer and Rose.”

Resolution 3 passed as amended with one nay vote.

4. Resolution 4. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, the following resolution was presented and moved by Father Steffaro, seconded by Mr. David Gemmel.

“Whereas the previous yearly per capita assessment to the national Church was \$105.00 and the yearly per capita monies remitted to the Midwest Diocese were an \$81.00 assessment and a \$10.00 addition for the Parish Health Facilitator;

“Be it resolved that the yearly per capita assessment to the national Church be \$50.00 -- \$55.00 less than the previous amount; and

“Be it further resolved that of the \$55.00 not remitted to the national Church, \$25.00 be added to the current \$81.00 per capita Diocesan assessment, and the \$10.00 Parish Health Facilitator assessment be discontinued, so the new yearly Diocesan per capita assessment will be \$106.00.”

In the ensuing discussion, it was noted the Diocesan Council felt that this was restrictive and, not knowing what if any reduction would be made at the All-American Council, expressed the desire to modify the resolution to read that “Any reduction would be split 50/50 between the Diocese and parishes of the Midwest Diocese.”

In response, Father Christopher Wojcik, seconded by Mrs. Donna Hodges, moved to amend the resolution by removing the third paragraph in its entirety.

The motion to amend the resolution was defeated with 36 votes in favor, 40 nay votes, and a number of abstentions.

The original motion was defeated soundly.

C. Other Resolutions.

1. Father Sawchak moved, seconded by Father Christopher Wojcik, that

“Whereas the Diocese of the Midwest agrees with the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania, be it resolved that the Diocese of the Midwest at its 47th Diocesan Assembly supports the resolution of the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania to limit the yearly per capita assessment to the national Church to \$50.00.”

The resolution passed.

2. Archpriest Theodore Bobosh moved, seconded by Father Christopher Wojcik, that

“Whereas, there is a great need to identify qualified men both for vacant episcopacies and future episcopal placement in the Church; and

“Whereas there currently is not a consistent mechanism to identify such persons;

“Therefore be it resolved that our Diocese form an episcopal search committee consisting of three priests and three lay persons.”

After discussion, the resolution was defeated with 34 votes in favor, 49 nay votes, and 2 abstentions.

3. Father Bobosh moved, seconded by Father Christopher Wojcik, that

“the Diocesan Assembly direct the Diocesan Council to begin the search process for episcopal candidates.”

The resolution passed with one nay vote.

D. New Business.

1. Father Yavornitzky related opinions expressed by members of the Diocesan Council and the Bishop's Council with regard to how Midwest diocesan delegates to the AAC might think and act with one mind at the ACC to greater effect.
2. Ms. Mabus spoke against a current resolution posted on the OCA web site concerning revising the OCA Statute with regard to the method of electing the Metropolitan.

E. Adjournment. There being no further business, the assembly was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. upon motion by Father Christopher Wojcik, seconded by Mr. D'Fantis, with the celebration of a Service of Prayer, during which members of the Diocesan Council, Metropolitan Council representatives, and auditors were installed.

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