

MINUTES — DRAFT

48TH DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Overland Park, Kansas
Monday, 5-7 October 2009

PLENARY SESSION I • MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2009

I. OPENING.

- A. The Assembly opened with the celebration of a Service of Prayer at 8:30 a.m., after which His Eminence, Archbishop Job opened sessions at 9:15 a.m.
- B. Archbishop Job formally welcomed His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah. The assembly rose and sang "God grant you many years."
- C. Archbishop Job turned over the chair to the Very Rev. John Zdinak, Chancellor, who opened elections for Clergy and Lay Vice-Chairs. The Very Rev. Alexander Kuchta was elected Clergy Vice-Chair, while Mr. John Sedor was elected Lay Vice-Chair.
- D. Mr. Sam D'Fantis was appointed parliamentarian, while the Very Rev. John Matusiak, Secretary, Mrs. Alexis Geeza, and Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak were appointed to the secretariat.
- E. The Very Rev. Thomas Mueller, Mr. Mark Stokoe, and Mrs. Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera serve as the nominating committee.
- F. Credentials: The Rev. Timothy Sawchak reported that one Metropolitan one Archbishop, 50 clergy delegates, 43 lay delegates, and 11 observers, for a total of 105 participants, are registered. For this session, in addition to the hierarchs, there are 45 clergy delegates and 42 lay delegates.

II. REPORT OF THE ARCHBISHOP.

Archbishop Job delivered his report, during which he reflected on the past year and focused on the need to "return to the basics." While he observed that the diocese is stable, he called upon all to remain vigilant on many levels. Finances are a serious concern, given the current fragile economy, as is reported diocesan membership. Both impact the financial resources of the diocese in many ways. He also spoke of the many activities going on in the diocese – camps, iconography classes, youth ministry, charity projects, parish health ministries, etc. – and expressed his sincere thanks to everyone for their "love of God and His People."

III. ADDRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN.

Metropolitan Jonah addressed the assembly on a wide variety of issues and entertained questions from the floor. He echoed Archbishop Job's call to "return to the basics," adding that while the OCA has undergone a crisis, we cannot lose focus on our primary duty to proclaim Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Gospel. This is especially crucial as we face the "culture war" that surrounds us. He also spoke of recent events in world Orthodoxy, specifically the gathering in Chambesy which called for the establishment of episcopal assemblies. He opined that this presents the OCA, not with a threat, but an opportunity, one in which the OCA can carry out its vision on a unified Orthodox Church in North America.

IV. REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR.

Father John Zdinak had nothing to add to his written report, which is attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.

V. DEANERY, MONASTERY AND OTHER REPORTS.

- A. Chicago Deanery. The Very Rev. Thomas Mueller had nothing to add to his written report, but noted one correction, namely that Mr. Steven Platko, who in his report had been listed as deceased, is not deceased.
- B. Cleveland Deanery. The Very Rev. John Steffaro had nothing to add to his written report. A comment was made from the floor commending Archangel Michael Church, Broadview Heights, for taking "Russian" out of its title.
- C. Columbus Deanery. The Rev. Joseph Gibson had nothing to add to his written report.
- D. St. Louis Deanery. The Very Rev. Timothy Sawchak had nothing to add to his written report.

- E. Michigan Deanery. The Very Rev. Andrew Yavornitzky had nothing to add to his written report.
- F. Minneapolis Deanery. The Very Rev. Paul Wesche had nothing to add to his written report. He did apologize for omitting the report from Christ the Saviour Mission, Anoka, MN.
- G. Saint John Monastery, Hiram, OH. The written report was noted.
- H. Presentation of the Virgin Mary Monastery, Marshfield, MO. Mother Sergia had nothing to add to her written report.
- I. Late Vocations Program. The Very Rev. Michael Butler reported that, for five years, he has tried to improve inconsistencies in the program, and spoke in detail about difficulties in this regard. His stipend for his work in late vocations was terminated in May 2009. He informed the delegates of his wish to resign as late vocations coordinator. He also recommended that clergy with parishioners studying in the late vocations program should contact the OCA Chancery. In the ensuing discussion, Father Thomas Mueller spoke about the Chicago Deanery program, which currently has 10 students. Revisions are being made to the curriculum with input from our diocese, and not just from seminary faculty members. Metropolitan Jonah, who had coordinated late vocations in the Diocese of the West, concurred that it is wise to solicit input from a broad spectrum of sources.
- J. Parish Development/Missions. Father Thomas Mueller had nothing to add to his written report. The aforementioned reports are attached to these minutes and made a part thereof.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 47TH DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY.

The minutes were approved as presented upon motion by the Very Rev. John Adamcio, seconded by Father Joseph Gibson.

The plenary session adjourned for lunch at 11:58 a.m.

PLENARY SESSION II • MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2009

I. CREDENTIALS.

The Rev. Timothy Sawchak reported that one Metropolitan, one Archbishop, 47 clergy delegates, 41 lay delegates, and 10 observers.

II. REPORT OF THE DIOCESAN METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES.

The Very Rev. Michael Matsko and Mr. Mark Stokoe reported on the work of the Metropolitan Council, especially in conjunction with the most recent joint session with the Holy Synod of Bishops. Father Matsko observed that, despite the need to deal with past problems and crises, the recent unprecedented joint meetings of the Metropolitan Council with the Holy Synod are providing a forum for genuine conciliarity and a sign of genuine, if slow, change. Mr. Stokoe concurred, and noted a number of essential changes to this end. While "there are still problems, they can now be discussed openly and with love." A wide variety of questions from the floor were entertained and answered thoroughly.

III. PARISH HEALTH FACILITATOR REPORT.

Mr. Joseph Kormos, Parish Health Facilitator, reviewed the written report distributed to all delegates, attached to these minutes, and made a part thereof, which offered a wealth of information. He spoke of "Parish Pulse," which is sent via e-mail to some 1,100 individuals; the parish health inventory; parish grants, the need for more feedback, and the need for additional funding, especially for other professionals to offer assistance.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT AND AUDITORS' REPORT.

Mr. Robert Koncel, Treasurer, reviewed the financial report. He commented on the diocese's investments, which reflect the same downturn experienced everywhere in the current economy. He also spoke of the impact made on diocesan finances as a result of several parishes that have not remitted assessments, and in some cases are not likely to do so. The total amount of unfulfilled assessment payments is quite substantial. The auditors' report was also reviewed. Both reports are attached to these minutes and made a part thereof. The reports were accepted unanimously upon motion by Mr. D'Fantis, seconded by Father Gibson.

V. BUDGET.

Mr. Koncel noted that there will be no increase in assessment for 2010, which stands at \$86.00 per adult member. The \$10.00 per year per member special assessment for the Parish Health Ministry will not be levied in the coming year, as it had been in 2008 and 2009. There are no cost of living increases. The Archbishop's aide/assistant position is reduced to half-time. After reviewing other budget considerations, the budget was accepted as proposed upon motion by Paul Fenster, seconded by the Rev. Christopher Wojcik.

VI. STRATEGIC VISION REVIEW.

Mr. Kormos introduced "What/Who Are We," a working document. Mrs. Alexa Geeza and Ms. Kitty Mabus facilitated a working session in which delegates participated enthusiastically in break-out and plenary for fora. A wide variety of ideas for ministries on a variety of levels, focused on the parish, were shared at the conclusion of the well-received session.

PLENARY SESSION III • WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2009

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Holy Trinity Church.

I. CREDENTIALS.

The Rev. Timothy Sawchak reported that one Metropolitan, one Archbishop, 38 clergy delegates, 33 lay delegates, and 4 observers.

II. ELECTIONS.

Father Christopher Wojcik was elected to the diocesan council, with the Rev. Stephen Hrycyniak serving as alternate.

Mr. Michael Dorosh was elected to the diocesan council, with Ms. Mabus serving as alternate.

Upon motion made by the Very Rev. Alexander Kuchta, seconded by Mr. D'Fantis, Judy Weindaw was elected auditor.

III. RESOLUTION.

A resolution was presented concerning the establishment of a committee to examine processes and present concrete proposals with regard to the selection of a new bishop. The resolution was withdrawn, however, and will be the first item on the agenda of the next diocesan council meeting.

IV. FEEDBACK FROM STRATEGIC VISION BREAKOUT.

Delegates offered feedback on Tuesday's strategic vision review sessions. The consensus was that the ideas that surfaced therein were not only "doable," but essential in ensuring the health of our parishes.

V. METROPOLITAN JONAH'S REMARKS.

In expressing thanks for the hospitality extended to him at the Assembly, Metropolitan Jonah shared his enthusiasm for the work of the diocese and its parishes, spoke of the importance of tithing, and challenged everyone to "focus on people, and love them!"

VI. NEXT DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING.

The next meeting will be held 1-2 December 2009 in Chicago.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, the assembly adjourned upon motion by Sam D'Fantis, seconded by Fr. Wojcik, at 3:54 p.m.

Members of the Diocesan Council were installed during the Service of Thanksgiving which followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Father John Matusiak, Secretary

Mrs. Alexa Geeza

Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak

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