

55TH ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Lansing, Illinois

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

I. OPENING

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at Saint Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church, Lansing, MI, at which His Grace, Bishop Paul presided, the 55th Assembly of the Diocese of the Midwest opened with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and prayer at 9:46 a.m., after which Bishop Paul called the Assembly to order.

II. CREDENTIALS.

Present were one Bishop, 47 clergy delegates, and 40 lay delegates, for a total of 88 participants.

III. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, APPOINTMENTS.

Archpriest John Zdinak, Chancellor moved, on behalf of the Diocesan Council, that Archpriests John Adamcio and John Matusiak and Philip Sokolov serve as the Secretariat, and that Archpriest Andrew Clements, Barry Gluntz and Vicki Giedinghagen serve on the Nominations Committee. Deacons will serve as tellers.

IV. REPORT OF BISHOP PAUL.

Bishop Paul read his report, which appears in its entirety on the Diocesan web site at <http://domoca.org/assembly.html>. His Grace spoke of the many challenges we face in ministering within the context of our secularized and polarized culture's "new normal. He specifically emphasized the centrality of witnessing to one and all in a loving manner and in service to Christ. He also highlighted the importance of sound stewardship policies and practices, the spiritual formation of our youth in the life of the Church, and the centrality of the home in handing on the faith.

V. REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR.

Father Zdinak highlighted the following.

- A. **Ongoing dialogue with Chicago's Christ the Savior Parish.** Discussions are moving forward in a positive manner. The parish recently presented a proposal and is willing to take on more responsibility for the management and costs of the property. Dennis Garlick serves with Father John as Diocesan Council liaison to the parish.
- B. **The Uniform Parish By-Laws Task Force** has completed its work and will offer a presentation this morning. Next year, attention will be turned to the Diocesan By-Laws.
- C. **The Stewardship Committee** also will offer a presentation this afternoon. The hard-working committee is developing a plan for moving toward a percentage giving model. The Diocese of the West's model has proven to be helpful.
- D. **Diocesan Archives.** Father John, together with Bishop Paul, Philip Sokolov and Deacon Alexander Koranda, have reviewed the Archives and discarded unnecessary items. The remaining records will be reorganized.
- E. **Parishes with assessment balances** have been contacted and Bishop Paul has acted accordingly in each instance. Some parishes had been forgiven their balances, while others have developed mutually acceptable payment plans.
- F. **The role of Diocesan Council members** will be explored at the Diocesan Council's December 2016 meeting in an effort to enhance their duties beyond participation in regularly scheduled meetings.
- G. **OCA Pension Plan.** As a member of the OCA Pension Board, Father John noted that clergy who remain active beyond the age of 75 years may receive their pensions. Retired pensioned clergy may remain active for two years up to a certain salary point.

VI. DEANERY, PRESENTATION MONASTERY REPORTS.

- A. **Michigan Deanery.** As an addendum to the written report submitted by Archpriest Andrew Yavornitzky, Dean, Archpriest Paul Albert explained the work of Orthodox Detroit Outreach centered at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, which brings together faithful from many parishes to serve the needy in southwest Detroit. He noted that the objective involves more than revitalizing the parish community; rather, it focuses on repurposing the parish to meet the needs of the community in which it ministers. He further expressed gratitude for the \$10,000.00 provided by the Diocese of the Midwest in expanding this ministry.
- B. **Minneapolis Deanery.** Bishop Paul noted that Saint Peter the Aleut Church, Minot, ND remains vacant.
- C. **Chicago Deanery.** No additions to the report as submitted.
- D. **Saint Louis Deanery.** No additions to the report as submitted.
- E. **Cincinnati Deanery.** No additions to the report as submitted.
- F. **Cleveland Deanery.** No additions to the report as submitted.
- G. **Presentation Monastery, Marshfield, MO.** No additions to the report as submitted.

VII. MISSION AND PARISH DEVELOPMENT REPORT.

As an addendum to his written report, Archpriest Thomas Mueller highlighted the guidelines now available on the diocesan web site. With regard to Late Vocations, Archpriest Elijah Mueller amplified his written report by emphasizing the program's value and success, especially in training catechists. He added that next year's summer program may be expanded to include training for Church School personnel, in addition to the current agenda.

VIII. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT.

In addition to his written report, Archpriest Alexander Kuchta announced that it is now possible to make donations for

charity to the OCA on the OCA web site. This is being overseen by the Metropolitan Council Charity Committee, of which he is a member. Since making it possible to donate on-line, \$1,500.00 has been received.

IX. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Robert Koncel, Treasurer, highlighted significant portions of his written report, which stands as submitted. He noted that the Auditors' recommendation that all documents be retained for a seven year period is being implemented. He also explained the shift of all Fidelity accounts to Morgan Stanley. The report was unanimously accepted upon motion by Deacon Thomas Keith, seconded by Archbishop James Dank.

X. AUDITORS' REPORT.

There being no additions to the report as submitted, Robert Graban moved, seconded by Daria Petrykowski, to accept the report as presented. Unanimously passed.

Father Zdinak noted that Polly Walker, who serves as the diocesan accountant, would be stepping down, but that she is willing to train a new accountant upon his or her appointment. On behalf of the Diocese, he thanked Polly for her many years of faithful service.

XI. 2017 BUDGET PRESENTATION.

Robert Koncel, Treasurer, noted that the only change from years past was the addition of \$2,400.00 per year for an assistant ["kelelnik"] to assist Bishop Paul and a \$1,000.00 annual contribution to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA. CPI increases are reflected in the sums budgeted for Bishop Paul, Chancellor Zdinak, and Philip Sokolov, Bishop Paul's Secretary. It was noted that the 2017 budget includes a deficit of \$17,500.00 but that there are sufficient funds in escrow to cover this amount. The 2017 budget was passed as presented upon motion by Kitty Mabus, seconded by Frank Tkach.

XII. APPROVAL OF 2016 ASSEMBLY MINUTES.

The minutes of the 54th Diocesan Assembly, convened in Atlanta, GA in conjunction with the 18th All-American Council, were approved as presented upon motion by Priest Nicholas Finley, seconded by Archbishop Nicholas Wyslutzky.

XIII. REVISED UNIFORM PARISH BY-LAWS. Archbishop Alexander Garklavs offered introductory remarks on the process by which the Uniform Parish By-Laws were revised, for the first time since 1984. He highlighted several revisions to specific sections of the former By-Laws, spoke of the importance of term limits, and clarified the definition of "Associate Priest" as one who is assigned to a parish with specific duties and some compensation. Two further clarifications – on page 5 of the written report, "appointment" should read "appointed" while on page 7, "old business" should be rendered "unfinished business" – were made. After discussion, the Revised By Laws were unanimously accepted upon motion by Deacon Thomas Keith, seconded by Dennis Garlick.

XIV. PRESENTATION ON IMPLEMENTING A YOUTH WORKER SCREENING PROGRAM IN PARISHES.

Priest Benjamin Tucci offered a detailed presentation on this phase of the screening program, offering a variety of insights into the screen process and related matters.

The First Plenary Session closed with prayer at 12:36 p.m., with the Second Plenary Session convening at 2:00 p.m., at which time ballots were distributed and delegates were asked to vote for Diocesan Council and other positions.

XV. STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT.

Simeon Morbey offered a detailed presentation on the ongoing work of the Stewardship Committee in developing a plan to transition from the former "head tax" assessment method to a flat percentage-based funding model, as mandated at the 2012 Diocesan Assembly for full compliance by 2021. He added that the plan would be presented at the 2017 Diocesan Assembly and that in 2018, parishes will pay a percentage of eligible income equal to their respective assessment levels. He fielded a number of questions, adding that a series of webinars is being planned to fully educate and inform parishes with regard to the transition. Mr. Morbey emphasized that the committee is relying on 100 percent participation on behalf of all parishes with regard to submitting requested financial statistics required to develop the final plan. The chair thanked Mr. Morbey and his committee members for their well prepared and detailed presentation.

XVI. ELECTION RESULTS.

Priest Nicholas Finley was elected to the Diocesan Council, with Priest Alessandro Margheritino serving as Alternate. Dennis Garlick and Ellyn Gilette were elected to the Diocesan Council, with James Emmerick serving as Alternate. Robert Graban was elected lay representative to the Metropolitan Council, while Frank Tkacz was elected Auditor.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Mr. Dennis Garlick, seconded by Joseph Mamczij, the Assembly adjourned at 3:10 p.m. with the celebration of a Service of Thanksgiving, during which Diocesan Council members and others elected were installed.

*Respectfully submitted by the Secretariat,
Archpriest John Adamcio
Archpriest John Matusiak, Diocesan Secretary
Mr. Philip Sokolov*