

After assembling at the Agia Sophia Coffee House for a tour, the Council moved to the office space and began at 10:50 with O Heavenly King

**Attendance:** absent Fr. John Soucek and Fr. Matthew Cantrell

**Minutes of August meeting** motion to accept, Fr. Michael Hatrak, seconded David Yeosock –passed

**Reports:**

**Bishop**

His Grace presented an outline of his report for the Diocesan Assembly which follows last year's outline and see where we are now. His report focused on the diocese, with reference to a few national items. All but two members of the DC were in Seattle at the AAC.

Regarding His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah's expression of sorrow for administrative disaster of the past three years and his intention to enter evaluation program on November 14th, His Grace informed the Council that his Beatitude is there. At the Metropolitan's request Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Michael accompanied him to the facility where he will undergo assessment until Friday. Bishop Tikhon will be going back on Friday with Bishop Michael.

Regarding the Strategic Plan and Funding, His Grace said these would be discussed within diocesan treasurer's report and revitalization.

His Grace indicated that the title of his report *That they may have life more abundantly* is chosen to indicate his focus and what he believes should be the focus of the diocese. Then he addressed the following areas he identified in last year's report as part of his five year plan.

**Bishop:**

Renew commitment to monastic vows. He said he is still a bad monk insofar as he does not get to Church very often. But he has done the following:

- He tries to take Wednesday as day off and encourages all the clergy to do likewise. They need to find time to strengthen themselves.
- For the past three months he has been seeing a counselor who deals with administrative stress and has found it very helpful.
- In compliance with Guidelines for Social Media issued by the Holy Synod, he has turned his personal Facebook into a page.
- He is trying to be more responsive to clergy in responding to calls and emails and meeting with clergy in more informal settings. Unfortunately, time constraints have not allowed him to do what he had hoped in this area but he remains committed to doing it.
- He has worked at increasing inter-parish cooperation notably in the area of education with the highly successful series of lectures given by Dr. Herman

Engelhardt, which received a great positive response, especially in the universities. His Grace noted that the Engelhardt series Involved several parishes and said it is easier to do such outreach when parishes share the financial burden.

- Holy Cross Williamsport enlisted St. Tikhon's Seminary and St. Nicholas in Bethlehem and Harrisburg area churches in providing venues for Fr. Joseph Huneycutt to speak.
- During the past year he met with Holy Annunciation, Berwick Parish Council which volunteered to help struggling parish to discuss ways in which this could be done and needs in our diocese.

#### Diocesan Administration:

Bylaws: continuing to collect what's lacking from parishes. One half to 3/4 of diocesan parish bylaws are on file. Searches continue as do requests for the remainder. His Grace stated his preference for uniform parish by laws as practiced in other dioceses of the O.C.A.

- in connection with this he referred to his proposal for the nomination of Diocesan Assembly officers made at the February meeting. Discussion was deferred to later in the meeting.

Expansion of Administrative Assistant and Communications Director to full time from current part time positions. Additionally he cited the need for reassessment in light of Cindy Davis' transitioning out of Communications Director position due to her new career in social work. The next issue of magazine will be her last. She is willing to help but said we need to find a new person. His Grace noted her numerous positive contributions to our diocese, among which he noted that she

- coordinated Engelhardt lecture, including venues, travel and publicity. Positive response.
- her regular updating of the website and her production of numerous issues of *Alive in Christ* throughout the year.

We need to re-evaluate position and its scope of responsibility. Need to get more accomplished people involved.

Our Treasurer submitted his resignation as a result of national changes. He believes that someone more professionally accomplished is needed to guide diocesan financial planning and affairs in the complex process of moving to proportional giving on a national and diocesan level. His Grace concedes the point but has not accepted the resignation and has no immediate plan to do so.

- need to assess needs of administration in the next few months. Plan for what needs are and look for people to fill those positions. His Grace endorsed the development of a Diocesan Talent Bank which will enable us to identify possible assistance for all areas.

#### Relocation of Diocesan Center

- nothing has happened.

- Possibilities. RBO building, rent space. Fr. David Mahaffey provided information on former rectory in Bethlehem. Bishop Tikhon saw a Church for sale in Philadelphia. The actual relocation depends on Children's Home Board decisions.
- Survey of property is almost done. According to David Yeosock we should have a completed survey and subdivision by the next Diocesan Council meeting in February. Subdivision must be presented to community (Monastery, Seminary, Diocese, Metropolitan Council) to approve. Approval is expected.
- Once we have it, we decide what we want to do with it.
- Presently open to opportunities, but financially limited.
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### **Diocese and Parishes**

- Administrative Housekeeping : Annual Meeting and Financial and Budget Reports. Still problematic obtaining 100% compliance without problems. As for Policies, Standards, and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct compliance, all but one parish are in compliance. There was a consensus on the Council that strong disciplinary measures should be taken by the bishop to bring about compliance. Some members indicated the strong feelings of their parishes to the non compliance of others which puts all of our parishes at risk.
- Clergy Compensation: Annual letter to parishes reminding about compliance with administrative requirements including clergy compensation.
- Parish Vitality.
  - Revitalization Committee work.
- Diocesan Clergy: health, compensation and brotherhood.
  - Health: A survey was given to the clergy at the workshop in Stroudsburg. More expanded version of the self assessment given to clergy at last Advent's retreat. Like the previous one, this is for bishop's personal use and review. He hopes to put together a sequence of retreats that will focus on spiritual, physical and emotional health of the clergy.

### **Clergy/Parish Health proposal**

His Grace intends to write a letter to the clergy which will establish a mandatory retirement age of 70 for priests in the diocese. This will require priests still serving at age 70 to submit letter of resignation which His Grace may or may not accept depending on particular circumstances. There was a strong consensus that this letter should also mandate that retiring clergy not live in the parish after retirement. It was noted that some jurisdictions require at least a 50 mile relocation. His Grace indicated an awareness of the many practical issues surrounding retirement.

A lengthy and animated discussion followed on the amount of time spent by the bishop on Seminary affairs and the degree to which that impedes his service to the diocese. Suggestions were made about him withdrawing or limiting his involvement in the Seminary. The following resolution was offered which engendered further discussion until a vote was taken with the understanding that the decision ultimately rested with the bishop himself.

A motion was made by Father Martin Browne and seconded by Father David Mahaffey that the Diocesan Council of Eastern PA requests that the seminary revise its governing documents and policies so that the office of rector of the seminary is held by someone other than the Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern PA by the beginning of the 2012-13 Academic Year.

Motion passed 6 to 5.

### **Chancellor's Report**

Fr. Mahaffey spoke about **Coatesville which is currently served by** Fr. Steven Miller from NY, who is a prison chaplain whose hours have been reduced there in order to serve in Coatesville. It is a part time situation but will eventually become a full time position if it works out. Parish desires full-time priest. Fr. Steven is on loan at present. Fr. David urged His Grace to regularize this situation with Bishop Michael.

**Russian Mission in Philadelphia.** Served by Fr. Nicholas Gulin on weekends. Concerns about winter due to recent move of Fr. Nicholas to a residence farther away from Philadelphia.

Fr. Solak raised the point that there should be a report to the Assembly on Census less decline for years.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Financial Statements of Income and Expense, Financial Position and Receivables were presented with explanations. Fr. Martin explained the financial relationship of the Summer Camp to the diocese regarding the separate account, signatories and the reconciliation of accounts. A full accounting will be provided by the officers of the camp itself, a preliminary report with copies of receipts has been electronically forwarded to Fr. Martin today (11/15).

He also reported that the year-end audit has to be scheduled. David Yeosock spoke to this issue, saying he is waiting to hear from Mat. Cantrell as Fr. Deacon Sergei Kapral is on his cross-country journey. Fr. Martin reported he will meet with Paul Berdy on Friday morning to answer his questions for the preparation of the compilation report.

He then presented the budget which calls for a \$2 increase in the assessment with an increase of 10% in the bishop's salary and cuts in various lines based on previous year's spending.

Fr. Daniel Kovalak moved and Fr. Michael Hatrak seconded presenting the budget as offered to the Diocesan Assembly. Mark Linnehan proposed an amendment to include a separate line for Parish Revitalization, seconded by D. Yeosock but rejected by Fr. Kovalak. Motion passed to present budget to assembly.

### **Revitalization**

Discussion on separate line of funding

Mark Linnehan provided a synopsis of the document

Fr. Nick thought that we should not fund something without a plan.

Fr. Michael Hatrak suggested funding from the mission line could be used for expenses

Fr. Mahaffey said if there was no line, out of sight out of mind.

Meeting at Catasauqua on Saturday Nov. 19 with 14 people coming from parish.

recommendation from Fr. Kovalak to focus on one main issue in the revitalization policy.

### **Metropolitan Council**

Fr. D. Mahaffey: one meeting prior to AAC, not much changed.

Fr. David strongly criticized the way business scheduled at the All American Council, particularly in reference to the resolutions and the way the last Plenary Session did not follow the vote of the body and limited and eliminated the presentation and discussion of numerous resolutions. Several members were of the opinion that resolutions should be the focus of any AAC, with some suggesting that they should be put at the front of the agenda.

The next MC meeting is scheduled for early February. David Yeosock mentioned an email from Melanie Ringa talking about scheduling a meeting with all Diocesan Treasurers and those involved in the consequences of the resolution passed at the All American Council.

Mark Linnehan suggested changing the order of the agenda for us at Diocesan Council meetings

### **Diocesan Assembly**

December 3rd at Williamsport. Fr. Mahaffey reported that one priest called him to question why in Williamsport. His Grace presented the following nominees for the leadership of the Assembly as he proposed last year for incorporation in the evolving Diocesan By Laws.

Fr. John Kowalczyk Clergy Chair

D. Yates Lay Chair

Fr. Jason Franchak Clergy Secretary

Kim Metz Lay Secretary.

Motion made by Fr. Daniel Kovalak, seconded by Fr. Nicolas Solak. All in favor.

Motion to Adjourn by was made by Fr. Michael Hatrak, seconded by Else Herman. All in favor.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 with the singing of It is Truly Meet.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Raymond Martin Browne, Council Secretary