

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Diocesan Counsel Meeting

Thursday, June 30, 2016- Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA

Present: Archbishop Mark, Fr. Raymond Browne, Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, Fr. Ignatius Guavain, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Fr. Nicholas Solak, Fr. Michael Demko, Fr. John Onofrey, Pdn. Peter Skoog, Pdn. Sergei Kapral, John Shingara, Joseph and Sandra Tosca, and Susan Schlasta

- The meeting opened at 10:10 with a prayer by Archbishop Mark
- The meeting convened at 10:20 a.m.
 - The minutes from the March 8 meeting were sent electronically. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Sandra Tosca and seconded by Fr. John Onofrey.
UNANIMOUS approval

Archbishop's Remarks:

- Archbishop Mark stated that plans were underway for the Diocesan Assembly of 2017. The Diocesan Assembly is scheduled for January 26 and 27, 2017 at Christ the Savior in Harrisburg. Fr. Stephen has negotiated rooms at the Candlewood Suite, N. Mountain Rd., Harrisburg, for \$69 per night. The cut-off date for the rooms at this rate is 12/20/16.
- Parish By Laws Update: A few parishes have formed committees to address their by-laws. All need to be updated by 12/31/17. The statutes are not negotiable. The priest presides at all meetings unless he designates someone else. The Church Mutual has indicated that parishes need to follow the by-laws to prevent liability. By Laws should initially be sent to Archbishop Mark when updated. There was discussion on the Statement of the Holy Synod of the OCA on Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs Regarding Marriage. This Statement is a policy based on the vote by the synod. It is our sincerely held religious beliefs and teaching of the Church. Church Mutual and Judge Lanier will be available to speak as to the importance to adherence to this statement. Fr. Browne stated that education is needed in that these are not political issues they are spiritual/religious issues.
- Diocesan Property: The state attorney general's office has all the paperwork related to the property. They have many questions regarding what the intention is to do with the property; what will the impact of selling the property be? Vladyka will prepare a letter to address their questions. In addition, Archbishop Mark has been renovating the Diocesan Center by painting the rooms and doing the yard work. It was suggested by Fr. John Onofrey that the maintenance budget is explored and determine what is needed and secure what is needed.
- Treasurer and Bookkeeper: With Vladyka's blessing, Fr. Ignatius has accepted a full time

position with the seminary as the Director of Student Life. As a result, he will not have a parish. In addition, a new diocesan treasurer needs to be added. There was discussion on potential treasurers with Mr. Joseph Tosca accepting the position. Father Ignatius will assist with the transition and as needed. Matushka Ashley Joyner will assist the treasurer as Financial Secretary and she is currently assisting Matushka Sandra. There was discussion on compensation for her assistance. There is \$15,000 allocated in the office budget. There was also some discussion on the job description of treasurer and Financial Secretary; and to review the differences between a 1099 and a W2. A motion was made by Father John Onofrey to increase Matushka Sandra's salary and to compensate Matushka Ashley for hourly assistance; seconded by Pdn. Sergei: UNANIMOUS approval.

Chancellor's Report:

- Fr. Browne's report was sent electronically
- There was discussion on the need for the Archbishop to be in the center of parish life and affordable housing was explored in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and the Bethlehem areas. As the potential sale of the Diocesan Center has been stalled for approximately 8 years, it was suggested that they meet with their attorney regarding options.
- There will be a new format to the Alive in Christ Magazine with Fr. Browne serving as editor.
- Sister Vassa will do five different presentations throughout the diocese. It is suggested that parishes promote Sr. Vassa in their bulletins.

Treasurer's Report:

- Fr. Ignatius presented the treasurer's report with discussion on increased income and less expenditures.
- Fr. Ignatius will be moving from this position to the Director of Student Life at the seminary. This opened the position of treasurer.
- Fr. Ignatius explained the difference between money based on budget or income with the Dioceses providing their obligation to the OCA through a budget system.
- A motion was made to accept the treasurer's report as presented with the stipulation for a more accurate understanding of the current finances by Fr. John Onofrey and seconded by Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk.
- Prior to breaking for lunch, Archbishop Mark complimented the counsel stating that he appreciates the professionalism and dialogue of the members.

Finance Committee Report:

- Fr. Sergei Kapral provided the members with a checklist of ideas for the Finance Committee and

a powerpoint. Archbishop Mark requested that the finance committee review the assessments from each parish. Pdn. Sergei stated that the committee would review the parish assessments.

- There was discussion on the need to audit the financial report to provide clarification of treasurer/financial secretary positions; to determine and review best practices and policy; categories; audits; time frames; where we are currently and where we want to be; and, the function/role of the finance committee. Archbishop Mark requested that John Shingara do this with the possible assistance of Mr. Gregory Polk. John Shingara agreed.

Deanery Reports:

Frackville:

- Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Holy Apostles Church, provided an update on the new church in Mechanicsburg. This church has been a mission church and yet, has been providing an assessment to the dioceses and OCA for 12 years. Father Nicholas Solak made a motion to grant financial assistance equal to the tithe of the Holy Apostles Church for one year. This was seconded by Fr. Browne. UNANIMOUS approved.

Philadelphia:

- Fr. Victor spoke of the Lenten events with four services held in Coatsville, Fr. Juvanally is doing a mission trip to Guatemala and a collection was taken; there is no information on St. Nicholas's Church, Philadelphia
- There was discussion regarding arrears for some Diocesan parishes. Pottstown has been in arrears since 2008 but are tithing at 10% at this time; McAdoo has shown 1 ½ years of monthly payments, discussed forgiving past debt.
- McAdoo is celebrating their 100 year anniversary
- There is currently a vacancy in St. Mary Church, Coaldale, PA.
 - A motion was made by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky to go into executive session. Fr. Ignatius seconded the motion- UNANIMOUS approved.

Wilkes Barre:

- Fr. Nicholas Solak stated that Fr. Nightingale's progress has been slow. Modification to his home is needed prior to discharge. The VA and/or Center for Independent Living may be able to assist.
- St. Basil's, Simpson is vacant
- Newly ordained Fr. Innocent, has been assigned the parish of St. Peter and Paul's, Uniondale

Liturgical Life Committee

- Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk reported that books for Lent will hopefully be available soon
- Fr. Victor proposed a program at St. Tikhon's for those interested in leadership positions within their parishes.

Clergy Continuing Education

- Father Nicholas discussed the HOPE program and the many benefits of the program. He stated that there are currently 5 groups in progress and two more that will be forming. The groups meet quarterly
- Sexual Misconduct- A documentary regarding child sexual abuse will be viewed
- Women's Retreat: No current information available

Metropolitan Council Report

- Father Tim Hoynicki stated that the next Metropolitan Council meeting is scheduled for September 19-22
- The OCA Mission School is scheduled for the end of August

Communications:

- Aric Gingo sent his report electronically
- Almost 100 news items were received for the website from 25/47 parishes. In May 2016, the Diocesan Website broke the 10,000 visitor mark.
- Many pictures without information have been received. A story needs to accompany a photograph
- There will be a new format for the Alive in Christ magazine. Fr. Browne and Archbishop Mark developed a list of topics and content for the Website. Articles are needed.
- With aging parishioners, fonts need to be larger to enable reading of the articles to be easier

Finance Committee

- Pdn. Sergei stated that education is needed for parishioners to see the connection between their parish and the diocese

Old Business

New Business

- St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Mt. Carmel, PA assists children in their community by providing coats and backpacks. It was discussed that a matching grant be provided up to \$250.
- Ideas for charitable events were discussed including Bishop Thomas sending \$250. to West Virginia to assist with the victims of the flooding
- There was discussion as to the Anthracite United Way and whether they support Planned Parenthood. It appears that the districts are not unanimous in whom they assist as York's United Way does not support Planned Parenthood.
- Discussed the Fair Food Program that the Diocesan Council meeting approved in March 2016 to provided \$500 towards the Migrant Worker Organization through Pdn. Sergei Kapral.
- Sandra Tosca requested that a letter be sent to the parishes in the Diocese to generate a list of maintenance services that the parishes had completed and were satisfied with the results, such as stain glass window repairs; painting; gold leaf painting, etc. Once it has been received, it will go into a clergy newsletter. Sandra will develop a draft letter and send it to Archbishop Mark for review.
- Archbishop Mark sent compensation guidelines to each parish treasurer
- Mr. Joseph Tosca agreed to accept the appointment of Treasurer for the Diocese.
- The next Diocesan Council meeting will be held on Thursday, September 15, 2016 at St. Stephen's Orthodox Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA.
- Fr. Martin Browne moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Fr. John Onofrey.
- The meeting ended at 4:30 with a tour of Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA. following the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan G. Schlasta