

Report of the Diocesan Council

The Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania is made up of the following members;

- His Grace Bishop TIKHON, Diocesan Hierarch
- V. Rev. John Kowalczyk, Chancellor
- Rev. Raymond Martin Browne, Treasurer
- V. Rev. Michael Hatrak, Dean of Frackville Deanery
- V. Rev. Daniel Kovalak, Dean of Wilkes-Barre Deanery
- V. Rev. S. David Mahaffey, Dean of Philadelphia Deanery, Metropolitan Council Representative
- Rev. Timothy Hojnicky, Frackville Deanery Clergy Representative
- Rev. John Soucek, Wilkes Barre Deanery Clergy Representative
- Rev. Matthew Cantrell, Philadelphia Representative
- Rev. Nicholas Solak, At Large Clergy Representative
- Elsie Herman, Frackville Lay Representative
- Doug Yates, Philadelphia Lay Representative
- John Buckeye, Wilkes-Barre Lay Representative
- Mark Linnehan, At Large Lay Representative
- David Yeosock, Metropolitan Council Representative.

The Council met four times during the past year on February 10, May 12, August 11, and November 15th. The first two of those meetings were held at the Diocesan Center, the third at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Soup Kitchen where the Council joined the staff in preparing and serving the midday meal. Participation in this ministry cosponsored by the Lehigh Valley Council of Churches is a regular part of the life of St. Nicholas parish in Bethlehem where Fr. David Mahaffey is Rector, and it was decided at the previous meeting to go there both as witness to our faith and as a realistic context in which to discuss the matters before the council. All agreed it was a highly worthwhile experience, an initial foray to be followed up by the council in the future and by parishes in our diocese which do not already do so. The fourth meeting was held at Agia Sophia Coffee Shop in Harrisburg.

Each meeting heard reports from the Diocesan Officers and from the Metropolitan Council Representatives. The Agenda for each meeting was established by His Grace based on his own priorities and issues communicated to him by the deans and other representatives as well as parish clergy and faithful encountered on his pastoral visits throughout the diocese.

What follows is a summary of the major issues and decisions made by the Diocesan Council during the past year.

His Grace informed the Council of his establishment of a Diocesan Court to deal with spiritual matters as stipulated in the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, Article XI, Sect. 2. The establishment of the Court guaranteed that the diocese was prepared to handle such matters in a timely fashion and to provide a just hearing and resolution of cases. Members of the Court were appointed for the life of the present Diocesan Council. Clergy members are Fr. Dan Kovalak and Fr. David Mahaffey. Lay members

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are Mr. Doug Yates and Mr. John Buckeye. Clergy alternates are Fr. Nicholas Solak and Fr. Martin Browne.

Based upon a request made in the previous year, Mr. David Yeosock was added to the reconstituted Orphanage Board as a representative from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. This board is responsible for resolving the situation of the St. Tikhon's Orphanage which was closed but never dissolved as a corporation. Moreover, the land on which the former orphanage building and the current diocesan center exist are wholly or partially orphanage property and so a resolution of property ownership is essential for St. Tikhon's Monastery, St. Tikhon's Seminary and for the Diocese. The Diocesan Council made an official recommendation to the Orphanage Board that the Diocese obtain a two acre subdivision of the property, including the property under the diocesan center once legal issues are resolved. David informed the Council that a professional surveyor was going to be contracted to do a proper survey of the property for the Orphanage Board so that an accurate assessment and resolution of property issues could be obtained. The cost of the survey would be covered by the seminary. **At the fourth meeting, David Yeosock informed the council that the survey is almost complete and will be submitted to the Children's Home Board (the legal name of the orphanage) for its approval of the requested 2 acre subdivision. He hoped that by the next Diocesan Council meeting on February 16th that we will be able to move forward.**

Parish Revitalization Committee was formed following the resolution of last year's Diocesan Assembly, the first meeting held June 23rd and subsequent meetings by teleconference and in person following throughout the Summer and early Fall. This included a meeting at Holy Trinity McAdoo and Holy Trinity Catasauqua on November 19th. Members were accepted from the Diocesan Council and include Fr. John Kowalczyk, Fr. David Mahaffey, Fr. Tim Hojnicky, Fr. Martin Browne, Mark Linnehan. Copies of minutes of the meetings and other information is on the Diocesan Website at www.doepa.org/revitalization.html.

In line with the Revitalization effort, the Council passed a resolution changing the Fiscal Year of the Diocese to January 1 to December 31 and recommends to the Diocesan Assembly that all parishes in our diocese adopt the same Fiscal Year. This will require a change in the date of the next Diocesan Assembly. There was discussion of parishes in critical situations and both their present and long-term needs and how they might be met. Such decisions are pending the completion of the Parish Revitalization plan.

Reports were heard from His Grace on matters related to the Holy Synod, including the progress in revising the Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct of the O.C.A. Additional reports were offered by the Chancellor on parish compliance with these, along with compliance in submitting annual financial reports and annual meeting minutes. Discussion focused on non-compliant parishes and possible responses to non-compliance ranging from suspension to removal of antimens. The Council recognized the sole competence of the Diocesan Bishop to exercise whatever discipline he sees fit in these cases.

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Metropolitan Council reports dealt with All American Council plans and the progress of the Draft Strategic Plan. Since much of the discussion on the Council was in executive session, there was little to report besides progress on both the AAC and the Strategic Plan. At the fourth meeting Fr. David Mahaffey informed the Council of discussions regarding the Agenda of the All American Council which sought last minute changes but were not approved.

Financial Reporting included Income and Expense Reports, Financial Position Reports and Receivables Reports with notification of any extraordinary expenditures, of which there were a few, all related to maintenance of the Diocesan Center. (See Treasurer's Report).

Upcoming Events were noted as were clergy assignment changes and events at the Seminary and Monastery, as they touch upon the life of our diocese. Among these were Centennial Celebrations in Edwardsville and Nanticoke, 9/11 remembrances, the Reconsecration of All Saints in Olyphant, Lectures throughout the diocese by Dr. Herman T. Engelhardt and the series at Holy Cross in Williamsport, and at St. Tikhon's and in Bethlehem by Fr. Joseph Huneycutt.

St. Tikhon's Summer Camp was henceforth to be a joint effort of the diocese and the seminary. The diocese would provide the personnel and the seminary would host. The administration of the camp would be under Kim Metz, Nick Macura and Tatiana Bohush who are members of the Diocesan Office of Young Adults. As part of this transition there would be a reexamination of policies and procedures.

His Grace announced the institution of a new diocesan award for clergy or faithful for their zealous and pious service to Christ and the Church here in the Diocese. This award is higher than a Diocesan Gramмота and will be awarded in a discriminating manner which recognizes outstanding service but is not diminished in character by overly generous bestowal. The Order of St. Tikhon of Moscow has been awarded three times since its institution earlier this year.

A Special Diocesan Assembly was contemplated before the All American Council. But since no resolutions were submitted, it was decided not to have such an assembly. The location of the 48th Diocesan Assembly was established as at Holy Cross, Williamsport. Since the parish was willing to offer a meal for this one day Assembly at no cost, it was further resolved that there would be no registration fee this year for the Assembly on December 3rd.

At the meeting on November 15th in Harrisburg the Diocesan Council approved the proposed budget for 2012 for presentation to the Diocesan Assembly. Additionally it narrowly passed a resolution expressing the opinion that the Bishop of the diocese should not be the Rector of St. Tikhon's Seminary as that responsibility absorbs a significant part of his time in a diocese which requires a full time bishop. His Grace took this under advisement as the Council recognizes that it is within his purview in conjunction with the Holy Synod of Bishops.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priest Raymond Martin Browne, Secretary