

DIOCESAN COUNCIL REPORT

The Diocesan Council met four times this past year

March 17 at Holy Trinity, Stroudsburg
June 2, at St. Mark's Wrightstown
August 19, at Christ the Savior, Harrisburg
November 18, at the Diocesan Center in South Canaan.

The March 17 meeting was the last one at which His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek presided as *locum tenens*. All subsequent meetings were presided over by His Grace, Bishop Mark following his installation as Ruling Hierarch on May 10th at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia. At each of the meetings the hierarch(s) presented a message which included both a review of activity prior to the meeting and of issues of critical importance to the diocese with recommendations or invitations for discussion.

Additionally reports were offered by the Chancellor, Treasurer, Deans, Auditors, Assistant for Communications, and invited guests. The substance of these reports will be found in the separate, respective reports offered by those persons for the Assembly.

In general the Council considered items for review, discussion and action in several general areas of administration.

The implementation of the Holy Synod mandate on comprehensive background checks for clergy and those having regular contact with children was a major topic at the last three meetings. Additionally compliance on the parish level with the Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct was also a regular topic of review and discussion. Issues of alleged clergy misconduct and the progress of investigations or the cases were also reviewed.

Property issues, specifically the issue of the Diocesan Center, remained an on-going topic of review and discussion. The last meeting of the year included a meeting with attorneys for the Orphanage and the Monastery in our ongoing work to bring this matter to a successful resolution. At present the diocese is waiting for the other parties to act, as we have been for two years.

Diocesan and Parish Administration issues have also been a topic of review, discussion and action. The Council voted to offer the Proposed Diocesan By-Laws for approval at this Assembly. These had been completed under the leadership of Metropolitan Tikhon when he was our hierarch and were scheduled for the Assembly in 2013 but could not be offered at that time due to the vacancy created by his elevation to Metropolitan. At the November meeting, however, the Council voted to postpone consideration of these Proposed Diocesan By-Laws until after the All American Council in July of 2015, which will include a Proposed Revision of the O.C. A. Statute which might have significant effect on our Proposed Diocesan By-Laws. The Council also approved the posting of a Uniform Parish By-Law to assist parishes in currently engaged in updating By-Laws which were written in the early 20th Century in order

to bring them into compliance with O.C.A. Statute and/or present parish conditions. Parishes were also encouraged to utilize By-Laws of other parishes who had been through the process in the last decade or two.

Programs of Clergy Care, Continuing Education and Parish Revitalization were also reviewed, discussed and acted upon in terms of speakers, events, and offers of assistance on deanery and parish levels. Presentations were also offered on Diocesan events such as the Teen Retreat , the Summer Camp and Women's Retreat.

The maintenance and upkeep of the Diocesan Center was also discussed when necessary. His Grace has been diligent in attending to the care of the property and securing the best prices for any necessary work.

Lastly the Council discussed the date and agenda of the Diocesan Assembly, which is to be held January 29/30 at St. Nicholas in Bethlehem.

The first meeting of the Diocesan Council for 2015 will be on March 10, 2015 at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priest Raymond Martin Browne

Diocesan Council Secretary