

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
147th Diocesan Council Meeting
October 11, 2007

His Grace, the Right Reverend TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, opened the 147th Session of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, with prayer at 10:30 am.

Present at this meeting of the Diocesan Council were:

His Grace, the Right Reverend TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
Archpriest John Kowalczyk, Diocesan Chancellor
Priest Martin Browne, Diocesan Treasurer
Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Dean – Frackville Deanery
Archpriest John Udics, Dean – Philadelphia Deanery, Secretary of the Diocesan Council
Frackville Deanery: Priest Timothy Hojnicki Elsie Herman
Philadelphia Deanery: Archpriest Dimitri Oselinsky Doug Yates
Wilkes-Barre Deanery: Priest Nicholas Solak Mary Sernak
Delegates At Large: Archpriest Daniel Kovalak Marie Proch
Metropolitan Council representatives: Father John Onofrey Peter Bohlender

The Minutes of the 146th Diocesan Council Meeting were distributed before the meeting. Father Hatrak moved to accept the minutes with corrections, seconded by Mary Sernak. The motion passed.

The Report of His Grace, Bishop TIKHON

His Grace said that the purpose of this meeting before the Diocesan Assembly is to discuss the proposed budget for 2008. The budget reflects where the Diocese has been and where we want to go. It must be idealistic for what we want to accomplish and realistic for concrete support.

On the national Church level, we are praying for a resolution of the crisis. Conflicts continue on all levels, which must be addressed at the upcoming joint meeting of the Synod of Bishops with the Metropolitan Council. We must also find stability in our Diocese to promote reconstruction of the OCA. We must focus on Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the Rock, and this will promote growth on all levels – spiritual, demographic and financial. Much of the conflict comes from minimalism. Healing comes from Christ.

As for the Diocesan budget, considering the decrease in adult members and decreasing donations we must either trim last year's budget back or find more income. Last year, assessments were \$159,000 -- 31% of the total amount collected. His Grace believes that this should be inverted, so that the majority of the income belongs to the parishes, and then part to the diocese and the smallest portion to the national Church. Such a change can be made only by an All American Council.

As the census decreases (the trend is that it decreases by 150 adults per year) the assessments must increase to maintain the budget. There are a number of ways we find income for the diocese – by assessment, by tithing, and so on. Salaries are 1/3 of the diocesan budget, divided between

four persons: the bishop, the chancellor, the bishop's secretary and the bishop's executive assistant (a position His Grace proposes to create).

Since the Treasurer will be presenting the Budget, His Grace limited his remarks to general comments on the budget.

The diocesan magazine is being reformatted for improvement to reflect the ecclesiological landscape: Diocese, Parishes, Seminary, Monastery – reformatted to show these four areas with more emphasis on parishes. This can be a missionary tool, as we work out distribution of the magazines.

A Christian Education Task Force, formed of 11 or 12 persons, including representatives from each Deanery, will meet in a couple of weeks and then begin its work. Its mission will be not only to prepare clergy, parish and youth retreats, but to facilitate more opportunities for us to get together in smaller groups. His Grace is willing to travel to meet with the youth of the diocese.

The same proposal is made for a Mission Task Force, for both “in-reach” and outreach, for revitalization of older parishes and for growth of new missions.

Another area of concern is cemeteries. There are at least two parishes which have cemeteries and which can no longer afford to keep them going.

His Grace would like to hear discussion on the idea of diocesan grants – for missions and parish revitalization, as well as on how to set all this vision in motion.

Father Kovalak asked about diocesan by-laws, since the national statutes do not cover every situation and because the leadership team changes too frequently.

Diocesan Chancellor's Report

Father Kowalczyk said that the Diocesan Assembly will focus on promoting the return of trust in the national Church, and for that reason Bishop TIKHON has invited the new Chancellor of the OCA, Father Alexander Garklavs to be present at the Assembly.

Father Onofrey asked again about retired clergy not being on the mailing lists for invitations to diocesan functions – lectures etc. He also brought up the question of attached clergy being able to attend the Diocesan Council. According to the Statute, they are invited to attend and speak, but do not have a vote.

Father reports that the second phase of the United Appeal has brought in \$9900.00. The decrease in giving reflects the climate in the Church.

Diocesan Treasurer's Report

Father Martin Browne presented his report for income and expenses in the Diocese. Father Udics made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit, seconded by Father Onofrey. The motion passed.

Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report

Father Onofrey gave a few words on the Metropolitan Council's preparations for their upcoming meeting with the Synod of Bishops.

A discussion ensued concerning the decision of the Diocese of the Midwest to withhold their assessments until information about the financial crisis is released. Bishop TIKHON will suggest that the doors of the meeting room be locked until the issues are resolved.

His Grace asks that we remember our hierarchs and the members of the Metropolitan Council in prayer, especially as they meet.

New Business

Father Browne presented 2 budgets. Budget 'A' is based on \$34 per adult parishioner based on last years' figure minus 150 persons. Budget 'B' is based on the idea that everyone, by virtue of his or her baptism, chrismation and participation in the Eucharistic life of Christ is part of His Body, the Church. Of that group, the only section which will grow much is the youth. We must provide our youth with the example of how to grow, by training adults as well as children in the life of giving. We have 832 children listed in our diocese. Budget 'B' proposes that \$1.00 per week per child be donated by the parents of the children, and that the amount collected be divided \$26/\$26 between the parish and the diocese. This would allow us to trim the assessments for adults (3262 adults, projected) by \$5.00.

A lengthy discussion ensued, at the end of which, Father Kovalak said that Budget 'B' could not be passed as it was not in accord with the requirements in the OCA Statute. Father Browne pointed out that this was for the Diocesan assessment, not for the National Church assessment. Father Udics made a motion to raise the Diocesan assessment by \$3.00 per adult member for 2008, and study other methods of providing a ready income for the diocese in the future. The motion was seconded by Peter Bohlender, and passed.

Father Udics made a motion, seconded by Peter Bohlender, that proposed Budget 'A', with the \$3.00 per adult member increase, be passed. The motion carried.

Father Kovalak moved that the revised Budget 'A' and the Treasurer's report be posted on the internet as soon as the revisions were complete (taking into account the \$3.00 increase, and the revision of numbers of adult members according to the census). Father Hojnicky seconded the motion and it passed.

Father Udics asked if, instead of having Deanery representatives to the Diocesan Council be nominated by the full Diocesan Assembly, that they be nominated by the Deaneries and elected by the Diocesan Assembly. Bishop TIKHON said he saw no reason why this could not be done.

Bishop TIKHON asked that we add Father Dimitri Oselinsky, Father Daniel Donlick and Marie Proch to the list of the ailing for our prayers.

Father Onofrey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Elsie Herman. The motion passed and His Grace adjourned the meeting at 3:10 pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary