

**Orthodox Church in America**  
**Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania**  
**146<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Council Meeting**  
**August 16, 2007**

His Grace, the Right Reverend TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, opened the 146<sup>th</sup> 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 Vladimir Fetcho, Dean – Wilkes-Barre Deanery  
Archpriest Michael Hatrak, Dean – Frackville Deanery  
Archpriest John Udics, Dean – Philadelphia Deanery, Secretary of the Diocesan Council  
Frackville Deanery: Priest Timothy Hojnicky Elsie Herman  
Philadelphia Deanery: Doug Yates  
Wilkes-Barre Deanery: Priest Nicholas Solak Mary Sernak  
Delegates At Large: Archpriest Daniel Kovalak  
Metropolitan Council representatives: Father John Onofrey Peter Bohlender  
Maria Proch, invited guest.

**The Minutes of the 145<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Council Meeting** were read aloud by Father Udics, Council Secretary. Father Hatrak moved to accept the minutes with corrections, seconded by Father Onofrey. The motion passed.

**Diocesan Chancellor's Report**

His Grace said that since Father Kowalczyk would be leaving the Meeting early to attend a conference of prison chaplains, he would give his report before the Bishop gave his report.

Father Kowalczyk said that arrangements are being completed for the Diocesan Assembly, and that the registration fee would be \$100.00.

The second phase of the United Appeal is underway. Envelopes are being mailed to each parish for distribution in the parishes on September 9, and collection on September 16. No third mailing would be made.

Alive in Christ magazine is being prepared – the next issue will include our salute to graduates. Father John Soucek is now helping with layout.

Father Kowalczyk reported that His Grace had assigned Father Daniel Matthewson as Priest-in-charge at Saint Mary's Church, Coaldale. Father Claude Vinyard has been assigned to Holy Trinity Church, McAdoo, and is living in their rectory. At All Saints' Church in Olyphant, restoration work is progressing on the icons and roof.

**The Report of His Grace, Bishop TIKHON**

His Grace read the draft of a letter which he will send out to our parishes next week, on the topic of helping us get through the OCA's current problems.

His Grace reported on the meeting of the Synod of Bishops. They heard the report of the Spiritual Court recommending the removal from the ranks of the clergy of Father Robert Kondratick, and accepted the report.

The Bishops discussed the letter of Archbishop NATHANIEL on our role in realizing an Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

The Bishops approved the appointment of Paul Bodnar as Secretary of the OCA.

The Bishops implemented their policy on church-wide background checks.

They heard the report of the General Council for the OCA debunking the "Brum Doctrine" and said that it is no more than a personal opinion, and stating that all discretionary accounts should be audited.

Though nothing has been concretized, it is probable that the 15<sup>th</sup> All American Council will be held in July of 2008, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Archbishop JOB and Bishop BENJAMIN are inventing a theme.

Discussion was also made on the Special Investigative Committee, ROCOR's reconciliation with the Moscow Patriarchate, and decision to discuss mission to Hispanics and Koreans at their next meeting in October.

Most of the discussion emphasized National Church concerns – but more thorough discussion of Autocephaly is anticipated.

There was discussion of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, but there was no conclusion about whether to remain members of those bodies.

In our Diocese, His Grace asks us to continue to pray for the repose of Matushka Mahaffey, for the health of the ailing, now including Matushka Olga Kovach and Marie Proch. Father Onofrey thanks us for our prayers but says that we can remove his name from the 'sick list'.

His Grace showed us the copy of the resolution granting permission to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania to build on Monastery land (the Orphanage property was deemed insufficient). So, the Diocese owns the house, but the Monastery owns the land. However, there is no purchase invoice, no donation receipt and no deed for the records.

The Diocese has been offered the gift of six acres of land by Helen Mankovich, in Estella, Pennsylvania. His Grace will look at the property. Father Browne reports that the land is beautiful but remote, and that the gift comes with no conditions (in other words, it can be sold).

The following parishes have major anniversaries:

Saint Vladimir Church in Lopez, 100 years

Saint Nicholas Church in Philadelphia, 90 years

Holy Cross Church in Williamsport, 30 years.

After the last Diocesan Council meeting, there was a Deans' meeting, attended by two deans, the chancellor and the bishop. There was a second meeting in July, and the next will be September 11. His Grace asks that Deanery meetings be scheduled soon after the Diocesan Council meetings so that information can be transmitted to the pastors.

His Grace has been working with his Administrative Assistant, organizing the office especially the schedule for correspondence and mailings. The work is going well.

A letter, with clearance forms for State Police background checks will be issued. Church Mutual Insurance Company is offering free background checks.

His Grace would like to focus on Christian Education and Missions by forming a task force in each Deanery, looking for a practical way to grow. He would like to see the Deans, and three or four clergy and lay representatives in each task force. The Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, Father Kovalak, would also be involved.

Father Onofrey asked about qualifications for ordination for candidates for the priesthood, including psychological testing. His Grace replied that there are already various levels of screening of the candidates including evaluations by their bishops and spiritual fathers.

His Grace reported that the process for electing a new bishop for the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania and for the Bulgarian Diocese has begun.

His Grace is still working on job descriptions for the Diocese.

There was discussion in the about the possibility of leaving the NCC and WCC.

His Grace will look into the mayor of Philadelphia's public statement that the city is a 'Pro-Choice city'.

### **Diocesan Treasurer's Report**

Father Martin Browne presented his report for income and expenses in the Diocese. He asked about payments to the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. His Grace will investigate.

Father Udics made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit, seconded by Father Hatrak. The motion passed.

### **Metropolitan Council Representative's Report**

Father Onofrey gave a report on the Metropolitan Council's meeting of June 12 – 13.

Audits are done, accounting to the penny, except for Alaska lands.

Candidates have been approved for OCA officers.

Syosset will implement Best Practices policy in June, to filter down to the rest of the Church.

Information on the Investigative Committee reports is to be sent out.

Information on Father Kondratick is to be sent out.

Monies collected for charities have begun to be distributed.

The Metropolitan Council and the Synod of Bishops will meet together, in October.

Father Kovalak made a motion to inform the Metropolitan Council that our Diocesan Council insists that the Metropolitan Council's financial reports and audit reviews include stavropegial institutions. The motion was seconded by Doug Yates, and was carried.

### **New Business**

Maria Proch was invited to speak about the diocesan Christian Education program. She requests administrative presence at meetings, and more support from the Deaneries. She said that there have been generous donations for Christian Education but that we need to go further. She wants to have more than the two events for women and teens.

The 2008 Diocesan Assembly is scheduled for the 21 and 22 of November. Father Kovalak requested that the reports prior to the assemblies be distributed earlier (according to the statute).

Mr Bohlender made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Father Hojnicky. The motion passed and His Grace adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary