Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
149th Diocesan Council Meeting
May 29, 2008

His Grace, the Right Reverend TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, opened the 149th Session of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, with prayer at 10:30 am.

In attendance 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 Hojnicki Elsie Herman
Philadelphia Deanery: Doug Yates
Wilkes-Barre Deanery: Priest Nicholas Solak Mary Sernak
Delegates At Large: Archpriest Daniel Kovalak Marie Proch
Metropolitan Council representative: Peter Bohlender

The Minutes of the 148th Diocesan Council Meeting were distributed by e-mail. Father Hatrak moved to accept the minutes with corrections, seconded by Peter Bohlender. The motion passed.

The Report of His Grace, Bishop TIKHON

His Grace reported on three meetings of the Holy Synod of Bishops, and on his trip to Alaska at the request of the Holy Synod.

At the Spring Session of the Holy Synod, His Grace offered a report about the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, including all the resolutions passed by the Diocesan Council. 1). His Grace presented the resolution calling for the modification of the stewardship/assessment system, together with his expression of support for the resolution. This will be discussed at the Town Hall Meetings. But we need to discuss this at our Assembly so that we can take the lead in the discussion at the All American Council. 2). His Grace presented the resolution against participation in the National Council of Churches. This was discussed but no decision was made. Bishop TIKHON suggested calling a conference of all Orthodox bishops to discuss this because at present there is no consensus. 3) His Grace presented the resolution on auditing all stavropegial institutions. This is supposed to take place annually according to procedure.

The ‘Town Hall Meeting’ in preparation for the next All American Council for our Diocese will be held July 19, in Bethlehem. The meeting will be open to all Orthodox Christians.

In preparation for the All American Council, a special Diocesan Assembly will be held August 9 in Philadelphia. His Grace appointed a Resolutions Committee, consisting of the Diocesan Chancellor, Treasurer, Deans, Father Solak and Doug Yates, and possibly a Saint Tikhon’s faculty member. Information on procedures for the two types of resolutions was distributed: general resolutions, which must be submitted 60 days prior to the All-American Council (deadline one month after our Assembly), and resolutions concerning changes in the Statutes, which must be presented 90 days before the All American Council (deadline one day after our Assembly). Any parish, Deanery or stavropegial institution may present resolutions, but all resolutions must be approved by the Diocesan hierarch.
His Grace said that whatever we do should be done as a Diocese, discussed by the Assembly, forwarded to the Pre-Conciliar Resolutions Committee who will then pass them along to the Holy Synod of Bishops who will filter them.

The two task forces implemented by His Grace have not met recently.

His Grace conveyed the thanks of the Monastic Community for a successful pilgrimage.

The Diocesan scholarships were distributed to four seminarians, as budgeted.

His Grace pointed out at the Holy Synod meeting was the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania is a major supporter of Saint Tikhon’s Seminary. However, the seminary is a seminary of the national church. It would be good to see the other dioceses support not only their seminarians, but support the seminary in general. The ideal is to have the seminarians supported by the church. The summer internship scholarships were also distributed.

His Grace met with an insurance broker because the seminary staff and monastics wish to separate from the Diocesan health insurance group. As of August 1, Matushka Kowalczyk will no longer receive or deposit insurance payments from the seminary staff or the monastics. This does not apply to the seminarians, who have no insurance coverage. It does not apply to the Philadelphia Deanery clergy who have their own individual health plans.

**Diocesan Chancellor’s Report**

The schedule of the Bishop’s activities was distributed.

Pastoral changes: Bishop TIKHON received the petition for Father Werecemic to leave Holy Annunciation Church in Berwick to become a full-time hospital chaplain. His Grace is revisiting parishes supplied by retired clergy, Alden Station and Saint Clair, for example, in an effort to possibly revitalize them. Saint Stephen’s Cathedral has requested support for a choir director and a part time priest who would serve once a month in Slavonic. Saint Basil’s Church in Simpson petitioned for funds for evangelization. Father Vinyard has stabilized Holy Trinity Church in McAdoo, His Grace is looking at their assessments which are in arrears, and the possibility that they would take a full time priest.

Only newly graduated clergy are being placed in parishes and are given significantly improved financial packages. The Diocesan Clergy Compensation Guidelines have not been worked on.

The forms for the Censuses will be mailed out by August 1, to be returned by September 1.

United Appeal mailing will include information on how the collected money is being spent.

The ‘graduates issue’ of “Alive in Christ” magazine will be out by September 1.

There was no motion to approve the Chancellor’s Report.

**Diocesan Treasurer’s Report**

Father Browne presented a four-page report. Father Hatrak made a motion, seconded by Peter Bohlender, that the Treasurer should obtain online banking privileges for informational purposes. The motion carried.

Father Browne reported on the expenses (utilities, maintenance and insurance) of the Diocesan Center since 2002. This showed that some years expenses were more than the amount paid in rent by the Diocese of Washington.

Father Kovalak made a motion that the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania moves to bill the Diocese of Washington and New York for actual costs for utilities, maintenance and insurance for the Diocesan Center of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, effective immediately. Father Hatrak seconded the motion. Bishop TIKHON said that there were other possibilities. Father Kowalczyk was asked to investigate if the Diocese can buy the land on which the Diocesan Center stands. After discussion the motion passed. Our Diocesan Chancellor will inform the New York Diocesan Chancellor of this resolution.

Father Hatrak moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report subject to audit, seconded by Elsie Herman. The motion passed.
Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report

Peter Bohlender reported on the last Metropolitan Council meeting. All the information he presented can be found on the OCA website. He reiterated that our Diocesan Council’s resolutions were presented, as explained above.

Father Udics made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Father Hojnicki. The motion passed and His Grace adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary
His Grace, Bishop TIKHON  
Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania  
P.O. Box C  
South Canaan, PA 18459

Your Grace,

This is to confirm that in accordance with the Diocesan Statutes, the six month audit of the books of the Diocese was completed by the undersigned today at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Edwardsville, PA, and all was found in order. As usual, the audit reviewed the financial income and expense records of the Diocese excluding the Health Insurance Fund of the Diocese, which is not under the Office of the Treasurer.

Sincerely in Christ

V. Rev. S. David Mahaffey

Rev. John Russin

Mr. David Yagoshek