

**Orthodox Church in America**  
**Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania**  
**151<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Council Meeting**  
**February 5, 2009**

His Grace, the Right Reverend TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, opened the 151<sup>st</sup> Session of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, with prayer at 10:30 am, in the Diocesan Center.

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 Hojnicky Elsie Herman

Philadelphia Deanery: Doug Yates

Wilkes-Barre Deanery: Priest Nicholas Solak Mary Sernak

Delegates At Large: Archpriest Daniel Kovalak Marie Proch

Metropolitan Council representatives: Archpriest John Onofrey, Peter Bohlender

**The Minutes of the 45<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Assembly**, November 22, 2008, at Saint Nicholas' Church, Bethlehem, were distributed and read privately. After lunch, Father Hojnicky moved to provisionally accept the minutes, seconded by Father Kovalak. The motion passed.

**The Minutes of the 150<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Council Meeting** were read and corrected. Father Hatrak moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Father Onofrey. The motion passed.

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

Until now, use of the Diocesan Center has been neglected. The fact that our parishes are dying is a sign that there is no content to our life in Christ, which is also symbolically represented in our under-use of the Diocesan Center. We need to be the Church better so that people will come to it. This requires effort from everyone.

The Diocesan Center should be not only for meetings but also more for building up of the Church. More meetings, even weekly, in smaller groups – specialists in each field – teaching, spiritual growth, will help break down isolation in any way we can – strengthen Orthodox presence and bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world around us.

We should reflect on a plan for symphony between Spirit and Church. Reflect, for example, on the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America – how do we express 'what is Orthodox Christianity in America' in various models. What do we need to do to make the Church real to the world around us, filling externals with real content.

The Bishop has been appointed secretary of the Holy Synod of Bishops at its last meeting.

Father Sergius has been appointed Acting Superior of Saint Tikhon's Monastery.

Matushka Alexandra (Sandy) Kopestonsky has been hired as the Bishop's part time secretary.

**Diocesan Chancellor's Report**

The Chancellor will inform the clergy on updates concerning the Orthodox Church in America Mental Health program.

The Schedule of Lenten Mission Services has been sent out.

The Bishop has moved into the Diocesan Center, but will live on the ground level. Visual inspection of the premises was carried out, and certain renovations will be necessary – minor cracks in the dry-wall, moisture stains, a solid core door is needed, cracks in the tile in the main bath, there is some mold, carpets have to be cleaned and replaced, the kitchen vinyl floor should be replaced, and there are certain environmental problems with the heat pump. The conclusion is that the house is in very good condition, but some maintenance work is required. This inspection was pro bono.

Some repairs have already been started.

The follow-up with the Honesdale Bank for a clear title to the Diocesan Center is that there is a mortgage on the monastery property on which the Diocesan Center sits. There are five properties each with separate deeds: 85 acres for the Monastery, including the Diocesan Center (1905), 105 acres for the Seminary (1968), 32 acres behind the Seminary, 20 acres on the hilltop behind the cemetery and 23 acres for the field across the road, deeded by Metropolitans Leonty and Ireney. And then there are 5 acres recently deeded to the Diocese in Estella, PA. The property insurance covers only the Diocesan property.

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

Father Browne presented a complete set of reports and statements. There was a discussion of the large amounts owed to the Diocese by various parishes, and how it is being collected. Minimalistic thinking needs to be broken, he said.

Father Udics moved to accept the Treasurer's Report subject to audit, seconded by Father Onofrey. The motion passed.

#### **Metropolitan Council Representatives' Report**

Father Onofrey reported that the Metropolitan Council will be meeting soon. A lengthy discussion of strategic planning ensued.

#### **New Business**

There was a discussion of the date of the next Diocesan Assembly. It is now scheduled for December 4 and 5, 2009, in Bethlehem.

Father Kovalak produced a pamphlet "Please Give" and distributed copies to everyone.

The next meeting of the Diocesan Council will be on May 5.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest John Udics, Diocesan Council Secretary