

Diocesan Council Meeting, February 10, 2011

Diocesan Center, South Canaan

All members present except for Fr. Dan Kovalak who was excused. His Grace informed the Council that Fr. Dan was with his daughter Natalia who was undergoing back surgery this week and asked all to remember them in their prayers.

I. Opening

The meeting began at 10:49 with the singing of O Heavenly King.

II. Diocesan Council Minutes

Minutes from the October 12 Diocesan Council were reviewed. No changes or corrections were made. Fr. Michael Hatrak motioned to accept, seconded by Elsie Herman, all were in favor.

III. Diocesan Assembly Minutes

Minutes of the Diocesan Assembly had been forwarded to all members who were asked for their input.

The question of the bishop's nomination of officers was not definitively addressed for future assemblies, so His Grace indicated he would prepare a written form for such a process, mindful of O.C.A statutes and preparatory to the composition of a complete set of Diocesan By-Laws supplementary to the O.C.A. Statutes.

The minutes were accepted as presented: Mark Linnehan made the motion, seconded by Fr. Tim Hojnicky, all in favor.

IV. Bishop's Report

a. Diocesan Court: provided for in Statutes, Article XI, Sect. 2. Did not have one recently in the diocese. Made up of clergy and laity, with 2 permanent clergy and 2 alternate clergy who would serve only on clergy related cases as per the statute.

i. There is a need to be prepared for issues which arise and need to be dealt with in a timely fashion.

ii. It is in the interest of justice

iii. The current membership is for the life of the present Diocesan Council since members are drawn from the Council

iv. Fr. Dan Kovalak and Fr. David Mahaffey, Douglas Yates and John Buckeye are the current members, with Fr. Nicolas Solak and Fr. Martin Browne as clergy alternates.

b. Orphanage Board

i. Met in November

ii. Scheduled to meet next Monday, February 14.

iii. David Yeosock is on the board, and he told the Council he is there to listen and bring back decisions of the Orphanage Board to the Council

iv. His Grace made the following observations about the board

1. It is cohesive in its outlook

2. All three institutions have to agree to the final settlement of property disposition, i.e. Monastery, Seminary and Diocese.
 3. Attorney John Krisa has recently communicated a confirmation to the Board that the Diocesan Center is on orphanage property.
- v. Discussion followed with the following results
 1. The Diocese wants as a first step title to the land under the house and a reasonable size plot of land around it.
 2. His Grace will appoint a Task Force/Exploratory Committee to investigate options regarding relocation to Philadelphia, Harrisburg or the Lehigh Valley.
 - vi. Motion made by Mark Linnehan for Orphanage Board to give title to 2 acre lot out of the 7.27 acre subdivision of which the Diocesan Center is now a part.
- c. Parish Revitalization
- i. Committee with mandate from Diocesan Assembly not yet formed. His Grace asked for recommendations, stating he has some names already and envisions a group of 6-8 people. They would start with the Plan presented at the Assembly (authored by Fr. Kovalak), and would come up with a concrete plan for one specific parish.
 - ii. Since the committee is to report to the Council, His Grace thought it should not be dominated by Council members, though volunteers were welcome.
 - iii. Fr. Tim Hojnicky volunteered to serve.
 - iv. Fr. Mahaffey stated that Natural Church Development with Fr. Ivanoff should be a part of any program of revitalization.
 - v. His Grace will constitute this committee within a week
 - vi. His Grace mentioned a meeting with Holy Annunciation in Berwick the evening of February 9th, which is interested in helping a struggling parish, and suggested that this could be incorporated into a parish revitalization plan.
- d. Lenten Schedule
- i. His Grace has received deanery schedules from the deans and is finishing his schedule of Sunday visits during Great Lent. He hopes to have the whole schedule out by the end of the week.
- e. Diocesan Awards
- i. Currently there are Synodal and Diocesan Gramotas and the St. Innocent Awards which are specifically for the Metropolitan to award for services to the Central Church Administration.
 - ii. His Grace wants to have a similar award for the diocese, so he has instituted the Order of St. Tikhon of Moscow for clergy or faithful for their zealous and pious service to Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church in Eastern Pennsylvania. This will be higher than a Diocesan Gramota.
 - iii. In making these awards, His Grace wants to maintain a balance between the two prevailing attitudes on awards, that they should be given at the end of life or generously bestowed on many in their prime. He wishes to recognize people's contributions, but also wishes to be discriminating so that the awards are not diminished in their character by indiscriminate **awards**.

- iv. Discussion: The topic elicited comments from the council on the following related areas:
 - 1. The need to get out the word about diocesan needs
 - 2. The persistent confusion between monastery, seminary and diocese
 - 3. The possibility of appealing to sons and daughters of the diocese throughout North America.
 - 4. Sharing Social Work perhaps through FOCUS. There was a consensus that any FOCUS endeavor should be in Philadelphia.
- V. Diocesan Chancellor's Report: Fr. John Kowalczyk
 - a. Bishop's Itinerary: See attached report.
 - b. Clergy Movements: Fr. James Dougherty to Coatesville is pending release from Antiochian Archdiocese which wants us to provide a replacement for Fr. James in his current assignment or wait for their seminarians to graduate. Fr. John had Fr. Mahaffey speak to this. Fr. David indicated his disappointment with the position of the Antiochian Archdiocese and stated that he was trying to contact Fr. James Dudash about replacing Fr. Dougherty in his current assignment.
 - c. Parish Administrative Compliance
 - i. Fr. John reminded the council of Fr. Kovalak's statement at the Assembly that a vote in favor of this was a commitment to fulfill it. He reviewed the compliance so far and indicated that some clergy had said that they would not be able to provide one or more of the elements called for by the Diocesan Assembly, i.e. Parish Minutes, Financial Statement, Budget or Sexual Abuse Compliance.
 - ii. Fr. John Soucek commented on the success of his parish of St. Michael's in Old Forge on the budget process which initially met with resistance but came into compliance and has found it to be a positive experience for all involved.
 - d. Sexual Abuse Policy Compliance.
 - i. Fr. John Kowalczyk stated four parishes had not responded at all. When questioned he indicated only fourteen parishes were in full compliance, the rest in progress.
 - ii. Discussion followed and it was decided the deans and chancellor would meet with the bishop following the Council meeting to come up with a plan to deal with non-compliance.
- VI. Treasurer's Report: Priest Timothy Hojnicky

Fr. Martin Browne presented his report (in 3 separate handouts)

The Wachovia CD was changed to be the "Wachovia Money Market" due to the better interest rate.

Income & Expenses:

- a. The Wayne Bank Credit Card payment for December and January is due to the fact that December's statement was not sent.

Aging summary report:

- b. Mechanicsburg, and Williamsport have switched to a tithing system so it appears that they are paid in advance. This is because the system doesn't have a way to express that. We will be looking into seminary scholarships and the protocols (ex: residential requirements?)

For access the clergy assistance fund, requests should be made to the respective dean.

Audit:

- c. Was done on 2/6/11
- d. The Committee prefers it to be done quarterly
- e. It looked at the Diocesan & Health insurance Records.

Fr. Michael Hatrak moved to accept the treasurer's report. Mark Linnehan seconded it.

Unanimously accepted, subject to audit.

VII. Diocesan Phone Plan

- a. Fr. Nicholas Solak made a presentation on the advantages of an A.T. &T business plan for cell phones for clergy and families. An 18% discount and tax exemption are two benefits. Current A.T.&T customers could transfer without penalty; others could join if they wished. All that are needed for the plan to be implemented are five lines. There is sufficient interest to start such a plan.
- b. Fr. David Mahaffey asked whether other companies had been contacted. They had not. Fr. David volunteered to contact Verizon and see what they offer, and we could see whether we could have multiple business plans with different carriers.

VIII. Metropolitan Council

- a. Father Mahaffey mentioned that there was not much to report. The MC is due to meet next month. As of now there is no agenda for that meeting.
- b. Father David did comment on the Strategic Plan which now has 10 workgroups, each of which is charged to produce a two page document for submission to the Strategic Planning Committee by the end of February for Metropolitan Council review.
 - i. Volunteers are welcome for these work groups.
- c. It is hoped to have two plenary sessions on the Strategic Plan at the All American Council.
- d. David Yeosock commented on the website for the All American Council and the promised communication regarding the flight and hotel costs for the event, which have been promised by the end of February to the parishes. Originally this information was to have been sent by November 30 via the website.

IX. Old Business

- a. Diocesan Census: Should rectors/clergy be included on the Diocesan Census. Discussion followed. Based on the Statute, and at the suggestion of Fr. Mahaffey, it was agreed that while the clergy family can be added to the census, the priest cannot.
 - i. In the course of this discussion there was a consideration of the role of the priest in the parish, his parish and the parish responsibilities and the broader issue of stewardship for all.

- ii. Fr. Mahaffey suggested that priests could tithe to a diocesan fund, Priest's Tithing Fund, which could serve for clergy assistance.

X. New Business

- a. St. Tikhon's Summer Camp: under management of the Office of Young Adults: Kim Metz, Tatiana Bohush and Nick Macura. They volunteered to continue it and develop it in areas which were adequate but could be improved.
- b. It will be a joint venture of the Diocese and the Seminary, with the Seminary serving as host.
- c. Currently they are re-examining policies and procedures.
- d. Date and location of Special Diocesan Assembly for All-American Council.
 - i. After discussion of several venues and a phone call from Fr. John Kowalczyk to Fr. John Perich, Fr. David Mahaffey motioned, seconded by David Yeosock and unanimously accepted to have the Assembly at St. Herman's in Gradyville on Saturday June 25. Fr. Kowalczyk said Fr. Perich was honored and said the event would not cost the diocese for having it there.
- e. Diocesan Council Meetings
 - i. May 10, August 11, November 15.
 - 1. The August 11 meeting will be at the St. Paul Lutheran Church soup kitchen in Allentown where we will take the place of St. Nicholas Bethlehem.
- f. Diocesan Assembly
 - i. One day event on December 3rd.
 - ii. Harrisburg or Williamsport were suggested. The rectors will be contacted before a final decision is made.

XI. Fr. David Mahaffey

- a. Informed the Council of Mat. Lisa Weremedic's ongoing medical situation which has not been relieved by her surgery. He asked the Council to remember her and Fr. James and family in prayer.
- b. Suggested a Wedding Anniversary Recognition Day for the 3rd Sunday in May. Discussion followed regarding specifics, but the motion made by Fr. David and seconded by Fr. Martin Browne was unanimously passed and the Bishop will consult with the deans about the details.

XII. Motion to close the meeting from Fr. Michael Hatrak, seconded by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky.

XIII. Meeting closed at 4PM with singing of It is Truly Meet

Respectfully Submitted,

Priest Raymond Martin Browne
Secretary