

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING  
DIOCESE OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
HOLY ANNUNCIATION CHURCH, BERWICK  
FEBRUARY 16, 2012**

**I. General Comments**

- A. I am providing my report in outline form for this meeting of the Diocesan Council and will try to have one for all future meetings.
- B. This should allow us to be more focused on the crucial issues and allow more time for discussion and questions.

**II. All American Council**

- A. Resolution on funding
  - 1. Meeting of Chancellors and Treasurers
    - a. Held January 17-18, 2012 at the OCA Chancery
    - b. Fr. John and Fr. Martin are providing a report for this meeting
  - 2. **ACTION NEEDED: Our Council will need to review the proposal that was put forward and give an evaluation of the impact on our diocese. We may also want to consider other alternatives.**
- B. Strategic Plan
  - 1. Lesser Synod and Metropolitan Council will be meeting next week in joint session
  - 2. The agenda calls for discussion on the Post Council follow-up on the Strategic Plan
  - 3. **ACTION NEEDED: Our Council should consider whether we want to present anything (related to the Strategic Plan or to other matters from today's discussion) to the Metropolitan Council meeting through our representatives, Fr. David Mahaffey and David Yeosock.**

**III. The Orthodox Church in America**

- A. Events since our last Diocesan Council meeting
  - 1. Metropolitan JONAH
    - a. Completed an evaluation at a professional facility
    - b. A confidential report was presented to the Holy Synod
    - c. The Holy Synod is working closely with His Beatitude on the follow-up to the evaluation and report.
  - 2. Concelebration with ROCOR Hierarchs (cf. oca.org [here](#))
    - a. Divine Liturgy held on Saturday, December 10, 2011
    - b. At the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign in NYC
    - c. It was a joyous event, and included 7 ROCOR hierarchs and 6 OCA hierarchs, as well as Archbishop Justinian (Moscow Patriarchate)

3. Archbishop SERAPHIM

- a. Synodal Commission continues its work
- b. Case has been remanded to trial (cf. oca.org [here](#))
- c. I would ask everyone to continue to keep His Eminence and all the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of Canada in your prayers.

B. Upcoming Events

1. Holy Chrism
  - a. Will be prepared this year at St Tikhon's Monastery
  - b. From Holy Monday to Holy Thursday
  - c. Announcement was made on oca.org ([here](#)) and a letter was sent to the clergy in the Northeast.
2. Lesser Synod Meeting: Tuesday, February 21
3. Metropolitan Council/ Lesser Synod Meeting: February 21-23
4. Consecration of Bishop Alexander (Bulgarian Diocese) May 4-5
5. Holy Synod Meeting (May 6-9)
6. Assembly of Bishops Meeting (September 10-12)

IV. **The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania:**

A. Diocesan Bishop

1. I am continuing to seek weekly counseling and guidance on administrative and personal matters.
2. I am also trying to take a day off during the week (with more or less success, depending on the week).
3. I am continuing to devote a considerable amount of time dealing with Seminary matters, especially with the focused visit from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) which is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012.

B. Diocesan Administration

1. Communications
  - a. I am pleased to present Mr. Aric Gingo as the new Assistant to the Bishop for Communications.
  - b. He is a parishioner of St John the Baptist Church in Edwardsville
  - c. He has been a professional art director for 20 years, holding a B.A. and M.A. in Advertising and Design. He was responsible for the production of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Books for Edwardsville.
  - d. He will administer our website and prepare our magazine.
2. Treasurer
  - a. I still have not accepted the resignation of Fr. Martin Browne
  - b. We are looking for financial talent in our diocese to assist him, which might become available through the "Treasury of Talents" database.
3. Diocesan By-laws

- a. Continuing our collection of parish by-laws, uncovering some old by-laws in our diocesan files (thanks to the diligence of Mat. Sandy and Cindy)
- b. I have requested a copy of the Diocesan Bylaws and the Uniform Parish Bylaws from the Diocese of the South (which hopefully I can forward to you before our meeting, if I receive them in time)
- c. **ACTION NEEDED:** There are several issues that I believe the Diocesan Council should begin to address in a more systematic way over the coming year:
  - a. Establishing Diocesan By-laws
  - b. Consideration of the feasibility of having Uniform Parish By-laws
  - c. Undertaking a thorough review of our many parish cemeteries and their corporate/legal status
  - d. Need for legal counsel in all these matters

C. Diocesan Center

1. Children's Home Board met on January 27
2. Property survey completed thanks to the hard work of David Yeosock
3. Orphanage property to be subdivided into 2 lots, rather than 3 (Monastery and Diocese)
4. Further details in report from Mr. David Yeosock
5. **ACTION NEEDED:** The Diocesan Council will need to officially approve the proposal from the Children's Home Board to subdivide the Orphanage Property into two sections. We will also need to consider our intentions for other actions that might be needed, such as an assessment of the property value.

D. Revitalization Committee

1. Has continued to meet (updates are being posted on our website)
2. Three parishes (one in each deanery) have expressed willingness to begin the process of revitalization
3. Mr. Mark Linnehan will provide more details of this process in our meeting.

E. Diocesan Clergy

1. Clergy Health
  - a. Retreat on March 5-6 at Holy Protection Greek Orthodox Monastery
  - b. Speaker is Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko
  - c. The theme will be "Do you want to be healed?"
  - d. Will address some of the issues brought forth through the Clergy Questionnaire given to the clergy in 2011 and will focus on the spiritual health of our clergy.

F. Diocesan Parishes

1. Lenten Schedule to be finalized shortly

V. Saint Tikhon's Monastery

- A. Brotherhood continues to grow
    - 1. 17 brothers (including myself)
    - 2. Fr. Afanassy from Philadelphia has joined the brotherhood and the OCA
  - B. Icon of St Anna now permanently housed at the Monastery
- VI. Saint Tikhon's Seminary
- A. ATS Site Visit
    - 1. Tuesday, February 14, 2012
    - 2. Focused visit
      - a. Strategic Planning
      - b. Student Assessment
    - 3. The evaluation was very positive and I will provide an oral report of their recommendations (the recommendation is not to be made public until the ATS Board of Commissioners officially approves it, but it can be communicated to relevant constituencies)