

Diocesan Council Meeting November 29, 2012  
Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick

The meeting opened at 1:40PM with the singing of *O Heavenly King*

Present were His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek, His Grace, Bishop Mark, Fr. John Kowalczyk, Fr. David Mahaffey, Fr. Nicholas Solak, Fr. James Weremedic, Fr. Martin Browne, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, Mr. David Yeosock, Mr. Douglas Yates, Mr. John Buckeye and Mrs. Elsie Herman.  
Absent: Fr. Michael Hatrak

Minutes of August 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Fr. Martin indicated they did not indicate the absence of Fr. Hatrak, who had a funeral that day, and Elsie Herman.

With the correction David Yeosock motioned to accept, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky seconded, all in favor.

Bishop Melchisedek's Report

- His Grace stated that the role of the locum tenens is to sit in chair and make sure no one who is not authorized to sits there. He indicated that he sees his primary role as putting into place selection of new bishop. Regarding the selection of a new bishop, His Grace stated there was nothing more to say than said earlier to clergy. The Holy Synod has a list of possible candidates and will, over next few months, whittle it down to something manageable. It is His Grace's opinion that there is a necessity of getting to know those candidates at the Synodal level so as to be able to recommend them to us, for us to recommend back to the Holy Synod the one(s) we think are best for us so it is a conversation and not an imposition.
- Bp. Melchisedek gave his office phone number in Pittsburgh and his assistant's phone number.
  - Introduced to Barry Migyanko, Administrative Assistant to His Grace Bishop Melchisedek. According to His Grace, Barry is an expediter.

Bishop Mark's Report

- His Grace offered thanks for warm reception of Diocesan Officers and noted how well organized things are at the Diocesan Center under Mat. Sandy. Continuity in the programs established is the goal of his administration of the diocese. He spoke with His Beatitude about those programs and has a clear idea of what they are and the direction in which to go with them. His Grace is working with webmaster to update contact information. His Grace stated that His Beatitude did a fantastic job with the diocese with plans for revitalization, clergy health and continuing education. He pledged to keep seat warm and clean.

Chancellor's Report: Fr. John Kowalczyk addressed the following points:

- Thanked the bishops for their prompt action in the transition.
- Continuity of programs established by His Beatitude.

Parish Revitalization:

- Keep this process going. Clergy workshop on PHIM on 11/9. Continue with parish council implementation of PHIM.
- Western Pa also using PHIM.
- Bishop Melchisedek asked Mark Linnehan to call his office to schedule meeting so that both our dioceses can coordinate with the plan.
- Fr. Tim explained what the committee had done on a deanery/parish level.

Welcomed Fr. Solak and Fr. Weremedic as new deans

By-Laws

Fr. Tim provided background to the proposed By-Laws.

- Put this on hold until we have a hierarch.
- Bishop Melchisedek asked for two things
  - Has committee under Gregory Nescott, contact him as he has gathered by-laws from other dioceses. Collate them and lay foundations pending a diocesan hierarch.
  - Don't want to present at assembly without ruling bishop.

Census Update

- 2830 adults with a decline of 92
  - According to Mat. Sandy they are mostly funerals
- Shillington: 29 person increase.
- Number of children is not accurate as some parishes called in their numbers before sending in completed censuses. Correct numbers will be provided in a final census.

Archbishop Tikhon's Schedule

- Oct 21 in Williamsport
- Nov. 4 in Bethlehem
- Bishop Mark was in Old Forge last Sunday for the scheduled visit and will be in Shillington this coming Sunday (December 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Fr. Nicholas Solak asked about liturgical life committee.

- Bishop Mark spoke with His Beatitude about it yesterday and agreed with Bishop Melchisedek that the funeral service finalization should wait for Diocesan Hierarch.
- Bishop Mark spoke with Fr. Vladimir Fetcho about providing liturgical notes for clergy newsletter
- Fr. Victor provided additional information on what the liturgical committee was considering.
- Bishop Mark will have a teleconference with the members to consider the purview of the committee.

See what questions are so can consider the answers.

Metropolitan Tikhon dinner on December 4

- 65 are registered at present. Fr. Kowalczyk said the deadline is extended to Monday, December 3.
- St. Michael's Center
- Fr. John gave the menu, possibility of a program.
- Discussion on the vestments/gift for His Beatitude.
- Fr. Nicholas Solak made a motion to use \$500 from the Vestment Fund to purchase a gift for presentation at the dinner, seconded by John Buckeye. All in favor.

Diocesan Treasurer: (Taken by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky)

- Fr. Martin presented his report.
- Significant difference from 2011-2012 in the November Financial Position due to the transition (check signing changes delayed payment of November OCA assessment)
- Relief check to Nanticoke was resent due to it being lost
- Wachovia/Wells Fargo account was closed, new account with Penn Star.
- A discussion was had on the financial situation in Lopez and the entire diocesan "dues system" as a whole
  - Motion to approve
  - Seconded by

Metropolitan Council

David Yeosock mentioned two positive fundraising initiatives by the Metropolitan Council:

- Suggestion to bring Alaskans to AAC, raised \$15,000
- Request for evangelization committee on chairs of delegates at AAC

Fr. David Mahaffey spoke of his role on the Metropolitan Council committees

- No ethical problems before the Ethics Committee
- He will not be on MC as of March 1

There will be a need to elect delegates at Diocesan Assembly.

Fr. Nicholas Solak suggested moving the Selection of Bishop from its place on the agenda since Fr. David Mahaffey had to leave and could offer insight from his experience of going through the process on several occasions. So moved without objection.

Fr. David noted that:

Diocese which asked the synod to keep out did worst.

Different ways to do it.

Current state of dioceses, do we need two bishops in PA?

Selection Committee should be an independent body beholden to no one, no favorites, no politics.

His Grace Bishop Melchisedek offered the following comments:

Selection Committee or Diocesan Council as a whole? Have to look at possibilities.

His personal goal and that of the Holy Synod is that candidates presented to diocese are already vetted by the Holy Synod. This had not been the case until Alaska.

Synod actively working on viable list of viable candidates.

Next few weeks Bishop Melchisedek will start consultation with other members of the Holy Synod to whittle down the list.

He is looking for a method to put in place whereby those who are potential candidates can be given special assignments, working with other bishops so they can get to know the candidates and assess them based on working experience.

Role of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania now is to wait.

Regarding the possibility of merging of Eastern and Western PA.

The Holy Synod draws diocesan boundaries.

Bishop of Pittsburgh declines comment on the question, but he is open to suggestion on the merging of dioceses. He does not know feeling in Western PA at this time.

Fr. Victor expressed concerns about the process and asked for some guidance from Bishop Melchisedek based on his experience. His Grace described the discernment process he uses in his diocese when a parish comes open and said he is considering how to do this on a diocesan level. Essentially it is a self-assessment on the part of the parish and the priests interested in the assignment.

#### Diocesan Center Status

David Yeosock gave background to the question of the land, the Orphanage Board and the process to divide the land between the monastery and diocese.

Land divided between diocese and monastery, 2 acres for diocese with the rest to monastery.

- Surveyor paid by seminary
- Should be submitted shortly.

- Should be clear by February. At that time the diocese could get title to the land.

2013 Budget (taken by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky)

- Fr. Martin presented the 2013 budget
- 2013 OCA assessment will go down \$10
- Increase Bishop's salary by \$5k
- Bishop's travel expense for Bishop Mark
- Treasurer's salary raised to subsidize travel expenses because of Fr. Martin travelling from Wrightstown (\$400 to \$600)
- Bishop's aide \$100 a week to serve, take pictures, etc.
- Fr. Nicholas Solak brought up the salaries and how incongruent they are
- Motion made by Mark Linnehan to accept both reports, seconded by Elsie Herman. Unanimous

Retreat

December 11<sup>th</sup> at Holy Protection Monastery with Bishop Melchisedek. Details will be sent out shortly.

Diocesan Assembly

In Bethlehem on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Schedule will be sent out, along with proposed agenda and will include the election of Diocesan Council.

Next Meeting of the Diocesan Council:

February 19<sup>th</sup> in Stroudsburg

Elsie Herman motioned to adjourn, seconded by John Buckeye.

The meeting closed at 4:40PM with the singing of *It is Truly Meet*.