

Diocesan Council Meeting of 28 September 2021

Attendees:

Archbishop Mark	Fr. Timothy Hojnicky	Sebastian Crews
Fr. Martin Brown	Fr. Seraphim Reynolds	Danalisa Radu
Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk	Russel Charowsky	Mark Linnehan
Fr. Nicholas Solak	Herman Almasy	Russel Charowsky

The meeting was called to order by Archbishop Mark and opened with the prayer “O Heavenly King...”

Archbishop Mark opened the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the minutes from the 1 June 2021 meeting. Two corrections were noted. Fr. Seraphim made a motion to accept the amended minutes; Fr. Victor seconded the motion. Accepting the amended minutes was passed unanimously. Amended minutes were forwarded to the Chancery office.

Comments from Archbishop Mark

- Abp. Mark noted and distributed for review several thank you notes received as a result of donations from the Diocesan Council. The donations were made to charitable institutions as well as individuals in need.
- Abp. Mark reiterated the clergy shortage in DOEPA –
 - Fr. Peter Henry has retired.
 - Fr. Barnabas Fravel has taken an extended leave of absence.
 - Fr. Vladimir Fetcho is having mobility issues.
- Because of the current reliance on supply priests and due to economic pressures, the stipend for supply priests has been increased.
- The DOEPA is also facing additional challenges:
 - Aging parish populations. St. John the Baptist Church in Edwardsville, PA was cited because 75% of the census is 65 years of age or older. Edwardsville is not an outlier but representative of parishes in northeastern Pennsylvania.
 - The Diocese doesn’t necessarily have accurate records on accurate membership in parishes because “voting members” may be financial contributors who actually live out-of-state.

Chancellors’ Report – Fr. Martin Browne

- There are currently 31 parishes listed as active in DOEPA. From a clergy perspective we have:

- 7 parishes with no permanent priest that are under administrative care.
- 6 parishes are being served by clergy that are above retirement age.
- 2 parishes have priests that are 64 years old.
- 17 parishes are being served by priests that are in the 40-65 age bracket.
- The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania currently has 2 seminarians.
- In a worst case scenario, in 2 years, if all eligible priests retired and no new priests joined the diocese, we could have 15 vacancies. That means 48% of the parishes in DOEPA would not have permanent rectors.
- A forward looking plan that helps in aligning and stabilizing parishes and clergy needs to be a priority.

Treasurer's Report – Mark Linnehan

- Current diocesan funding is roughly \$600,000 being held in various investment instruments. There is an additional \$400,000 in ready access accounts.
- Based on cash-on-hand, there was discussion on moving \$250,000 from our bank account to the Russian Brotherhood as an interest earning investment. A motion to move the funds was made by Russ Charowsky and seconded by Fr. Nicholas Sloak.
- We are currently at 94% of our budgeted income from the diocesan parishes.
- A motion was made by Fr. Martin and seconded by Sebastian Crews that the Diocese should absorb the cost of the All American Council and not invoice the parishes to recover the funds. The money had already been sent to the OCA.
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Deans' Reports

- **Philadelphia Deanery** – Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk
 - Fr. Barnabas Fravel has taken an extended leave of absence and has been replaced at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Wilmington, DE by Fr. Silouan Burns.
 - The warden at the Russian mission in Philadelphia has moved back to the Ukraine. Parishioners will need to get serious about establishing and funding a building project for a permanent church if they are to remain viable.
- **Frackville Deanery** – Fr. Timothy Hojnicky
 - Fr. Chuda announced his retirement at the most recent deanery meeting.
 - Fr. Timothy reports that some churches in the Frackville Deanery are still wearing masks.
- **Scranton Deanery** – Fr. Nicholas Solak
 - Fr. Joshua Schooping has left All Saints and the Orthodox Church.

- Fr. Silouan Burns has moved to Wilmington, DE to serve St. Michael the Archangel Church.
- Holy Resurrection Cathedral and Holy Trinity have been working and worshipping together.
- Various Parishes in the Scranton Deanery have administrators and, luckily, we have enough supply priests to service the open parishes.

- **New Business**

- There may be a need to move the Diocesan Assembly. Abp. Mark will reach out to Fr. Innocent Neal about hosting at Holy Trinity Church in Wilkes Barre.
- There is a need to begin a search for new Diocesan Council members. Current members are asked to indicate whether or not they want to remain on council.

Charities

- Seminarian Support - \$2,600 each for Deacon John Black and Bill Rusk. Motion made by Fr. Victor and seconded by Fr. Timothy
- Harrisburg Food Bank - \$500. Motion made by Deacon Peter Skoog and seconded by Sebastian Crews.

- **Action Items**

- Deacon Peter to prepare a document / presentation on criteria for parish revival
- Abp. Mark to reach out to Fr. Innocent about hosting the Diocesan Council

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter N. Skoog". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Protodeacon Peter N. Skoog