

**Attendance:** Archbishop MARK, Fr. Martin Browne, Jennifer Bzik, Russel Charwosky, Daria Cortese, Sbn. Sebastian Crews, Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Pdn. Sergei Kapral, Fr. Mark Koczak, Mark Linnehan, Danalisa Radu, Fr. Nicholas Solak, Dn. Peter Staller, Christopher Yanovich, Fr. Gregory White

**The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM with the singing of “O heavenly King”.**

**Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed via email prior to this meeting. A motion to accept the minutes, amended to fix a spelling error and correct a date, was made by Mark Linnehan and seconded by Fr. Gregory White. The motion passed unanimously.

**Archbishop’s remarks:**

- St. Mary (St. Clair, PA) is now administered by Fr. Vjekoslav Jovicic and served by Fr. Joseph Ramishvili.
- We have several priests at, or close to, retirement age:
  - Fr. John Kowalczyk (70 next May)
  - Fr. Vladimir Fetcho (77)
  - Fr. James Jadick (68)
  - Fr. John Perich (69)
  - Fr. Stephen Miller (66)
  - Fr. John Onofrey (64)
  - Fr. Gregory White (66)
- Fr. Nicholas Solak has stepped down as Dean and is now OCA Director of Pastoral Life. The new Dean is Fr. Innocent Neal.
- We have officially set aside the bylaws of St. Nicholas in Coatesville, due to inability to populate the parish council. The parish now has a steering committee.
- **St. Tikhon’s Summer Camp:**
  - DOEPA is relieving the camp administrators of several responsibilities to ease their burden, create greater financial transparency and promote a balance of power.
  - The camp must comply with legal background-check requirements, including fingerprinting. DOEPA will conduct background checks and verify clergy references.
  - We must maintain records of who attends the camp every year; these records should be delivered to the diocesan office.
  - We received several “thank you” notes from camp participants.
- The mission in Gettysburg will have Divine Liturgies twice a month in September and October, and will have them weekly beginning in November.
- **Clergy compensation:**
  - It is vital that Fr. Leonid Schmidt is fairly compensated for his work with the Gettysburg mission.
  - Clergy compensation must reflect the huge increase in fuel and grocery prices.
- **Uniondale lawsuit:**

- The Uniondale lawsuit has been dismissed, as it stemmed from a major miscommunication between the parish and their attorney. Their primary concern was actually cemetery lawn care, which has now been arranged by Abbot Sergius.
- Neither DOEPA nor the OCA has a plan for perpetual cemetery care when a parish closes. Parishes who want perpetual care must do what is necessary to remain open and maintain their cemeteries.
- **Coatesville lawsuit:** We have not received any further information. The suit may have been dropped.
- The OCA central administration has received a new complaint alleging sexual misconduct. The accused individual has been suspended from all functions during the interview/investigation progress. The allegations may or may not have merit.
- Metropolitan HERMAN reposed on September 6th. Memory eternal!

### **Chancellor's report:**

- The report was distributed on paper before the meeting began.
- Primary activities since the last meeting: All-American Council resolution on the pension plan, clergy staffing of parishes, and the St. Tikhon's Summer Camp evaluation.
- **AAC/pension plan:**
  - The resolution passed on the last day of the All-American Council has the ability to establish clear and comprehensive expectations of accountability and transparency on the part of the Pension Board to its participants.
  - Fr. Martin emphasized that, both personally and as a diocese, we should do everything in our power to ensure that the Pension Board complies.
- **Clergy retirement:**
  - The response to His Eminence's request for information regarding retirement plans of clergy over 60 was not readily forthcoming and, in some cases, evasive.
  - Some respondents provided dates, to which we plan to hold them, and others will have further conversations, at the Archbishop's request, to find mutually agreeable solutions.
- **St. Tikhon's summer camp:**
  - We recently held a Zoom meeting with clergy and lay camp participants to discuss areas needing improvement, including financial accountability, policies, procedures and personnel issues. It was a very productive meeting, and we will schedule a meeting with the camp directors in the near future.
  - The youth greatly enjoyed their camp experience.
- **Clergy fellowship and continuing education:**
  - We hope to finalize the date and location for the clergy pre-Nativity retreat. This will probably occur in November. The agenda will be prayer and fellowship.
  - The next continuing education event will be on October 25th, at Holy Apostles in Mechanicsburg. The speaker will be Fr. Ted Pulcini from the Antiochian Archdiocese, and he will speak on the topic of anger.

- **Upcoming activities:** Next week, His Eminence and Fr. Martin will attend an open house at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton, PA, which is owned and operated by the Malankara Indian Orthodox Church.<sup>1</sup> This will be a useful opportunity to evaluate the site as a potential venue for future DOEPA activities.

### **Treasurer's report:**

- The report was distributed via email prior to the meeting. See report.
- **Highlights:**
  - The financial state of the diocese is very good, although we are slightly behind on some obligations.
  - Expenses have been lower than expected; income has also been slightly lower. To date, our net income is 102.8% of the diocesan budget.
  - There are no parish aging concerns as of 8/31/22.
  - Mark Linnehan and Jennifer Bzik conducted audits of St. John the Baptist (Edwardsville) and St. Peter and Paul (Uniondale).
  - Many thanks to Jennifer Bzik for her help with the aforementioned audits, and with QuickBooks.
  - We must continue working to improve the administrative and financial processes of the St. Tikhon's summer camp.
- Mark Linnehan was recently elected to the board of OCIF (stated for transparency).
- Cash vs. accrual in accounting: in *cash basis* accounting, income is reported when received; in *accrual basis* accounting, income is reported when it is earned.
- **Audits:**
  - Reports on the diocesan audits of St. John the Baptist (Edwardsville) and St. Peter & Paul (Uniondale), performed by Mark Linnehan and Jennifer Bzik, were distributed via email prior to the meeting. See reports.
- **Recommendations include:**
  - Consistent, and preferably electronic, record keeping
  - Monthly account reconciliation
  - Receipt retention, reduction/elimination of "scrap paper" receipts, and retention of account statements
  - Consolidation of unnecessary bank accounts and establishment of reasonable controls
  - Vendor payments via check, made payable to the vendor (not the parish treasurer, to withdraw cash and hand it to the vendor).
  - Proper issuance of 1099 forms and gathering of documents necessary to issue these forms
- A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made by Sbn. Sebastian Crews and seconded by Fr. Martin Browne. The motion passed unanimously.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.htcretreat.com](http://www.htcretreat.com).

**Metropolitan Council report:**

- The next meeting of the Metropolitan Council will take place in Washington, D.C., beginning on October 19th.
- David Lane, Esq., who is a lay member from the Diocese of the West, has been nominated to be the Metropolitan Council's liaison to the OCA Pension Board.

**Deanery Reports:**

- **Philadelphia:**
  - The clergy picnic in May was a success, and attendees expressed a desire for a similar gathering in late September.
  - On September 23rd, several parishes in the deanery will hold their annual golf tournament.
- **Frackville:**
  - The Gettysburg mission will begin holding weekly Divine Liturgies in November, served by Fr. Leonid Schmidt. The mission does not yet have a name.
  - On October 25th, there will be a retreat featuring a talk on anger by Fr. Ted Pulcini.
  - The deanery clergy picnic was held on September 4th in Harrisburg. Serbian and Greek clergy were also invited; several Serbs attended, but the Greeks did not participate.
- **Wilkes-Barre:**
  - The deanery retreat will take place on October 1st, at Holy Trinity Church in Wilkes-Barre. The retreat theme is "Igniting the Flames of Renewal," and will feature keynote speaker Bill Marianes.
  - There are currently two parishes in administration.
  - Fr. John Nightingale is feeling better.

**Further discussion:**

- Fr. Nicholas Solak suggested holding a clergy event, such as a luncheon or information session, for those nearing retirement age.
- DOEPA is recompiling a list of available substitute clergy, both from within the OCA and from other jurisdictions. This includes background checks and fingerprinting.

**The meeting broke for lunch at 12:00 PM and reconvened at 12:42 PM.**

**There was no Old Business.**

**New Business:**

- **Charity:**

- There was discussion of various charities to which DOEPA may contribute, including The Chosen,<sup>2</sup> the Fellowship of the Transfiguration,<sup>3</sup> and the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, Inc.<sup>4</sup>
- In three months parishes will collect a dedicated offering for the Diocese of Alaska, as Bp. ALEXIS currently does not have sufficient funds to visit every parish each year.
- Fr. Martin Browne recommended a charitable focus on Mexico, and suggested donations of toilet paper to the needy here in the United States, as toilet paper is not covered by food stamp benefits.
- DOEPA has \$6,000 in its budget for charity.
- Sbn. Sebastian Crews moved to donate \$1,000 each to the Diocese of Alaska and the Diocese of Mexico. Fr. Martin Browne proposed an amendment to increase the donations to \$2,000 per diocese. Sbn. Sebastian accepted the amendment. The amended motion was seconded by Christopher Yanovich, and passed unanimously.
- Sbn. Sebastian Crews moved to donate \$500 to the Pennsylvania Orphan Care Alliance. The motion was seconded by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, and passed unanimously.
- Fr. Martin Browne spoke about the Legacy of Life Foundation, a pro-life organization in Bucks County that supports at-risk women during pregnancy and for the first three years after birth.<sup>5</sup> He remarked that if at some future point someone in the diocese has a house they are willing to donate for this purpose, DOEPA should consider forming a similar organization.
- His Eminence stated that DOEPA should support, and perhaps eventually form, a school that does not participate in gender-identity propaganda. At the least, we should consider donations to parents who send their children to a distant school for this reason.
- **Seminarian/mission support:**
  - Sbn. Sebastian Crews moved to give \$1,500 per semester to support Dn. Nathan Causson. The motion was seconded by Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, and passed unanimously.
  - As agreed at the previous council meeting (May 2022), DOEPA will also give \$1,500 per semester to Dn. John Black and Bill Rusk.
  - Fr. Timothy Hojnicky moved to give \$500/mo. directly to Fr. Leonid Schmidt. The motion was seconded by Fr. Martin Browne, and passed unanimously.
- **Other New Business:**

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<sup>2</sup> A multi-season TV series about the life of Christ. Information about the program and donation process is available at [watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen/pif](http://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen/pif).

<sup>3</sup> A pan-Orthodox fellowship promoting ecological stewardship. More information available at [www.orth-transfiguration.org](http://www.orth-transfiguration.org).

<sup>4</sup> [www.uuarc.org](http://www.uuarc.org)

<sup>5</sup> More information available at [www.legacyoflifefoundation.org](http://www.legacyoflifefoundation.org).

- Mark Linnehan proposed a resolution to have a '23/'24 winter teen retreat, and asked for this to be discussed during Old Business at the next meeting.
- There was a brief discussion of upcoming budget issues such as the camp subsidy. Fr. Martin Browne recommended continuing the subsidy.
- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and seconded by Daria Cortése. The motion passed unanimously.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Meet with St. Tikhon's camp administrators to discuss administrative and financial changes.
- Continue compiling list of background-checked substitute clergy.
- Continue discussions with clergy approaching retirement age to establish definite, mutually agreeable plans.
- \$2,000 donation to both the Diocese of Alaska and the Diocese of Mexico.
- \$500 donation to the Pennsylvania Orphan Care Alliance.
- \$1,500 donation per semester to seminarian Dn. Nathan Causson. Donations to Dn. John Black and Bill Rusk (also \$1,500 per semester) will continue.
- \$500 per month directly to Fr. Leonid Schmidt.
- \$500 donation to the Pennsylvania Orphan Care Alliance.
- Add discussion of a potential winter teen retreat to the agenda of the November council meeting.
- Continue discussion of upcoming budget items, including the camp subsidy.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 PM with the singing of "It is truly meet".**

**NEXT MEETING: November 15th, 10:00 AM**

### **Supplemental Email Activity**

On October 18th, 2022, His Eminence emailed the Council asking for a motion, second and a vote to donate \$1,000 to a discretionary fund for Metropolitan TIKHON, as requested by the Holy Synod. A motion was made by Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and seconded by Fr. Martin Browne. The motion passed.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Daria Cortése, Recording Secretary**