

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MINUTES
DIOCESE OF THE WEST
June 11, 2014

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin convened a regular meeting of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, with the singing of *O Heavenly King*.

Present: Archbishop Benjamin, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Archpriest Basil Rhodes, Igumen Daniel (Brum), Archpriest John Pierce, Archpriest Matthew Tate, Archpriest Anthony Karbo, Archpriest John Dresko, Archpriest Lawrence Margitich, Priest Damian Kuolt, Priest Andrew Cuneo, Deacon George Shumaik, Subdeacon Paul Pilipenko, Subdeacon Johann Morse, Dorothy Nowik, and Ivan Pouschine. Also present were Monk Barnabas (Day), Andrew Smith, and John Dellamonica.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - The previously-distributed minutes of the March 11, 2014 meeting of the Diocesan Council were received.

REPORT OF THE ARCHBISHOP – His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin greeted the members of the Diocesan Council with the joy of the Feast of Pentecost and acknowledged his gratitude for the gifts which God has bestowed upon the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of the West. He recalled image of the Body of Christ reflected upon by the Holy Apostle Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians, noting that each and every person is needed in order for the Body to be healthy and function for its appointed purpose. His Eminence noted the absence of Diocesan Treasurer, Mary Caetta, and requested that everyone keep Mary and her husband Jim in their prayers. The Archbishop recalled the two anniversaries he observes this year- the tenth anniversary of his episcopal consecration and his sixtieth birthday. He also noted that since the last meeting of the Diocesan Council he has visited fourteen diocesan parishes and two monasteries. He gratefully reported on the good operation of the central administration of the Church under the guidance of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, and with the assistance of the OCA Chancellor, Father John Jillions. His Eminence also reported that he has requested that the name of Igumen Daniel (Brum) be placed on the Holy Synod’s agenda for election to the episcopate as auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of the West. He recently participated in the consecration of Bishop David of Sitka and Alaska. This makes his service as Locum Tenens of the Diocese of Alaska no longer necessary. In the future he looks forward to returning to Alaska as a guest and, in fact, will do so when he participates in an “Orthodox” cruise to Alaska in September.

The Archbishop reported that he has had to address the unfortunate issue of the activity and arrest of Archimandrite Isidore (Brittain) who was, as is widely-known, arrested and charged with one hundred counts of child pornography. Going through this troubling process, he noted that he has observed that our policies, guidelines, and standards have shielded parish children and the diocese from such risk. His Eminence also reported that a spiritual court was convened yesterday and that the court has recommended that Archimandrite Isidore be deposed from the Holy Priesthood by action of the Holy Synod. Further, he called upon the members of the

Diocesan Council to remember Archimandrite Isidore in their prayers and to understand him as a person in need of God's mercy and healing. His Eminence also reported on the pending lawsuit against the Diocese of the West and Saint Innocent Parish, Tarzana, CA, relating to actions by a former choir director at that parish several years ago. The Diocese has been served, our insurance company is defending the Diocese, and we have been informed of the amount of insurance coverage we have for this incident. Several parish positions are in need of being filled, including Holy Virgin Cathedral, Los Angeles, and Nativity of the Holy Virgin, Menlo Park. Both of these parishes require bilingual clergy. His Eminence also stated that he will ordain Hierodeacon Innocent, Superior of Saint John Monastery, Manton, to the Holy Priesthood on the monastery's patronal feast, July 2. Lastly, His Eminence observed that funds have been raised from throughout the Diocese for the support of the Children's Hospice of Saint Petersburg and thanked everyone for their support of this and other diocesan charities. His Eminence closed his report by inviting questions and comments.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER – Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, was unable to be present. In her absence, Dorothy Nowik, member of the Diocesan Finance Committee presented the financial report. She noted that all had received the diocesan financial report through May 2014 and that everything is in good order. Igumen Daniel (Brum) read the report of the Diocesan Audit Committee noting that the internal audit of diocesan financial records of FY2013 took place at Saint Christina Church, Fremont, on May 5; conducting the audit were Igumen Daniel (Brum), Subdeacon Paul Pilipenko, and Maha Estephan, members of the Diocesan Audit Committee. Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, was also present to assist with the audit. Reviewed were diocesan financial records as well as the financial records of Synaxis of the Theotokos and Life Giving Spring Corporations. All was found to be in good order.

There was also discussion of the status of Saint Peter the Aleut Mission in Lake Havasu, AZ. Although the mission has been closed, there is still need to establish a board to oversee the mission's assets.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (Archbishop Benjamin/MacKinnon) "That Archbishop Benjamin, President; Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Secretary; Mary Caetta, Treasurer; and Archpriest Matthew Tate be appointed as the Board of the Saint Peter the Aleut Mission." The motion carried.

REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR - Around the Diocese – Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Diocesan Chancellor, led a discussion of the highlights of life and ministry within the Diocese of the West. He noted that: The Rocky Mountain Deanery has seen the establishment of three missions; these new communities are in Durango, Parker, and Colorado Springs. There is also a new group in Marysville/Yuba City, CA. The missions in Hemet and Bakersfield, CA, are "holding their own." The Project Mexico trip scheduled for July 15-21 and organized by Father Anthony Karbo will have approximately 180 participants, the largest such group ever. Archbishop Benjamin and several other clergy from the diocese will be in attendance and make presentations, including Father Basil Rhodes and Father Andrew Cuneo. In addition to the usual good work that will be accomplished at Project Mexico, the trip will focus on the youth of the Diocese and will emphasize developing their vocations in the Church early-on. Poulsbo is coming out of its recent difficult times with Father Damian Kuolt helping to bring healing and a

sense of stability to that mission community. The Ashland mission has bought property in a very good location. Saint Katherine Mission, Encinitas, CA, is doing very well and has just signed a five-year lease in an industrial space in order to accommodate the growth in membership. Bozeman is breaking ground for a multi-stage building project. The property for a future monastic community, to be a dependency of Saint John Monastery, has been received by the Diocese, and His Eminence will establish a board to prepare by-laws, etc. Priest Moses Hibbard, a new graduate of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, has been assigned to Billings. The Diocesan Finance Committee has proven to be an excellent addition to the work of diocesan administration. Saint John Monastery has undergone a gradual but sure process to a return to stability. In early April, Igumen Daniel (Brum) was tonsured at Saint John Monastery. Elevation of the Holy Cross Church, Sacramento, recently observed the twentieth anniversary of its meals/outreach program, providing an average of about 3,000 meals a year. This takes place every Tuesday morning and is run by the faithful of the parish. Father Ian and Matushka Nina recently celebrated their 40th Anniversary of Marriage - Many Years! Parish receivables are at the lowest level ever. Memory Eternal! to Mary Dellamonica, well-known and well-loved for her dedication to the Church throughout the years. Saint John of Damascus Church, Poway, CA, recently received a very sizeable donation—from a non-Orthodox man who simply liked to come and pray with the community. Father John Dresko will celebrate the 35th Anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood later this month. Many Years! Archbishop Benjamin will join the faithful of Saint Paul Church, Las Vegas, in honoring Father John and in celebrating the parish feastday.

His Eminence added that the Diocese of the West is very blessed in its clergy and dedicated lay people. The Diocese maintains a strong common vision and a unity of spirit and purpose. His Eminence also expressed his gratitude- and that of the Diocese- to Father Ian for his unflagging dedication and commitment to his work as chancellor.

OCCIF (ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND) – John Dellamonica was present to provide an update on OCCIF. He once again asked for the support of the Diocese and of the clergy in identifying persons who can assist with its work. At this time, in particular, there is need to identify a person with a background in securities law. A person from the Greek Archdiocese is working with the design of the website. Two new members were added to the Board: Linda Couchell and Deacon Dumitru Nita. There is still a need to have a CPA on the Board. With the assistance of Father Damian Kuolt, a survey to assess the needs of missions is being completed. It is also hoped that a survey will be prepared and distributed to parishes in September. It is also anticipated that OCCIF will be eligible to accept funds sometime within the next three months, once everything has been cleared and approved by the State of California.

STATUS OF PROPORTIONAL GIVING – Fathers Tate and Dresko presented “real” figures related to establishing proportional giving as the diocesan norm for supporting the works of the Diocese and of the OCA. A print-out spread sheet containing all pertinent numbers and information relative to diocesan parish and mission communities was distributed, explained, and discussed. This will be presented for approval by the Diocesan Assembly when it meets in October. It is planned to have this based on real income rather than on figures from the previous fiscal year.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (Pierce/Morse) “That the Diocesan Council accept the report as presented and authorize the distribution of the proposed rates and figures to parish priests, parish councils, and parish treasurers for review and discussion prior to the Diocesan Assembly for final review and action at the Assembly.” The motion carried.

SAINT JOHN MONASTERY, MANTON – Father Matthew Tate reviewed the status and nature of the loan to Saint John Monastery, an 8%, interest-only loan. This loan will be up for renewal on June 26, 2016. Other options to this loan continue to be investigated. An area for concern is that donations to the monastery were down significantly in 2013 (2012: \$208,000.00; 2013; \$121,000.00). A year-to-date financial report shows an increase in candle sales which seems to be offsetting the decrease in donations. Also, the number of guests has increased, providing additional income. With hopes for greater visibility within the Diocese, it is also anticipated that donations will increase. It should be noted that the Monastery also continues to pay down the loan made by the Diocese; the 70K loan has been paid down to 46K. As heard in His Eminence’s report, Father Innocent is presently the monastic superior and will be ordained to the Holy Priesthood in early July. The Monastery is recovering its stability after recent difficulties and a good spirit and atmosphere is prevalent. There are eight members of the monastic brotherhood, in addition to one novice and one postulant. Father Basil Rhodes noted that we desire to encourage and support monastic life of all monasteries within the Diocese of the West.

COMMUNICATIONS – Father John Dresko, Director of the Department of Communications, requested that clergy continue to send in information, announcements, etc. relating to parish life and events for posting on the diocesan website. As at the last Diocesan Council meeting, there was also discussion about the possibility of providing a bi-annual pdf. Format newsletter of diocesan events and news that could be downloaded locally and distributed to parishioners who do not use the internet.

2014 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY – The 2014 Diocesan Assembly will be held at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Phoenix, AZ, October 7-9, 2014. Junior clergy will gather prior to the Assembly for a meeting with His Eminence on the morning of October 7th. Igumen Daniel (Brum) reported that planning for the Assembly continues with the enthusiastic involvement of the parishioners. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon has accepted the Archbishop’s invitation and will be in attendance. Information relevant to assembly and hotel registration will be posted on the diocesan website.

OCA PENSION BOARD – Archpriest Matthew Tate reported on the status of the OCA Pension and the work of its board, which will meet in three weeks. He noted that the stock market has been good and that the pension investments are solid and stable. A further clarification will be made concerning the status of retired clergy receiving income (e.g. for serving as supply priests) from the OCA without compromising their participation in the plan.

SEMINARY VISITATIONS – His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin recently visited the two seminaries and commented on the positive nature of those visits.

DIOCESAN CHARITIES – Father Lawrence Russell was unable to be present for the meeting. However, it was noted that the post-Pentecost Stewards of the West appeal is scheduled to be sent out soon.

PARISH AND CLERGY SCREENING UPDATE – Andrew Smith, Administrative Assistant, reported that there is presently 100% compliance in submitted reports.

SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS – A meeting of the Synaxis Corporation took place yesterday. It was reported that there is a need to paint the back of the building; repairs are up to date; thermostat(s) have been replaced.

LIFE GIVING SPRING – Father John Dresko reported on the ongoing saga of LGS. The property was broken into on May 15. At that time, Father John was contacted by the Boulder City Police with a report of a break-in and vandalism. Although the property is still legally owned by “I Am Free.” The lawyer has been contacted and it is reported that “I Am Free” has no insurance on the property. It is anticipated that foreclosure on the property will be finalized by the end of June. Due to neglect by “I Am Free,” the property is in very bad condition. We will need to discuss the possibility of pursuing legal action against “I Am Free” as this seems to be a case of criminal negligence. However, at present the Diocese of the West is unable to do anything as the Diocese is not the owner of the property. One party has expressed an interest in the property- with full awareness of its present condition. Options will need to be explored.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL – **Father** John Dresko noted that there is presently nothing to report. The next meeting of the Metropolitan Council will take place September 23-25.

FORT ROSS PILGRIMAGE – The annual pilgrimage to Fort Ross will take place on Friday, July 4. Despite the cost of \$1,000.00 for use of the Fort, there is a general consensus that this historic event should continue.

OTHER- A discussion took place concerning the special needs and challenges of various parishes within the Diocese. A Deans Meeting will be held in San Francisco in July.

Father Ian MacKinnon noted that this is a significant year for the Diocese as it marks the Tenth Anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration of our Archpastor, His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, as well as his Sixtieth Birthday. The Diocesan Council wishes to express its congratulations to His Eminence as well as its gratitude for the guidance, leadership, care, and love he has shown for the Diocese throughout these many years. The members of the Diocesan Council will further express their gratitude at a celebratory dinner to be held at Harris Restaurant later today at 5:00 p.m. Many Years, Vladyka!

Next Diocesan Council Meeting – The next meeting of the Diocesan Council will take place on Tuesday, October 7, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Phoenix, AZ. The meeting will be followed by Vespers and dinner at a local restaurant. The 2014 Diocesan Assembly will be convened the following morning.

Adjournment - His Eminence adjourned the meeting of the Diocesan Council at 1:13 p.m.