

DIOCESE OF THE WEST

DIOCESAN COUNCIL MINUTES

June 6, 2013

Christ is Risen!

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin convened a meeting of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, California, at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 6, 2013, with the singing of the Paschal Troparion.

Present: Archbishop Benjamin, Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Archpriest Basil Rhodes, Archpriest Lawrence Russell, Archpriest John Pierce, Archpriest Matthew Tate, Archpriest David Brum, Archpriest Anthony Karbo, Archpriest John Dresko, Archpriest Lawrence Margitich, Archpriest Michael Anderson, Archpriest John Strickland, Priest Andrew Cuneo, Priest Damian Kuolt, Deacon Antony Dyl, Subdeacon Wesley Smith, Mary Caetta, Dorothy Nowik, and Ivan Pouschine. Also present were Monk Barnabas (Day) and Andrew Smith, Diocesan Administrative Assistant.

Previous Minutes- The minutes of the March 6, 2013 meeting of the Diocesan Council were received.

Report of the Archbishop – His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin reiterated his gratitude to God for the good work and commitment to the Church of the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Diocese of the West and reported on his extensive travels, including pastoral visits to parish and mission communities within the Diocese of the West, travels to the Diocese of Alaska in fulfillment of his duties as diocesan *Locum Tenens*, as well as travel to fulfill other responsibilities within the Orthodox Church in America. He further reported that two new mission are being established; one in Hilo, HI, and one in Durango, CO. Concerning monasteries within the Diocese, His Eminence reported that Monk Innocent has been appointed as the new superior of Saint John Monastery, Manton, CA. Also, Saint Barbara's Monastery continues its improvement work on its property and buildings. New priestly assignments include Priest Benjamin Huggins, Durango, CO; Priest David Morrison, Bozeman, MT; Priest John Peck, Billings, MT; Deacon Alexis Baldwin, Colorado Springs, CO; and Priest Andre Paez, Tempe, AZ. His Eminence also commented on concerns relating to financial or sexual misconduct and how these issues are addressed within the Diocese. The annual Fourth of July celebration at Fort Ross will be held this year, continuing a tradition that began in the 1920's. The Archbishop noted that the cost for this event is \$1,000.00 paid for the use of the fort chapel and facilities. His Eminence also reported on the ongoing life and work of the Holy Synod and gave an update on vacant dioceses within the OCA. In closing, His Eminence also expressed his gratitude to Archpriest Ian Mackinnon, Diocesan Chancellor, to the Diocesan Deans, to Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, and to Monk Barnabas (Day) and Andrew Smith for their assistance.

Report of the Treasurer – Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, reviewed the YTD 2013 Diocesan Budget (through May) and noted that there were no out of the ordinary transactions and that all is in good order. Budget reports are provided in a timely manner to all members of the Diocesan

Council and are also posted on the diocesan website (dowoca.org). She noted that only three parishes are in arrears of payment of their diocesan assessments, but this might be due to a change in treasurers as these parishes are normally up-to-date in their assessment payments.

The report of the Audit Committee was read by Archpriest David Brum, Audit Coordinator. The report noted that all was found in good order in the internal audit for FY2012. One of the recommendations of the Audit Committee included in its report is that an external review not be performed for FY2013; the usual internal audit will be performed, however.

Motion: It was moved and seconded (Tate/Margitich) "To receive the report of the audit committee for FY2012 and its recommendations." The motion carried.

Projects/Events of Note in the Diocese – Father Ian MacKinnon, Chancellor, led a discussion of the current projects and events of note in the Diocese, the "good stuff" that is happening within our diocese: Agia Sophia Coffee Shop and Bookstore in Colorado Springs, CO, is observing its seventh year of providing good coffee, good books, and good outreach; the recent subdeacons and deacons retreat/workshop was a success; the situation at St John Monastery, Manton, CA, is improving; a new mission in Durango, CO, has been established, as well as a new mission in Hilo, HI; Archpriest David Lowell will begin his sabbatical in Cambridge on September 1, 2013 and will be back serving in the diocese after one year; St Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV, recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary; newly ordained priests and deacons are returning from the seminaries to the diocese to begin their assignments; Saint Barbara Monastery has received its permits; and the Bright Week Dinner hosted by Archbishop Benjamin was a wonderful event.

Subdeacon Dimitri Solodow – His Eminence reported on the health of Subdeacon Dimitri Solodow.

Motion: It was moved and seconded (Archbishop Benjamin/Brum) to send greetings to Subdeacon Dimitri Solodow: "The Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West sends its greetings and best wishes to Subdeacon Dimitri Solodow with the assurance of its prayers for recovery of health and strength."

Finance Committee - Dorothy Nowik, member of the diocesan finance committee, reported that there is need for an adjustment in the current budget in order to provide for office equipment.

Motion: It was moved and second (Nowik/Rhodes) "That \$1,800.00 be transferred from excess funds to provide for the purchase of the needed office equipment." The motion carried.

Dorothy also noted that the budget for FY2014 is being prepared for presentation to the Diocesan Assembly in October and that all budget requests need to be submitted by August. The Diocesan Council will review the proposed budget at its next meeting, the evening before the opening of the Diocesan Assembly.

Continuing Clergy Education – As has been previously noted, the Holy Synod now requires twenty hours *per annum* of ongoing education for clergy (priests and deacons). His Eminence

reported that, the day prior to the October Diocesan Assembly (October 7), Archpriest Ian Pac-Urar, Director of the Department of Ongoing Education, will give a presentation to clergy on concerns relating to sexual misconduct and how to address it pastorally. This presentation will count toward the hours required by the decision of the Holy Synod. Discussion ensued. More information on this presentation will be forthcoming.

Saint John of San Francisco Monastery – Archpriest Matthew Tate led a brief discussion regarding the financial situation at Saint John Monastery and addressed some options concerning how to best address this. There will be further discussion at the next meeting of the Diocesan Council. His Eminence noted that, although now smaller in number, the health and wellbeing of the monastic brotherhood is steadily improving.

Communications - Archpriest John Dresko, Director of Diocesan Communications, noted that there is nothing new to report. As always noted, the diocesan website depends upon the submissions it receives from parish and mission communities.

2013 Diocesan Assembly – The 2013 Diocesan Assembly is being hosted at Saint Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, CA. Arrival for clergy participating in the Continuing Education for Clergy program will be on Monday, October 7, with the continuing education session with Father Ian Pac-Urar scheduled to begin at approximately 3:00 p.m., continuing for possibly five hours, and concluding the following day. Check-in for the Assembly will begin the next day (Tuesday) and the Diocesan Council will meet for a dinner meeting after Vespers. The Assembly will be convened the following day (Wednesday) and will adjourn at approximately noon on Thursday, October 10. More information, including reports submission and delegate registration will be forthcoming on the diocesan website. Hotel information will also be provided.

OCA Pension Board – Archpriest Matthew Tate presented a report on the status of the OCA Pension Plan. He observed that the Pension Board is currently exploring various options concerning the investment of pension funds. The choice of investments has traditionally been conventional, conservative, and based in stocks and bonds. Other options are currently being reviewed in order to provide for a greater return on invested funds and thus a possible greater return to those enrolled in the OCA Pension Plan.

Charities and Appeals – Archpriest Lawrence Russell noted that the last diocesan appeal was to provide assistance to Project Mexico and the next diocesan appeal will be for the support of The Children's Hospice of Saint Petersburg. The Archbishop is now a member of the Board of Directors of Project Mexico, celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. He also recently met with Priest Alexander Tkachenko, Director of the Children's Hospice.

Raphael House of Portland, OR – Archpriest Matthew Tate gave an update on the work of Raphael House in Portland, OR. He reported that it currently operates with a \$1.4 million annual budget. As with a majority of non-profits, Raphael House has seen a downward trend in donations due to the economic climate and is averaging a \$100,000.00 annual deficit. In spite of this, Raphael House remains the premier shelter for victims of domestic abuse in the Portland area.

Clergy Screening and Parish Compliance – It was reported that compliance for the screening of diocesan clergy is at 100%. It was noted that it also important to remember that, in addition to priests and deacons, all subdeacons and readers are also to be screened.

Diocesan Loan Program (Orthodox Christian Capital Investment Fund/OCCIF) – No report was given; it was noted that the work of this program is currently on hold. However, at the March meeting of the Diocesan Council it was reported that final touches are being made to the OCCIF website, final licensing is pending, and a capital campaign is being planned. It was then noted that OCCIF is not yet able to receive money from investors.

Life-Giving Spring – Mortgage interest payments are being received. The legal address is to be changed to the address of Saint Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV.

Metropolitan Council – Since there had not been a meeting of the Metropolitan Council since the last meeting of the Diocesan Council, there was nothing to report. Archbishop Benjamin has appointed Archpriest John Dresko to fill the clergy representative position previously held by Archpriest David Lowell. Father John will be eligible for election in his own right at the Diocesan Assembly.

Proportional Giving – Archpriests John Dresko and Matthew Tate led a discussion concerning the ongoing work of addressing the question of financing the work of the Diocese of the West as well as the manner of fulfilling our financial obligation to support the work of the Orthodox Church in America. The discussion centered on how to best incorporate proportional giving into all levels of church life, i.e., parish/mission, the diocese, and the OCA. An enthusiastic discussion took place, attempting to synthesize various understandings of and approaches to stewardship into a method that will be acceptable as well as beneficial to all concerned. Key to the discussion was the manner of determining designated gifts and how to prevent misuse of the system. Fathers Dresko and Tate listened to the concerns raised and will incorporate these into the presentation to be made at the Diocesan Assembly. It was noted that the consensus of the Diocesan Council will be needed before the presentation is to be made before the Diocesan Assembly. Therefore, a presentation will be made to the Diocesan Council at its next meeting, i.e. before the opening of the Diocesan Assembly.

Fort Ross Fourth of July Celebration – As noted in the report of the Archbishop, the annual celebration at Fort Ross will be held on July 4, 2013. The Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Next Diocesan Council Meeting - The next meeting of the Diocesan Council is scheduled for Monday, October 7, 2013, following Vespers prior to the convening of the annual Diocesan Assembly to be held at Saint Seraphim Church, Santa Rosa, October 8-10, 2013

Adjournment - His Eminence adjourned the meeting of the Diocesan Council at 2:25 p.m.