

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 17, 2008
Christ the Savior Church, San Francisco, CA

The meeting opened at 10:30 A.M. with the singing of “O Heavenly King...”.
“Memory Eternal” was intoned for the newly departed Archpriest Gregory Szyrnski.

Diocesan Council Members Present: Bishop BENJAMIN; Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Chancellor; Nadine Wood, Secretary; Abbot Jonah; Archpriests Anthony Karbo, Lawrence Margitich, and Eric Tosi; Priest John Strickland; Johann Morse, Dmitri Solodow, Dorothy Nowik, and Carole Shumaik.
Deans Present: Archpriests Joseph Hirsch, Bazyl Kalinowski, Basil Rhodes, Lawrence Russell and Matthew Tate.

Minutes of the October 1 and October 3, 2007 Meetings were accepted with correction.

Report of Bishop BENJAMIN:

His Grace reported the passing away of Archpriest Gregory Syrnski of W. Sacramento, CA. He also announced the retirement of Archpriest Vadim Pogrebniak of St. Spiridon Cathedral, Seattle, WA. Bishop Benjamin mentioned possible personnel changes. His Grace noted that a Russian speaking priest is needed for Holy Myrrhbearer’s in West Sacramento. Priest John Schroedel is serving the Kona, Hawaii Mission. Fr. John is on loan from the Diocese of the Midwest. His Grace also reported that Nicolas Carr was ordained to the Holy Deaconate in Santa Rosa, CA.

His Grace outlined the work of the Special Investigative Committee. As chairman of the SIC, its work consumes much of his time. His Grace read the charge given the Committee by the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan Council which was posted on the OCA Website. Dr. Dmitri Solodow of the DOW and member of the Diocesan Council is also a member of the SIC. It is the hope of the Committee that the investigation will be completed by the All American Council scheduled this year.

His Grace also spoke on the “current events” in the OCA: withholding of National Assessment by the Diocese of the Midwest and tonsure to Reader of convicted sex offender in the Diocese of Alaska. He noted that, although these events are not specifically problems of our diocese, they raise concern among the clergy and faithful of our diocese and are a cause of disunity within the Holy Synod. Some discussion followed.

Archpriest Joseph Hirsch requested His Grace to ask the Holy Synod to withdraw its recommendation for parishes to add the Central Administration as additional insureds on their policies. His Grace will ask Metropolitan HERMAN to have OCA attorneys provide a legal opinion to be revisited at the next Diocesan Council Meeting.

His Grace requested the deans to follow up with return of clergy personal data forms he requested of all the diocesan clergy.

The Clergy Retreat scheduled for May 20-22 at LGS has been cancelled due to the fact there will be a Mission Deanery Retreat, the All American Council and the Diocesan Assembly this year. The Diocesan Assembly will include the Retreat Topic “Confession”. The Annunciation Church of Milwaukie, OR will host the Diocesan Assembly this year.

His Grace informed the Council of his desire to have the Monastery in Calistoga, CA returned to the DOW. When Metropolitan THEODOSIUS was *Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of the West, the Monastery in Calistoga was made Stavropegial. After compiling a history of the monastery’s transfer to the

omophorion of the Primate, His Grace, will petition the Holy Synod to return the Monastery to the DOW. It was noted an investigation regarding legal ownership may be necessary and the Metropolitan Council consulted. Bishop Benjamin hoped the monastery might become a place where retired clergy and widowed matushki might live in retirement.

His Grace also reported:

- He continues to travel around the diocese
- Father Eugene Tarris' health continues to fail and that he has requested to be relieved of serving regularly. His Grace intends to give Fr. Eugene the Title of Pastor Emeritus
- Archpriest Vadim Pogrebniak will be attached to St. Spiridon's and given the title "Pastor Emeritus"
- Father Alexander Lisenko has been released from his duties at St. Barbara Monastery and is currently living at the St. John Monastery in Manton, CA
- Deacon Michael Pleafka suffered a heart attack recently but is recovering
- Deacon Mark Becker is having problems with his kidneys
- The relationship between the Romanian, Serbian, Greek & OCA bishops in the West continues to grow.

Charities & Appeals:

Raphael House has been designated this year's Diocesan Charity. Priest John Strickland will be responsible for providing posters on the internet for parishes to download and print. Archpriest Anthony Karbo has arranged a fund raiser for Raphael House with Colorado Coffee Merchants who will roast Ethiopian coffee for the diocese to sell with a profit of approximately \$5.00 per pound going to Raphael House. His Grace, gave each of the DOW Council members a pound bag of coffee.

Treasurer's Report:

Archpriest Ian MacKinnon reviewed the Financial Report Summary prepared by Mary Caetta as she was unable to be present at the meeting. It was unanimously agreed any additional funds received in January 2008 for victims of the California wild fires should be contributed to the Red Cross in San Diego for fire victims. Any questions regarding the Treasurer's Report should be brought up to Mary at the next DOW Council Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Metropolitan Council:

Archpriest Matthew Tate reported the OCA will be hiring an attorney to represent the OCA in a law suit Betty Kondratick as filed. The OCA Ethics Committee is serving as an *ad hoc* legal committee until the next Metropolitan Council meeting in May. The Kondratick law suit is specific to the house on Martin Drive which was purchased by the OCA for the Kondraticks. Unauthorized renovations were done to the house with money from Betty Kondratick. It was noted that the OCA is currently living within its means and that the cost of running the Central Administration was at one time greater than the cost of running all of the dioceses of the OCA put together.

Point Reyes:

MOTION: Dmitri Solodow moved the DOW Council authorize the sale of the Point Reyes property which may include the dismantling of the chapel and its reconstruction at one of the monasteries. The final terms of the sale to be approved by the next DOW Assembly. SECOND: Archpriest Eric Tosi. Discussion followed. It was noted that surrounding properties have recently sold for \$1.4 million. The property is currently worth between \$1.2 and \$1.6 million. **Approved.**

Bishop's Housing:

The Chancellor's Advisory Committee recommends not to purchase the Steiner St. property. It does, however, the need to locate property for a diocesan center/residence. Priest Thomas Alessandroni indicated that he will petition the Bishop for a release and transfer from the Synaxis of the Theotokos mission this summer. His Grace has indicated he will grant the petition. Priest John Takahashi and his family have agreed to move to 720 Duboce Avenue so that His Grace could move into the rectory of Holy Trinity Cathedral.

MOTION: Dmitri Solodow moved the Diocesan Council accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee not to purchase the Steiner St property. SECOND: Abbot Jonah.

Discussion followed. It is understood the diocese will cover the moving expenses for His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN and Priest John Takahashi. **Approved.**

Diocesan Communications:

Discussion of the need to have a new model for diocesan communication took place. The cost of the *Vision* was also discussed. Dmitri Solodow and Andre Paez will submit a proposal at the next Diocesan Council meeting.

Parish Screening Procedures/Timeline:

A letter of understanding and compliance will be provided to His Grace.

Life Giving Spring:

Archpriest Eric Tosi gave a brief report developments at LGS. New tenants are renting the small house. The number of retreats is up. The most serious development is Kathryn Short, the present director will e with us for less than a year and a replacement needs to be found soon. The Board of Equalization ruled in our favor on our tax exempt status, however, there is some question as to whether or not we owe back taxes.

NEW BUSINESS

Deanery Reports:

- Pacific Central Deanery: Archpriest Basil Rhodes reported Dn. Michael Plefka suffered a heart attack.
- Mission Deanery: Archpriest Matthew Tate reported he and Archpriest Stephen Soot will be meeting with parishioners next week to discuss assignment of a permanent priest. Holy Apostles, Portland, Oregon is currently remodeling their building for sale as condos. Proceeds from the sale will be applied to the purchase of new property in Vancouver. The Merced Mission has its property on the market. There are liens from contractors amounting to some \$200K. Holy Ascension Mission of Olympia, Washington received a planting grant. Bishop BENJAMIN was informed an OCA Albanian Mission was started some six miles from the already-existing DOW mission. His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN wrote a letter of protest to His Grace, Bishop NIKHON, copying the members of the Holy Synod. And His Grace, Bishop NIKHON has closed the mission.

- Rocky Mountain Deanery: Archpriest Joseph Hirsch reported his deanery is doing well. There were 57 participants at the Youth Retreat. Archpriest George Gray was the speaker. The Holy Theophany Church in Colorado Springs has plans to build a parish hall. Transfiguration Cathedral, Denver is in the second phase of their grant to restore the temple. The dean also reported the decline in Archpriest Eugene Tarris' health. Father Joseph has hired Fr. Eugene's son Michael as administrative assistant. All is well in Delta, Colorado. Herman's in Littleton is stable and is paying off their debt.
- San Francisco Russian Missionary District Deanery: Archpriest Bazyl Kalinowski reported that there is good news and bad news. San Diego and Menlo Park are doing well, as is Christ the Savior in San Francisco. Of course the bad news concerns the passing away of Fr. Gregory Syrynski and the need to find a replacement.

Next Diocesan Assembly:

The next DOW Assembly will be held in Milwaukee, Oregon October 7-9, 2008. The tentative schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, October 7:	Diocesan Council Meeting and registration
Wednesday, October 8:	Divine Liturgy Presentation on Confession Plenary Sessions
Thursday, October 9:	Plenary Sessions conclude Clergy Meetings Diocesan Council Meeting

All American Council, November 10-13, 2008:

The next AAC will be held in Pittsburg, PA.

Upcoming Retreats & Workshops:

The Deans' Meeting that was scheduled for May 8-9, 2008 has been moved to May 15-16 at LGS. Retreats for the Matushki should be regional and try to include the clergy wives of other jurisdictions.

Audit Committee Recommendations:

Tabled until the next meeting.

Procedures for Receiving New Clergy into the Diocese:

The Mission Board is discussing a proposal to create an intern program for seminarians coming to the Diocese of the West. The long-range vision is to provide some financial aid to make such a program possible. A request was made to allocate \$500 a month from out of the mission stipend budget starting this summer.

MOTION: Dmitri Solodow moved that beginning in June 2008, \$500 per month for a 1-year period be allocated for an intern program for a seminarian to be assigned in our diocese.

SECOND: Carol Shumaik. **Approved.**

The next meeting of the DOW Council is scheduled to be held on Thursday, April 3, 2008 at 10:30 a.m. at 2040 Anza Street.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine Wood,
Secretary