

**Diocesan Council Meeting
Diocese of the West
Tuesday, June 30, 2009
Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, California**

His Grace, the Right Reverend BENJAMIN, Bishop of San Francisco and the West, convened the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the West at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, California, at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 30, 2009. His Grace appointed Archpriest David Brum as acting secretary.

Diocesan Council Members Present: Bishop BENJAMIN; Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, Chancellor; Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer; Archpriest David Brum, acting secretary; Archpriest Lawrence Margitich; Priest Michael Anderson; Archpriest Anthony Karbo; Priest John Strickland; Subdeacon Johann Morse; Subdeacon Paul Pilipenko; Subdeacon Dmitri Solodow. **Deans Present:** Archpriest Bazyl Kalinowski; Archpriest Lawrence Russell; and Archpriest Matthew Tate. **Guests:** Archpriest David Lowell and Barry Migyanko.

Minutes of the March 10, 2009 Meeting were accepted with corrections, noting the correct spelling of the names of Peter Schwalbenberg and Subdeacon Paul Pilipenko, noting that Eric Worth is not *Priest* Eric, and that Priests Michael Spainhoward and Yousuf Rassam have been assigned, not attached to their parishes.

Report of His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN

Bishop BENJAMIN noted that his schedule has recently included several parish visitations as well as his commitment to his duties as Locum tenens of the Diocese of Alaska. His Grace also reported that Archimandrite Gerasim of Saint Herman Monastery, Platina, CA, will be released to the Orthodox Church in America and will participate in a program of special studies at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, with plans for a parish assignment in Alaska and the hope that he will eventually be considered for the office of Bishop of Alaska.

The chapel at Saint John's Monastery, Manton, has been completed and was consecrated by Metropolitan JONAH and Bishop BENJAMIN on June 24. The chapel at the monastery in Santa Paula is in the pre-construction phase. \$40,000.00 in diocesan funds have been allotted to assist with this project. Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga, faces financial issues and is still in the process of "sorting out" its administration.

On June 20, 2009, Bishop BENJAMIN participated in the consecration and installation of Bishop MELCHISEDEK as ruling hierarch of the Diocese of Pittsburg and Western Pennsylvania.

His Grace noted that a 1.3 million dollar offer had been made for the Life-Giving Spring property in Boulder City; earnest money has been deposited and the 30-day period of due diligence has begun. There are questions relating to zoning, however, other potential buyers have been identified and have expressed interest in the property. Monies from

this sale will be used to pay outstanding commitments to the Home of Mercy, the Diocese, and Life Giving Spring employees.

His Grace commented on the ongoing work of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council. The OCA Statute is being reviewed and the present structure of the All American Council is also currently under review. Discussion is also taking place concerning the composition of the Metropolitan Council.

His Grace also reported that Fort Ross is presently slated to be closed due to financial constraints within the State of California, that there is need for a diocesan clergy handbook, and that the Diocesan Assembly will include an opportunity for a meeting of the heads of the monasteries within the Diocese.

Report of the Treasurer

Mary Caetta, Diocesan Treasurer, presented highlights of the previously-distributed Treasurer's Report. She noted that the internal audit was completed. In this audit, there was a question relating to appropriate procedures being in place in case of any unforeseen need to hand over the responsibilities of the Diocesan Treasurer. The audit also noted that the proceeds from the sale of the Point Reyes property were properly recorded.

Mary reported concerning parishes in arrears of Fair Share and DPA. In light of the fact that the Diocese is responsible for payment of the "Fair Share assessment" to the OCA, whether or these funds have been received from the parishes, the following motion was made:

Motion by Dmitri Solodow
Second by Archpriest Lawrence Margitich

"That parishes in arrears of their payment of the Fair Share assessment and the DPA be allowed to pay and be credited for their Fair Share assessment before they pay their DPA, if they are unable to pay both." Motion passed.

His Grace noted that Saint Innocent Church, Tarzana, is still to be billed for its outstanding 2005 assessment. He will speak with the priest concerning this matter.

In reviewing the budget to date, it was noted that the cost of the telephone and internet services at the Diocesan Center have exceeded the anticipated cost reflected in the budget:

Motion by Johann Morse
Second by Dmitri Solodow

"That an additional \$700.00 be allotted within the diocesan budget for telephone expenses at the Diocesan Center." Motion passed.

Discussion also took place concerning the overrun on expenses related to the diocesan website and the fact that *The Orthodox Vision* is no longer in production:

Motion by Dmitri Solodow
Second by Mary Caetta

"That the \$3,000.00 allotted within the Diocesan Budget for *The Orthodox Vision* be utilized for the ongoing development and maintenance of the Diocesan website." Motion passed.

Old Business

Synaxis of the Theotokos Parish Corporation

His Grace noted that the by-laws of the Synaxis Corporation remain to be revised to bring the corporation under the administration of the Diocese, as there is no need to maintain a separate corporation. The property will likely be accepted as diocesan property under the administration of the Diocese. There was also discussion of the need to form a diocesan property committee to evaluate and oversee the administration and care of diocesan properties. Special thanks was offered to Johann Morse for his attention to and care of the Synaxis property and its maintenance.

Diocesan Communications

His Grace has previously appointed Subdeacon Dmitri Solodow as Chairman of the diocesan Department of Communications. Dmitri noted that *The Orthodox Vision* faces ongoing difficulties, mostly relating to the lack of submissions and a general lack of interest. As noted above in the motion relating to the diocesan website, it has been proposed to stop publication of *The Orthodox Vision* and to focus time, talents, and funds on the diocesan website. Development of the website and improvements continue. It was noted that if anyone has any ideas for the website or wishes to submit photos or reports, they should contact Dmitri Solodow. As has been discussed on several previous occasions, relating to *The Orthodox Vision*, members of the clergy are crucial links in assuring that parish life and activities are regularly reported to the Department of Communications.

His Grace expressed his gratitude to Dmitri and to Barry Migyanko for their attention to website development and design.

Diocesan Assembly

His Grace reported that preparation for the 2009 Annual Diocesan Assembly continues. The Assembly schedule and other information will be distributed in the near future.

Strategic Planning

Dmitri Solodow reported that the *Strategic Planning* process initiated by the Holy Synod continues. He noted that discussion of Church vision and goals must include input from parish discussions. Meetings will be held regularly and will include input from the Holy Synod. Reports of these meetings will be returned to the dioceses for further discussion.

Diocesan Charities

It was reported that disbursements from the charity fund as budgeted are completed depleted. His Grace directed that a diocesan appeal be made for the benefit of Martha and Mary House.

Motion by Johann Morse
Second by Priest Michael Anderson

"That \$2,000.00 from the general expenditure fund be allotted to the Diocesan Charity Fund." Motion passed.

Raphael House

Archpriest David Lowell, Director of Raphael House, San Francisco, was present to report on its work. He reported that the Raphael House By-laws have been amended and that the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of the West now appoints two members to the Board of Directors. Father David further reported that one board member was terminated for a conflict of interest. He also highlighted the need and goal of having local Orthodox parishes more involved in the life and mission of Raphael House.

Parish Screening Procedures

His Grace highlighted the need for ongoing screening process for church workers, as new volunteers or church employees are added. The Diocese will also now proceed to the screening of clergy.

Diocesan Loan Program

Bishop BENJAMIN reported that a meeting of the Diocesan Loan Committee was recently held and that there is need to identify someone to serve as CFO. The loan process is still to be determined. The Loan Program will function as a separate diocesan corporation whose Officers and Board will be appointed by the Bishop. The Program will be able to accept deposits from any person or institution; however, loans will be made only to diocesan institutions.

Metropolitan Council

The report on the Metropolitan Council took place in executive session.

Diocesan Attorney

His Grace commented on the need to identify and retain a diocesan attorney. A name has been suggested and His Grace will follow up.

Summer Camps

Priest Michael Anderson reported that Saint Eugene's Camp will be held July 5-11 and that His Grace plans to attend.

New Business

Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga

Archpriest Ian MacKinnon noted the need place on record the June 2, 2009 vote taken by email concerning the \$5,000.00 diocesan loan to Holy Assumption Monastery.

Motion by Bishop Benjamin
Second by Dmitri Solodow

"That a loan in the amount of \$5,000.00 be made to Holy Assumption Monastery in order to pay overdue property taxes and that Mary Caetta be authorized to oversee this payment." Motion passed.

His Grace reported on the status of Holy Assumption Monastery and provided a brief history and background information on the manner in which the Monastery has been administered during the past few years. He noted that several unknowns still need to be addressed, including the question of by-laws. The official documents of transfer from the OCA still need to be obtained; His Grace will obtain this from Metropolitan JONAH. In order to assist with the process of bringing the Monastery back into line with diocesan needs and expectations, His Grace appointed a Board of Trustees. Including His Grace as President, the new board consists of Archpriest Ian MacKinnon, vice president; Archpriest Michael Regan, treasurer; Archpriest Lawrence Margitich, secretary; and Igumen Sergious (Gherken). The board will also discuss the monastery's future as an institution of the Diocese of the West.

His Grace reported that, subsequent to the vote taken on June 2 via email, Mary Caetta discovered that an additional \$12,824.64 in property taxes is overdue and that the property will be auctioned if this is not paid immediately.

Motion by Johann Morse
Second by Dmitri Solodow

"That the Diocese of the West grant a loan in the amount of \$12,824.64 to Holy Assumption in order to pay overdue property taxes. This payment will be overseen by Mary Caetta." Motion passed.

It was noted that the process of bringing the Monastery into alignment with standard administrative procedures will continue and that His Grace will meet with the Board of Trustees on July 19.

Seminary Visitations

Archpriest Matthew Tate reported on visits made to Saint Tikhon's Seminary and Saint Vladimir's Seminary. He noted the good spirit which exists among the seminarians and that several seminarians from outside the Diocese of the West have expressed interested in the possibility of serving here.

Mission Board

Father Matthew Tate, Dean of the Mission Deanery, reported that the Mission Board recently met and that this meeting provided good insights and good vision concerning

missions within the Orthodox Church in America and, more specifically, within the Diocese of the West. Father Jonathan Ivanoff (Shirley, New York), provides church development seminars that are helpful. His seminars may become part of the ongoing development of diocesan missions and parishes as well.

Deanery Reports

His Grace invited the Deans who were present to provide brief reports on life within the Deaneries. Archpriest Bazyl Kalinowski, Russian Deanery, Archpriest Lawrence Russell, Pacific Southwest Deanery; and Archpriest Matthew Tate, Mission Deanery presented updates on the life of the parishes/missions and clergy within their respective deaneries. It was noted that life is generally stable and that, while some parishes face special challenges, generally life within the parishes in the Diocese of the West is healthy and stable.

Saint Mary Magdalene Mission, Merced

Archpriest Matthew Tate, Dean of the Mission Deanery, reported on the status of the Merced Mission and noted that an attorney is to draw upon the pertinent documents relating to the mission's property.

Motion by Mary Caetta
Second by Archpriest Lawrence Margitich

"That Archpriest Matthew Tate and Archpriest David Lowell be authorized to sign the loan agreement and other pertinent documents relating to Saint Mary Magdalene Mission, Merced, California." Motion passed.

Father Matthew and Father Michael Anderson reported on the positive developments and the new property at Saint Christina Mission, Fremont, CA.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Diocesan Council will be convened the evening prior to the Annual Diocesan Assembly in Santa Rosa, California, on Tuesday, October 13, 2009. After the Diocesan Assembly, the regular quarterly meeting will be held on December 15, 2009.

His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN adjourned this meeting of the Diocesan Council at 2:00 p.m. with the singing of "It is Truly Meet."