

Office of Communications

Orthodox Church in America Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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The following report on the Diocesan Council Meeting of 17 May 2010 is provided thanks to input from Father Alexey Karlgut (Dean, New York State Deanery). It is neither a verbatim account nor an official minutes of the proceedings; it is intended for the sharing of information in the most effective and timely manner available at this time. We sincerely thank Father Karlgut for his efforts toward this end.

The meeting of the **Diocesan Council of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey** was held on **Monday, 17 May 2010** at Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church, Clifton NJ. His Grace, The Right Reverend +Michael, Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, presided.

His Grace formally opened the meeting and thanked the members of the Diocesan Council for their continual dedication and work. As his first official act as ruling hierarch of the diocese, His Grace made the following appointments:

Diocesan Chancellor	Archpriest Joseph Lickwar
Dean, New York State Deanery	Archpriest Alexey Karlgut
Dean, New Jersey Deanery	Archpriest Samuel Kedala
Dean, New York City Deanery	Archpriest Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk

Following the direction of the holy Apostle Paul, that "*all things be done decently and in good order*" in the Church, and consistent with the Statute of The Orthodox Church in America which prescribes the appointment of a Spiritual Court in each diocese, His Grace re-constituted a **Spiritual Court** for the Diocese of New York and New Jersey with the following appointments to court membership:

Clergy	Diocesan Chancellor (Archpriest Joseph Lickwar) Dean, New York State Deanery (Archpriest Alexey Karlgut) Dean, New Jersey Deanery (Archpriest Samuel Kedala) Dean, New York City Deanery (Archpriest Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk)
Laity	Mr. Scott Anderson Mr. George Elia

In consonance with the Church's teaching on conciliarity (handed down to us long ago by Saint Ignatius of Antioch), Bishop +Michael established a **Diocesan Council of Presbyters** to advise him on matters pertaining to the life, growth, and development of the Diocese. The following clergy (comprised of the Chancellor, the Deans, two priests from each deanery, and two retired priests; for an initial term of one year renewable at that time) were appointed to the Diocesan Council of Presbyters:

Archpriest Joseph Lickwar
Archpriest Alexey Karlgut
Archpriest Samuel Kedala
Archpriest Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk

Archpriest Ken James Stavrevsky (NYS Deanery)
Archpriest Igor Burdikoff (NYS Deanery)
Igumen Christopher Calin (NYC Deanery)
Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff (NYC Deanery)
Archpriest Gary Breton (NJ Deanery)
Priest Steven Evanina (NJ Deanery)
Archpriest John Nehrebecki (Retired)
Archpriest Sergius Kuharsky (Retired)

In a concerted effort to facilitate, improve, and expand communications at all diocesan levels (bishop, deaneries, clergy, and parishes), His Grace established the position of the **Diocesan Director of Communications** and appointed Archpriest Ken James Stavrevsky to serve in this role.

In addition, His Grace extended his blessing for currently serving elected members of the Diocesan Council to continue their service until the elections of a new council at the next Diocesan Assembly, on 9 November 2010, at the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection, New York NY

Bishop +Michael reiterated his vision for the diocese and its ministries as [*paraphrased*]:

Living parishes in a territorial area, led by their own priest, serving under the omophorion and blessing of the Diocesan Bishop; together constituting the local Church in all its completeness in that area. This “local Church” conducts its life by executing the mission tasks expected of Christ's Holy Church. As such, it brings salvation in Jesus Christ to all who embrace its teaching and sacramental life, fulfilling the Great Commission within its territorial area.

Bishops, entrusted by the Apostles by virtue of their consecration, bear the greatest degree of responsibility for the whole Church. A Diocesan Bishop is accountable for the people in his diocese. This is an holistic responsibility, caring for every aspect of life in communities (parishes) and for the lives of the members (clergy and lay) of his diocese. This is not a license for unlimited power and control; rather, it is a call to profound accountability, the maintenance of unity in mind, the expression of love, and the sharing of a sacred vision throughout the diocese. It means that a Bishop must *know* and *love* his priests, deacons, and all people ... actively building and nurturing consensus with them as a body of unity gathered together in love having Christ as its head.

There are common ministries that must exist in the diocese: charitable outreach, evangelism, missions, youth work, religious and theological education, and many others. These ministries must be actively developed within the parishes and the diocese to address the local and unique needs of its members, and of the community at large. The needs of parishes are specific, in many ways unique, and vary greatly throughout the expanse of the diocese -- from inner city neighborhoods to rural settings in small communities. These needs can be best addressed on the local level of the parish and the diocese: it requires all of us, in our respective areas of responsibility and within the God-given talents bestowed upon us, working together

in the diocese to do the work of the Church -- in a manner that is as conciliar and inclusive as possible.

Ministries, charitable outreach, and witness in our parishes must be “alive.” Parishes must be strengthened because it is through the life of the parish that one grows in Christ, loves Christ, and is united with brothers and sisters in a common service of making the Great Commission a reality in their communities, workplaces, and families. It is in the parish where the work of the Church is manifested in a very concrete and personal way: with the participation of all its members, with recognition that all actions must be foremost grounded in the love of Jesus Christ and undertaken in accordance with His will, and unto His glory alone.

Minutes of the previous Council meeting were reviewed and approved for accuracy regarding issues discussed and actions taken. The Chancellor stated that some issues discussed during the meetings of the Diocesan Council are confidential in nature and must not be discussed outside the confines of the Council. In the future, if there are issues which should not be discussed in a public forum, the Council will go into executive session.

The Chancellor presented his report, primarily reviewing the preliminary reports of all activities that took place during the consecration of Bishop +Michael. A detailed report with all financials will be ready for the next Diocesan Council meeting. It was the unanimous opinion of the Council that all of the consecration celebrations were truly inspiring, outstanding, and well-organized. The Chancellor thanked all those involved in the many aspects of preparation for and conduct of the consecration. His Grace reiterated that all the celebrations were not about him but, rather (and appropriately), about the Diocese.

Clergy transfers, assignments, vacancies in several parishes, and other administrative issues were brought up by the Chancellor and discussed by the Council.

The Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. Lawrence Tosi, Esq., distributed and presented the treasurer's report including a comprehensive balance sheet. He expressed his concern regarding several parishes that are continually delinquent in fulfilling assessment requirements. It was the expressed feeling of the Council members that financially delinquent parishes must begin submitting their assessments and achieve an “up to date” status now that we have a new Bishop (who, himself, sets an example of Christian stewardship). It was the hope of the Council that any residual grievances or misgivings of the past would be put to rest; that every parish would truly desire to be a full and an active participant in the exciting future we begin, anew, guided by a truly Christian vision as offered by His Grace: one of faith, love, and service.

The situation at Holy Cross Monastery (Niagara Falls NY) was discussed, focusing on the Council's desire to remove any liability -- past and future -- from the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, and The Orthodox Church in America in connection with both the monastery and Archimandrite Nicholas (Iuhos). Mr. Lawrence Tosi reported to the Council that the attorneys have conducted title and deed searches at the request of the Diocese, and inform us that neither the Diocese, nor The Orthodox Church in America, owns the property. Therefore, we are advised by legal counsel that any litigation would be at extreme financial cost and with unpredictable results. After review, questions, and

discussion, the Chancellor made the following **motion**: *“In an attempt to remove any future liability from the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The Orthodox Church in America, the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey authorizes Mr. Lawrence Tosi, Esq. to contact the attorney of Archimandrite Nicholas (Iuhos), offering to sell the church building and property of the Holy Cross Monastery for a nominal fee to be later determined by the Diocesan Council.”* Archpriest Alexey Karlgut seconded the motion. The motion **carried unanimously**.

His Grace informed the Council that the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection in New York City was asked and has agreed to host the **Diocesan Assembly on Tuesday, 9 November 2010**. Information on the Diocesan Assembly, reports, accommodations, registration forms for clergy and lay delegates, and schedules for the services and plenary sessions will be forthcoming over the summer months.

His Grace again appealed to the parishes, clergy and laity of the Diocese to give full and generous support to **Saint Andrew's Camp**, in Jewell NY, as an important resource for our diocese in ministering to youth. He will be visiting and residing at Saint Andrew's Camp often this summer between parish visitations, services, and administrative meetings.

In other matters, the Council reviewed plans for moving Bishop +Michael and the diocesan offices to the chancery in Bronxville NY. His Beatitude, Metropolitan +Jonah, vacated the residence in Bronxville at the end of March. The residence is in very good condition and a comprehensive clean-up, with attention to small maintenance issues, will be addressed in the immediate future. The process of moving His Grace will occur in June, after he fulfills and concludes his responsibilities as the Dean of Saint Tikhon's Seminary.

His Grace gave a short presentation on the **Episcopal Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs of North and Central America** gathering in New York (25-28 May). While there was some apprehension, Bishop +Michael is hopeful the assembly might produce some positive results in cooperation among the hierarchs of various jurisdictions.

Archpriest Alexis Vinogradov (diocesan representative to the Metropolitan Council and member of the Strategic Planning Committee for the Orthodox Church in America) discussed recent meetings of these bodies. He reassured the members of the Diocesan Council that while communications from the **Strategic Planning Committee** have been nearly non-existent in the past, this was due to the committee members' efforts to build a functional consensus on very difficult issues, such as: conciliarity, accountability, and the hierarchical nature of the Church. He assured everyone that communications will be coming very soon, and that all of the dioceses and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America will have an opportunity to read, discern, and discuss the documents. A venue for input from everyone will be provided by the committee.

His Grace informed the Council that he was tasked by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America [OCA] with reviewing the current mode and methods of financial support (assessments) in the OCA, and developing a more scriptural approach of stewardship as it relates to financial resources provided from parishes to the diocese, and from the diocese to the OCA. He solicited any ideas and input from members of the Council, and extends his request for input and ideas to all the clergy and laity of the diocese. In a short discussion that followed, it became evident that stewardship first and foremost calls us to become the disciples of Christ. We become his disciples by

