

## **DRAFT MINUTES – PENDING APPROVAL**

**Assembly of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey  
Right Reverend MICHAEL  
Bishop of New York  
Orthodox Church in America  
Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, New York  
November 12, 2013**

### **Opening Prayer**

The Assembly opened, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and a meal, with the singing of “O Heavenly King...” at 12:30 PM EST.

His Grace, Bishop Michael, made opening remarks welcoming the delegates and observers. He thanked the parish of Holy Trinity Church for hosting the Assembly.

### **Appointments**

His Grace then made the following appointments:

Vice Chairs (one from the clergy, one from the laity): Archpriest Joseph Lickwar (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Jersey City, NJ); Mr. Scott Anderson (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY)  
Secretariat (one from the clergy and two from the laity): Fr. David Cowan (Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY); Archdeacon Michael Suvak (Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY); Mr. James Kornafel (SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ)  
Credentials Monitor: Archpriest Stephen Evanina (Holy Assumption Church, Clifton, NJ)  
Tellers: Fr. Igor Kseniuk (St. John the Baptist Church, Passaic, NJ); Fr. Leonid Schmidt (St. Gregory Palamas Church, Glen Gardner, NJ)

### **Address of Diocesan Hierarchy**

His Grace gave his opening address. The text is available online at [http://nynjoca.org/files/2013/2013%20Assembly/Bishop\\_Address\\_DiocesanAssembly\\_2013.pdf](http://nynjoca.org/files/2013/2013%20Assembly/Bishop_Address_DiocesanAssembly_2013.pdf)

### **Report of the Credentials Monitor**

1 Bishop  
49 Clergy Delegates  
34 Lay Delegates  
11 Observers  
Total Attendance: 95

### **Old Business**

#### **Approval of Minutes, 2012 Diocesan Assembly**

Father Joseph Lickwar entertained a motion to approve the Minutes from the 2012 Diocesan Assembly. The motion was made by Mrs. Janet VanDuyn (St. John the Baptist Church, Rochester, NY, Diocesan Lay Representative to the Metropolitan Council) and seconded by Archpriest Samuel Kedala (Holy Spirit Church, Wantage, NJ). The motion passed.

### **First Invited Presentation – “Protecting Our Children And Our Churches”**

#### **Ms. Cindy Davis, Coordinator, ORSMA (Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations), Orthodox Church in America**

Father Lickwar introduced Ms. Davis, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the recent updates to the *Policies, Standards, and Procedures of the OCA on Sexual Misconduct* (“PSP”). She highlighted the consequent requirements on the part of parishes to ensure compliance and maximize protection of our children and our churches against even the engendering of an environment that would leave us vulnerable to allegations of sexual misconduct. A copy of the handout distributed by Ms. Davis is on file in the Diocesan Chancery. Bishop Michael emphasized that each person from the clergy and laity who works with children in church life, needs to submit to a Level 1 criminal background check. [See the Resolution passed to this effect at the end of this Assembly.]

### **Report of the Treasurer – Matushka Mary Breton**

Father Lickwar asked Treasurer Matushka Mary Breton to come to the podium and entertain questions concerning the Treasurer’s Report, which had been distributed to participants in advance. Matushka Breton asked if there were questions. There were none. She noted that every year, each parish needs to send its annual financial reports to the Diocesan Chancery together with its Annual Meeting minutes and its request for the Bishop’s blessing of its Parish Council membership.

### **Report of the Diocesan Auditors –**

#### **Igumen Joseph (Hoffman), David Maliniak and William Rentz**

Father Hoffman reported that the Auditors’ Committee had audited the books and found everything in order. He asked if there were questions from the Assembly; there were none.

Father Lickwar entertained a motion to accept the reports of the Treasurer and Auditors. A motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report was made by Archpriest Daniel Skvir (Holy Transfiguration Chapel, Princeton, NJ) and seconded by Archpriest Joseph Frawley (St. Martin of Tours Chapel, West Point, NY). The motion was approved. A motion to accept the Auditors’ Report was made by Fr. Sophrony Royer (SS. Peter and Paul Church, Bayonne, NJ) and seconded by Archpriest David Vernak (Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ). The motion passed.

### **Second Invited Presentation – “Update on OCF and College Ministry in the Diocese”**

#### **Fr. John Diamantis, Chair, Department of College Ministry**

Father Diamantis related the various activities undertaken by the Diocesan Department of College Ministry and urged parish clergy and lay leaders to make every effort to both connect their graduating parish children to churches near their new colleges, and reach out to Orthodox (and prospective Orthodox) college students who are attending schools near our churches. Bishop Michael emphatically endorsed Fr. John’s remarks, noting the challenges to traditional Christian faith, morals, and practice which bombard college students.

### **Presentation and Approval of 2014 Budget**

Father Lickwar turned over the chairmanship of the Assembly to Lay Vice-Chair Scott Anderson. Mr. Anderson moved to the Approval of the 2014 Budget. The Proposed 2014 Budget was handed out, along with Year-To-Date financials from January-October 2014. Mr. Anderson asked Matushka Breton to offer any pertinent comments on the Proposed Budget. Matushka Breton stated that because the census is dropping, we expect an approximately \$30,000 drop in assessment income. To balance the 2014 budget we will need to raise \$124,000 in DDB donations during

2014, up from \$100,000 in DDB donations budgeted in 2013. The 2014 budget contains no increases to salaries or stipends, not even a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

Mr. Anderson asked for any questions concerning the proposed Budget. Father Sophrony Royer asked why the amount for Seminarian Aid has increased. Bishop Michael responded that we anticipate four Diocesan men entering seminary as full-time students in 2014, up from two in 2013.

Mr. Anderson entertained a motion to approve the 2014 Budget. The motion was made by Fr. Samuel Kedala and seconded by Fr. Sophrony Royer. The motion passed.

### **New Business**

#### **Election of Deans**

Ballots for the election of Deans for each of the three Deaneries had been collected earlier. Bishop Michael announced the results:

- New York State Deanery: Fr. Alexey Karlgut (re-elected)
- New York City Deanery: Fr. Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk (re-elected)
- New Jersey Deanery: Fr. Gary Breton
- Assistant Dean, New Jersey Deanery (new position): Fr. David Vernak

#### **Election of Clergy and Lay Members to Diocesan Council**

Mr. Anderson requested nominations for Deanery Clergy representatives to the Diocesan Council. All of these seats are up for election or re-election; and all current members are eligible for re-election. Mr. Anderson noted that the nominating party must be from the same deanery as the nominee. In each case, the nominee accepted the nomination and no additional competing nominations were made from the floor.

#### **Clergy Representatives**

- New York State Deanery: Father Alexey Karlgut, the Dean, nominated **Fr. Ken James Stavrevsky**, the current representative. Father Stavrevsky was re-elected.
- New York City Deanery: Father Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk, the Dean, reported that Fr. Daniel Degyansky, the current representative, does not wish to continue on the Diocesan Council. Father Krawczuk nominated **Archpriest Joseph Woodill** (St. Nicholas Church, Woodside, NY). Father Woodill was elected.
- New Jersey Deanery: Father Samuel Kedala nominated **Fr. Stephen Evanina**, the current representative. Father Evanina was re-elected.

#### **Lay Representatives**

- New York State Deanery: Bishop Michael announced that **Scott Anderson**, who currently holds the position, is the only nominee thus far. Mr. Anderson was re-elected.
- New York City Deanery: Archdeacon Michael Suvak nominated **Mr. George Elia**, who currently holds the position. Mr. Elia was re-elected.
- New Jersey Deanery: Father Kedala nominated **Matushka Mary Breton**, who currently holds the position and serves as Treasurer. Matushka Breton was re-elected.

### **Election of Diocesan Auditors**

Mr. Anderson noted that the only nominations received so far are for Igumen Joseph Hoffman, Mr. David Maliniak, and Mr. William Rentz, the current Auditors. No other nominations were made from the floor. The three current Auditors were re-elected.

### **Election of Diocesan Clergy and Lay Representatives to the Metropolitan Council**

The Lay Representative seat held by Jan VanDuyn was not open for election this year; her term continues. The Clergy Representative seat was open for election. Archpriest John Shimchick (Church of the Holy Cross, Medford, NJ), the current clergy representative, was nominated by Matushka Mary Breton. Father Alexey Karlgut was nominated by Fr. Leonid Schmidt. A secret ballot was taken. Fr. Shimchick was elected.

### **Third Invited Presentation: “Making A Parish Flourish in the Northeast”**

#### **Rev. Timothy Hojnicky, Chair, Revitalization Committee, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania**

Father Hojnicky gave a PowerPoint presentation sharing the successes and challenges of growing the mission parish of Holy Apostles, Mechanicsburg, PA, where he is Rector.

### **Reports from the Deaneries**

Questions were sought on the Deans’ Reports, which had been distributed beforehand. No questions were posed.

### **Report from Representatives to the Metropolitan Council**

The written Report of the Representatives to the Metropolitan Council had been distributed previously. Mrs. VanDuyn related that the Central Church staff had asked the Council members to spread the message that there are many holy relics of the American Saints housed at the Chancery in Syosset, available for giving out to parishes which request them. Mr. Anderson entertained questions for Diocesan Representatives to the Metropolitan Council, Fr. John Shimchick and Janet VanDuyn. None were posed.

### **Updated Report of the Credentials Monitor**

1 Hierarchy  
53 Clergy Delegates  
35 Lay Delegates  
11 Observers  
Total Attendance: 100

### **Reports of Diocesan Officers**

The Chairpersons of the following Diocesan Departments, having previously submitted their reports, made themselves available to field any questions. None were posed.

- Office of Communications – Archpriest Ken James Stavrevsky
- Diocesan Publications / Jacob’s Well – Archpriest John Shimchick
- Commission on Liturgical Music – Archpriest Daniel Skvir, Matushka Doreen Bartholomew and Ms. Carol Wetmore
- Commission on Mission and Evangelism – Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff
- Missions – Archpriest Alexey Karlgut
- Department of Youth Ministry – Priest Jason Vansuch and Priest James Worthington

- Department of College Ministry – Priest John Diamantis
- Department of Religious Education – Matushka Andrea Diamantis

Mr. Anderson entertained a motion to accept all the reports of the Diocesan officers, Commissions, and Departments. Archpriest Gary Joseph Breton (Church of the Annunciation, Brick, NJ) made the motion; Fr. John Bohush (attached, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY) seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **Fourth Invited Presentation:**

**“Update on the Building of the New Church, and Thank You!”**

**Ms. Stacey Gleeson, Lay Coordinator, Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission, Rocky Hill / Princeton, New Jersey**

A video was presented by Ms. Gleeson; Archpriest John Cassar, the Rector of the Mission; and Mr. Russell Komline, the Mission Treasurer; depicting the considerable progress made during 2013 on the building of a permanent church for the Mother of God Mission.

#### **Other New Business**

##### **Resolution Concerning Background Checks**

Father Lickwar made a motion for the passage of the following Resolution:

“BE IT RESOLVED, that every parish in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey should perform a Level One background check for all individuals in the parish who work with children; this check will be held in confidentiality by the Rector of the parish and the Parish Council President; and should be renewed every three years.”

Father Karlgut seconded the motion. Mr. Anderson entertained discussion, and discussion ensued. Bishop Michael explained that he supports the motion because, even though the Holy Synod and Central Church Administration have not yet published a policy like this, one will certainly be forthcoming. In the interim, the Diocese can demonstrate that our parishes are doing due diligence to protect our children and communities. Addressing the priests, His Grace stated that if they want to recommend anyone to be tonsured a Reader, ordained a Subdeacon, or as a candidate for the Diaconate, Diaconal Formation Program, or to seminary, then the Diocese has procured a questionnaire which they must complete. The candidate must meet with the Bishop, and a background check must take place. For deacons and priests (whether to be ordained or transferred into the Diocese), psychological testing is necessary.

Mr. Anderson called for a vote. The motion passed.

##### **Charity Project: Bethany School for Girls, Jerusalem, Palestine**

Bishop Michael spoke about the charity initiative he wishes to undertake throughout the Diocese, to provide financial aid to the Bethany School for Girls in Bethany, Jerusalem, Palestine. Matushka Mary Breton moved that the Diocesan Assembly support Bishop Michael’s effort to provide assistance to the Bethany School. Archpriest Paul Shafran (Retired) seconded the motion. Mr. Anderson entertained questions. Archpriest Ilya Gotlinsky (Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton, NY) commented on the historical background and tenuous political and financial

situation of the school. Archdeacon Michael Suvak suggested a collection for the School be taken in parishes on Palm Sunday, 2014. Bishop Michael welcomed the notion of continuing the effort past the Advent and Nativity 2013 season, into 2014. The motion as worded by Matushka Breton passed.

**Video Presentation: “2013 – Diocesan Year in Review”**

The video had been shown earlier, during the meal following the Divine Liturgy. His Grace thanked Fr. Ken James Stavrevsky, Communications Director for the Diocese, for creating it.

Bishop Michael thanked his Chancellor and Deans, with special thanks to former Dean of the New Jersey Deanery, Fr. Samuel Kedala and congratulations to the newly elected Dean and Assistant Dean of New Jersey, Fr. Gary Breton and Fr. David Vernak. His Grace thanked Matushka Mary Breton for her work as Diocesan Treasurer and Mrs. Stephanie Burk (Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ) who assists with Diocesan bookkeeping. He thanked the Chairs of the Diocesan Commissions and Departments and all of the Diocesan priests, all of them with unique gifts. He commended all the organizations which serve within the parishes. He thanked his Subdeacons and drivers, Mark Federoff and Nilus Klingel, and driver Bill Bolinsky. He thanked Fr. David Cowan, his personal secretary.

**Diocesan Council Oath of Office Administered**

Bishop Michael assembled the newly elected and re-elected Diocesan Council at the Ambon. He prayed over them and administered the Oath of Office, swearing them in for their term of service.

**“Memory Eternal”**

Bishop Michael intoned and all sang “Memory Eternal” for Archpriest Archpriest Daniel Pavelchak, Archpriest Aaron Archer, and Deacon John Protopapas, members and former members of the clergy of the Diocese who had reposed in the Lord since the last Diocesan Assembly.

**Adjournment**

Father Lickwar made a motion to adjourn the Assembly. Father Stephen Evanina seconded the motion. The motion was passed. The 2013 Diocesan Assembly was adjourned with the singing of “It Is Truly Meet,” at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. David Cowan, Clergy Secretary