

MINUTES OF THE 41st ANNUAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION

41st Annual Diocesan Convention Working Session Meeting, 16 July, 2016

PREAMBLE

As determined at the 40th Diocesan Convention held at Saint Thomas Orthodox Church in Fairlawn, OH on 17-19 July 2015, this 41st Diocesan Convention of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia was duly scheduled to be held at Saint Sophia Eastern Orthodox Church in Des Plaines, IL. Notices of the Convention were communicated to all Diocesan Parishes, and delegates from these parishes are listed on the Credential Letters that are available in the Diocesan office. A quorum was duly noted. Various issues came to the several committees (whose individual reports are attached herein) and to the convention floor between the dates of 15 July and 17 July 2016. Many motions were duly made. The resolutions of the Diocesan Mixed Council for 2016 and passed by them are set forth below.

I. OPENING PRAYER

The day opened with a MolebenTe-Deum service held at Saint Sophia Eastern Orthodox Church at 7:30AM. The service was led by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH and His Grace Bishop DANIL, assisted by Diocesan clergy, and responses were sung by the delegates and observers of the Convention.

II. OPENING OF MEETING SESSION

Following breakfast, the 41st Annual Convention of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A., Canada and Australia business meeting session was opened by His Eminence the Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH at 9:00 AM CDT.

His Eminence began with a welcome to the convention and a statement opening the proceedings, asking all to congratulate Fr. Tzonkov and all parishioners of St. Sophia for their growth and beautification of their temple. He encouraged all to focus on growth of the Church inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. We must show people how faith has changed our lives, living the Orthodox faith, letting that faith shape our lives. He asked us to be true sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, and to follow our Lord.

In accordance with Diocesan Bylaws, Article VIII Section 1, His Eminence proclaimed the convention to be in session. Also in accordance with Diocesan Bylaws, Article VIII Section 5, all resolutions and

decisions of this Convention shall become effective after the blessing and approval of the Metropolitan.

III. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

After declaring the convention to be open, His Eminence nominated as Chairpersons V. Rev. Father Grouiu Tzonkov, V. Rev. Father Stevan Bauman (Joy of All Who Sorrow) to chair the convention and V. Rev. Fr. Basil Rusen to serve as secretary. The convention approved the nominations unanimously.

Father Bauman assumed the chair, and announced that only those present who had been selected as voting delegates by their parishes were eligible to move or second motions or to vote.

IV. PATRIARCHAL GREETING

Father Petar Totev/Diocesan Cathedral read the Patriarchal Address from His Holiness Patriarch NEOFIT in Bulgarian. The address was then read in English by Father Philip Tolbert/Santa Rosa. The letter of greeting was entered by acclamation.

V. HOST PARISH WELCOME

Fr. Grouiu Tzonkov welcomed all hierarchs, clergy and delegates to the 41st Annual Convention.

VII. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Father Bauman presented the agenda for the day. Fr. Bauman added a report before New Business. He asked for a motion to include a vote on the new bylaws into the topic of New Business. Evelina Darazhanska from St. George/Orlando moved to include the bylaws amendments for vote. Fr. Dn. Michael Walker/Joy of All Who Sorrow, seconded. Father Bauman called the issue, and there were 25 yea, 11 nay. Mary Drippe/Joy moved, Deanie Joseph seconded to accept the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES/40th ANNUAL CONVENTION

The chair asked for a motion to waive the reading of the minutes from the previous convention and to accept them as printed. Fr. Protodn. Michael Walker/Joy of all Who Sorrow, seconded by Fr. Peter Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration moved to accept. The motion passed unanimously. The minutes are contained in the Attachments for reference.

IX. STATE OF DIOCESE ADDRESS

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH read his "State of the Diocese" address, which is attached. The address ended with a standing ovation

and “Na mnogaia leta, Vladiko!” The address was entered into the proceedings by acclamation.

X. REPORTS

X.1 FINANCIAL/TRUSTEES AUDIT AND BUDGET REPORT

Dr. Pumpalov presented the report, which is shown in the Attachments.

Dr. Pumpalov reviewed the Balance, P&L, and financial sheets for the year ending December 31, 2015. Dr. Pumpalov then presented the P/L sheet for 2015. Dr. Pumpalov asked if there were questions from the floor.

Fr. Philip Tolbert clarified that the BOYA account, which is listed in Santa Rosa, is in fact BOYA and not Santa Rosa. Dr. Pumpalov stated that it would be changed for the next report.

Mary Drippe asked why there is no line item for ‘health’ for His Grace. Dr. Pumpalov stated that since His Eminence has Medicare, the expense listed for His Eminence in fact covers His Grace. This too will change in next year’s report.

Protodeacon Michael Walker/Joy of All Who Sorrow, corrected the number for the convention to 40th, not 34th.

Fr. Peter Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration asked what the expense to the Antiochians was for. His Grace stated that it was for a collection for the Antiochian Patriarchate in response to their appeal for donations. Income was received by the Diocese in 2014, but the Patriarchate did not cash the check until 2015.. He also asked a question related to “Traveler’s Insurance”, and what that charge represents. “Travelers” is simply the name of the insurance company.

Dr. Pumpalov presented the proposed budget for 2017. He highlighted the increases in dues and salaries. He stated that every two years there would be a 4% increase in both. Dr. Pumpalov stated that there is a Seminarian Fund with a balance of a little more than \$3400.00.

Fr. Patrick Tishel/Holy Resurrection asked why the real estate tax in New York is so inexpensive. His Eminence stated that since the cathedral and the residences of clergy are tax exempt, and since one tenant is handicapped, the city does not collect tax on these portions of the property. The Diocese pays taxes only on rental units that generate income.

Fr. Protodeacon Michael Walker/Joy of All Who Sorrow asked about the IRA for Fr. Petar. Dr. Pumpalov stated that the \$ 1300 should be \$ 1030.

Louis Dimitroff/St. Stephen's asked how dues for parishes are calculated. Dr. Pumpalov stated that it's \$10 per member plus \$500.

X.2 PARISH PRIEST REPORTS

The Chair called for the Parish Priests' Reports. Those presenting were limited to three minute reports.

- Saint Clement/Dearborn given George Rochette
- St. Stephen/Indianapolis was given by Fr. Dimitar Angelov
- St. Thomas/Fairlawn report was given by Fr. Dn. James Waltenberger
- Sts. Cyril & Methody/Toronto was given by Fr. Valeri Choumarov
- Holy Trinity/Madison given by Fr. Ivan Malinov
- Joy of All Who Sorrow/Indianapolis given by Fr. John Miller
- Holy Dormition/Santa Rosa given by Fr. Michael Oyer
- Holy Transfiguration/East Syracuse given by Fr. Philip McCafferty
- Holy Trinity/Toronto, given by Nick Stephanov
- Christ the Savior/Nashville given by Fr. Jerome Sanderson
- Saint Innocent/Roanoke given by Fr. Michael Furry
- Saint Sophia/Des Plaines given by Fr. Grouiu Tzonkov
- Saint Cyril and Methody/Melbourne given by Fr. Petar Totev for Fr. Alexander Popov
- Saint Herman/Hudson given by Fr. Basil Rusen
- Saint Ivan Rilsky/Montreal given by Ivan Gekoff with Fr. Dimitar Shumov
- Saint Dimitar/Brampton given by Fr. Milan Radulovich
- Holy Ascension/Canada given by Fr. Milan Radulovich
- All Saints Mission/Buffalo given by Fr. Milan Radulovich for Fr. Milovan Gerasimovic
- Holy Ghost/Sterling Heights given by Archimandrite Gregory Valentine
- Saint Maximos Skete/Palmyra given by Fr. Stevan Bauman for Fr. Igumen Mefodii
- St. George/Toronto, given by William George
- Holy Transfiguration/Huntsville Ontario given by His Grace Bishop Daniil for Fr. Boris Krieger
- Saint George/Los Angeles given by Miriana Blaskova
- St. Zlatka/Irvine given by Miriana Blaskova
- Saint George/Orlando given by Deacon Atanas Megerov
- Saint John of Rila/Niagara Falls given by Maria Petrova
- Saint Nicholas/Hollywood FL given by Fr. Todor Dimitrov
- Holy Resurrection Mission given by Father Gregory Owen

- St. Moses Community/ Indiana State Prison given by Fr. Gregory Owen
- St. Nicholas/Atlanta given by Proleta Gotseva-Veleva
- Sts. Kiril and Methody Cathedral/New York given by Fr. Petar Totev
- Holy Resurrection/Allston multimedia presentation on St. Herman School by Fr. Patrick Tishel
- St. John the Baptist Monastery given by Fr. Patrick Tishel

X.3 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Popadia's and Deaconessa's Conference Report given by Popadia Junia Tolbert
- Fr. Philip Tolbert gave the BOYA report
- Saints Mary and Martha Sisterhood Report given by Popadia Susan Furry
- President's, Combined Meeting, and Bylaws Report – Father Stevan Bauman gave a verbal report

X.4 RESOLUTIONS

- Father Bauman presented the full list of the Resolutions of the Convention

Deanie Joseph/St. Stephen Indianapolis moved to accept all the reports, seconded by Fr. Protodeacon Michael Walker. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Father Bauman asked for a motion to amend the bylaws according to the presentation made at the Combined Meeting last night.

Father Michael Furry/St. Innocent moved to accept the amendments to the bylaws as submitted, thanking the commission for their work, and encouraging them to work out the remaining details over the coming year. Seconded by Fr. Gregory Owen/Holy Resurrection Mission.

Fr. Dimitar/St. Stephen asked how we can accept but ask the commission to keep working. Fr. Michael suggested we accept the current work as the starting point, taking the coming year to incorporate other concerns expressed at this convention. Mark Angelov/St. Stephen expressed concern that the process is open ended, with no information as to which parts would be changed, or when the changes would be prepared.

Father Philip McCafferty expressed the concern that the motion is unclear.

Fr. Philip Tolbert suggested that perhaps the motion be recalled. Fr. Bauman suggested that the existing motion be discussed and voted on.

Popadia Susan Furry asked how many sections are involved. Fr. Bauman stated them to be Articles III, IV and VII.

Father Bauman asked how many are willing to stop discussion and vote on the motion as presented. Those in favor of stopping discussion and voting were 33. Those opposed were 12.

Fr. Bauman noted that to amend the bylaws, a 2/3 majority of the delegates at the convention is required. With 57 delegates present, 38 would be required to amend. Those voting YES (to accept the motion) were 35. 22 were opposed, so the motion to amend did not pass.

Father Bauman called for a new motion. James Kelley/Holy Resurrection Boston made a motion to accept the amendments as proposed and task the commission to work with the parishes to present amendments next year, seconded by Fr. Peter Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration. Mark Angelov/St. Stephen stated that “we really don’t agree with the proposal in its entirety, nor bring about articles because every article is touched.” William George/Toronto said that he feels uncomfortable before going back to the parishes to have discussion with them. Margret Stefanoff/Holy Trinity Toronto agrees, says that her people are “very angry” over some of the proposals made, this is too much of a rush. Fr. David Skopp/Holy Dormition stated that the question, “What’s the rush?” needs to be answered. And he stated that there is in fact an emergency.

Nik Stefanoff/Holy Trinity, Toronto spoke saying that the text can be ‘tweaked’ to make it more tolerable. He spoke of Article VII Section 12 related to the Metropolitan’s authority to approve decisions related to property.

David Lewis spoke saying that the bylaws relationship between church and Diocese is only one aspect of the issue. But the parish bylaws are another part of the problem, for there have been instances where local bylaws are at odds with those of the Diocese. In his view the amendments are not ready as shown, and we need to get them right before we approve anything.

Popadia Junia Tolbert asked if these bylaws must be approved at a civil level. Fr. Bauman stated that they do not.

Fr. Protodeacon Michael Walker asked to vote on the current motion, asking that it be defeated, and that the commission be asked to address the “current concerns.”

Popadia Mary Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration stated that we should vote against the motion for now, that communities send their concerns and opinions over the next year.

Mary Drippe called for a vote. Father Bauman asked how many wanted to call the vote now. Those in favor were 40, so the vote would be called. Those in favor of the current motion were 32. Thirty eight are needed to amend. Those opposed were 23. This motion was also defeated.

Fr. Jerome Sanderson suggested that David Lewis and Nik Stefanoff together make suggestions to feed into the revision of a new set of bylaws.

Lou Dimitroff/St. Stephen Indy asked who is currently on the commission.

His Grace stated the makeup of the commission, and that it will need to be changed due to several resignations from it. He stated that the document as it exists is needed, that it is necessary, that it is a step forward. He would like better definition from the convention, a more specific mandate.

Fr. Peter Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration moved that the commission be congratulated, that they be tasked to work with priests and parish boards to iron out the various issues by the next convention.

Seconded by Fr. Jerome Sanderson/Christ the Savior. Fr. Bauman called for discussion. Ena Kutriansky/Holy Trinity Madison, stated that there is a major misunderstanding of what we’re doing. Ignorance of the law doesn’t mean that there is no law. His Eminence has the authority we’re discussing. The churches are private property up to a point. If you don’t like this, you don’t like being part of the Orthodox Church.

Popadia Maria Petrova/Niagra Falls asked how can we do anything without His Eminence’s blessing?

Deanie Joseph stated that ownership of property is according to the deed.

Fr. Michael Furry stated that most of what is being aired is about property. He asked His Grace, based on his understanding, are there other parts that COULD be passed if we left off issues of property.

Popadia Mary Bunitsky/Holy Transfiguration stated that this goes beyond the property issue. It includes dispute resolution and appeal processes.

Popadia Anna Sanderson/Nashville asked if there is a possibility that the sides involved can have a referendum within the coming year so that this can be worked out before the end of the next year. Current bylaws forbid this.

Lou Dimitroff/St. Stephen stated that it would be good to attach due dates.

Alexander Karadjov/Sts. Cyril & Methody Toronto said that each church should vote paragraph by paragraph on the proposal, and submit their results back to the committee.

Ben Rinehart/St. Herman offered an amendment to the motion to create a group to deal with the revisions comprised of one representative from each parish willing to submit such a person, and, to avoid issues of people not getting documents, to modify the motion to state that the first draft of the group be submitted by 31Dec16 with final version being distributed no later than 90 days before the next convention. A second was requested for the amendment. His Grace stated that simple rules make for better working. The current bylaws have provisions for the 90 day transmission. He asked that things not be made more complicated. There was no second for the motion to amend the current motion. It failed for lack of a second.

Father Bauman asked for a vote on the current motion. Those in favor were 47. Those opposed were too few. This motion passed.

His Eminence asked that the last four words of the previous motion be removed. Perhaps the commission won't be ready by the next convention.

Mark Angelov/St. Stephen made a motion to remove the last four words. George Rochette/St. Clement seconded. Fr. Bauman asked if there was discussion. Those for the motion were 45. It passed, and the motion was modified.

2. Vangel Angelov/St. Cyril & Methody Toronto moved, seconded by Fr. Antonie Poposki/St. Clement Dearborn to accept the budget as presented. The motion passed.
3. Fr. Bauman asked where the convention should be held next year. Boston and Madison have both spoken. Madison asked for them to be awarded the convention since it will be there 110th anniversary. The convention is awarded to Madison.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mary Drippe moved to adjourn, seconded by Deanie Joseph, and it passed unanimously.

His Eminence thanked Fr. Bauman for chairing the convention.

The meeting ended at 4:20PM.

Submitted in humility by:

Father Basil Rusen
Reader David Lewis

Attachments:

1. Information Package, 41st Diocesan Convention, including:
 - a. Content
 - b. Opening Message
 - c. Agenda for the 40th Diocesan Convention
 - d. Patriarchal Encyclical
 - e. 40th Annual Convention Minutes
 - f. State of the Diocese Address
 - g. Diocesan Dues and Budget
 - h. Resolutions of the 40th Diocesan Convention
- Annual Financial Report
Parish Reports
Combined Meeting Notes
Credential Letters