

2013 Diocesan Assembly
Diocese of the South
St Justin Martyr Orthodox Church
Jacksonville, FL

First Plenary Session – Wednesday July 31, 2013

1. The first plenary session of the 2013 Diocesan Assembly began with the singing of “O Heavenly King” at 1:09 p at St Justin Martyr Orthodox Church, Jacksonville, FL, on Wednesday July 31, 2013.
2. His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon, delivered his opening remarks, which can be viewed on the DOS Website.
3. Fr. Ernesto Rios motioned to accept the minutes from the 2012 Diocesan Assembly as presented; Fr. Peter Smith seconded this motion. Judge Lanier pointed out that the date was not on the minutes; a friendly amendment was suggested to add the date. It was accepted and passed unanimously.

The credentials committee reported that 44 clergy, 32 lay delegates, and 13 observers were present.

4. Chancellor’s Report. Fr. Marcus Burch opened his report by thanking the deans for their work, Archbishop Nikon for being an anchor for the diocese, and Milos for his growth programs. Though many good things are happening, the Episcopal Search Committee has been slow and somewhat frustrating. After the initial interviews, and forwarding names of candidates to be vetted, the synod recommended one of the candidates, Archimandrite Gerasim, have more experience in the DOS. In light of that recommendation, Fr. Gerasim will be the Rector of St Seraphim Cathedral in Dallas. As we move forward in preaching the Gospel we need good deans, we need to grow priests by assigning them to parishes w/ financial assistance to grow. We need to grow spiritually and in numbers. He concluded by thanking all of the delegates for their work in the DOS, and reiterated that our community is our greatest strength.

5. Treasurer’s Reports. Milos Konjevich began his report by reiterating that our Tithe, Managed Debt, and Internship programs are strong, and we are doing fine. He spent much time explaining the “Sources and Uses of Funds Statement” showing how the DOS has stabilized financially since we began relying on tithes from the parish as our source of income. For the past 6 years our cash flow has been positive every year except 2010. Our DOS Savings Account and Managed Debt Programs have given parishes an edge in building new facilities, and these programs will be stable as long as we collect 60% of what needs to be paid. Currently we have been collecting around 70%.

Fr. John Maxwell asked if our low tithe number at this point in the year should be a red flag? Milos explained that there was an artificial surplus in tithe at this point

last year due to an event at a parish. We are running behind by about 6%, however the 4th quarter is traditionally our strongest.

Fr. John Anderson (St Seraphim) asked how the MDP helps parishes get funding. Milos explained that many banks were willing to offer a bit more principal if the DOS backed a parish.

Fr. Joseph Car asked if the DOS concurred with Milos' assessment. Fr. Marcus said that would be addressed in the assembly while discussing agenda item 9.

Judge Lanier motioned that the 2014 budget be accepted, and asked for discussion.

Fr. Joseph Lucas asked about two allotments received for assembly expenses that were not on the assembly line of the budget. It was pointed out that they were listed under line item II since they were expenses not required to host an assembly, and could be cut if funds were tight.

Randy Homyk asked if an audit had been conducted since the last assembly, Milos replied that one had not been conducted.

Fr. Paul Yerger asked what unencumbered payroll was, Milos replied that they were uncommitted funds.

Mat Terri Smith asked why we were allotting less for utilities when average costs were going up. Milos said that the new number reflected the last year's actual expenses.

Fr. Peter Smith seconded the motion to accept the budget.

Fr. John Cox asked if we could increase the funding for the DOS website to make improvements. Milos said we just need to spend more and more will be allotted next year.

The question was called, and there was no opposition to the budget.

There was a break from 3:04 to 3:35

6. Reports

- a. Deaneries – There were no questions for the deans, though many like Fr. Thomas Moore's spreadsheet to give an overview of the deanery.
- b. Monastic Institutions – Mother Thecla expressed their sorrow in losing Mother Lyubov, but noted that they are constructing their new facility with no debt. She also reminded the assembly of the clergy wives retreat which will be September 26 – 29.

c. Metropolitan Council – Judge Lanier and Fr. Gleb McFatter shared that the draft minutes for the spring session of the Metropolitan Council would serve as their report, but that they did have a few notes to add.

- for the first time the legal committee had a written report
- a committee had been established to preserve the OCA archives
- council decided to move the 15th All American Council to 2015 in light of the expenses and work required to call a special council to elect a Metropolitan.
- this MC meeting was the most calm and cooperative in several years

Fr. Philip Reese asked if there was some record of relics that had been and were being distributed through out the OCA. Abp Nikon said he would bring it up at the next synod meeting.

8. Diocesan By-Laws. Due to the time left in this session, it was agreed to move ahead to item 8 on the agenda and look at the proposed Diocesan By-Laws.

Fr. Dimitri Cozby introduced the By-Laws by explaining that they are internal guidance that explains how the Parishes of the DOS interact with the Orthodox Church in America. The set proposed simply codify what the DOS has been doing in recent years. They are not meant to trap a bishop in procedure, but are intended to be a foundation that can be changed. Judge Lanier pointed out how every corporation must have a definition of its purpose and define how it will interact with others, and these By-Laws answer that question. He pointed out how By-Laws could have aided in a quicker and more peaceful resolution to the 1997 problems in George.

Fr. Dimitri moved to adapt the By-Laws and proposed two friendly amendments.

- that Article IV, Sect 3 read “compile, preserve, and publish”
- that Article VI, Sections 1 and 2 be reversed and renumbered.

Fr. Ernesto Rios seconded the motion to accept the By-Laws as amended.

Fr. Michael Z asked why the Assembly did not elect the treasurer and secretary. Fr. Dimitri replied that this is not how things have been done, which is why the By-Laws reflect this.

Fr. Dn Steven Kroll mentioned that civil law required those positions. Fr. Dimitri replied that this was true, but we could elect a committee to fill these roles or rename them so long as the core functions were completed.

Fr. Ernesto asked how these By-Laws would affect the incorporation of individual parishes. It was stated that this would still be done in accordance with state law.

Fr. John Cox asked if the flow of Article I, Sect 3, was logical. Fr. Dimitri noted that it was a exact paste from the OCA Statutes.

Fr. John Anderson (St Seraphim) asked why Article I, Sect 5i provided no room for discussion as to the proposed candidates. It was noted that there is generally discussion in each deanery before the names are presented to the Assembly.

Fr. Theodore Pisarchuk asked if Article V, Sect 2, could provide for the nomination of a dean instead of an election. This cannot be the case at this time because the OCA Statutes are clear on this and the DOS By-Laws must be obedient to the OCA Statutes.

Fr. Justin Frederick mentioned it might be difficult to amend the By-Laws according to Article 9, and that it doesn't seem that there are many dangers to not having By-Laws. Judge Lanier pointed out that not having them is simply not completing everything necessary to be a legal corporation.

Fr. Justin Frederick then motioned to table the By-Laws until we had a ruling hierarch. This was seconded by Maureen Jury.

Fr. Ernesto pointed out that they By-Laws are important to protect ourselves in the corporate world.

Fr. Basil Zebrun asked what Archbishop Nikon's opinion was. His Eminence explained that all of this other dioceses had By-Laws, and that they are necessary.

Maureen Jury reiterated that it was difficult to change the By-Laws in accordance with Article IX, Section 2.

Fr. Stephen Freeman gave a heartfelt talk about the pressure he saw Abp Dmitri under with the 1997 lawsuits, and stated that he believed Abp Dmitri would have like to have By-Laws.

Fr. Paul moved the previous questions, Fr. Gerasim seconded, and the motion to table was defeated.

Judge Lanier called the original motion which passed with 2 in opposition.

Fr. Marcus asked the members to stay for Vespers and the Akathist to the Mother of God, the Healer of Cancer, for Silas Hays. He reminded the assembly that we would reconvene at 9 am tomorrow. Judge Lanier moved to adjourn.

The second plenary session was called to order at 9:38am, August 1st, at the Quality Suites Orca Room, and opened with the singing of "O Heavenly King."

The credentials committee reported that 44 clergy, 27 lay delegates, and 10 observers were present.

9. Other Business. Mr. Noel Busch gave a concrete explanation of the Managed Debt Program and how it should interact with a local parish. He used the new building project at St Athanasius Church in Nicholasville, KY, as an example. He expressed gratitude to Milos for this “genius” program, and for the documents provided that speak to bankers. Noel then articulated 4 recommendations to further strengthen the program including

- An institutional memory – we need to create guidelines to help clergy and faithful understand the program.
- Conduct a transactional review and a limited audit.
 - This began with a balance sheet review that 35% of the parishes did not respond to.
- Look into the possibility of getting “Key Man” insurance on Milos.
- Identify an understudy.

Fr. Gleb McFatter addressed the assembly in regards to audit preparation. He clarified that the goal is to get an external audit, but first we need to do an internal audit, which began with the Balance Sheet Confirmation that several parishes have yet to complete. We also need to establish files for each parish/person with savings at the DOS, and parishes in the Managed Debt Program. Once the files are established we can get an external review so we know what we will need to do for an audit.

Fr. John Maxwell asked what a external review would cost, Fr. Gleb thought it would run about \$1200.00

7. Elections. The following people were nominated for audit committee.

Fr. Daniel Hickman nominated Mr. Rudy Ruedelhuber

Fr. John Anderson nominated Fr David Bozeman

Fr. Justin Patterson nominated Mr. Christopher Naughton

Fr. Ernesto Rios motioned that the nominees be elected, Fr. Dimitri Cozby seconded, the motion was carried.

The following were nominated for Diocesan Council

Deanery	Primary	Secondary
Appalachian	Mr. Burt Walther	Michael
Atlanta	Ms. Barbara Massoudi	
Carolinas	Subdn Dennis Poole	Mr. Willard Brown
Dallas	Mat. Elizabeth Perdomo	Mr. Steven Baines
Orlando	Mr. Noel Busch	Mr. Rudy Ruedelhuber
Miami	Mr. Gary Popovich	Mr. Peter Economies

10. Upcoming Meetings.

The upcoming Pastoral Conference will be in Denton, TX, February 17 – 21, 2014, and the 2014 Diocesan Assembly will be held in Dallas, TX, July 21-25.

Fr. Ernesto Rios made a motion to thank the clergy and faithful at St Justin Martyr for their hard work in making this a wonderful assembly. It was seconded by Fr. Philip Reese, and passed unanimously.

Fr. Ernesto Rios motioned that the meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Fr. Peter Smith, and passed unanimously. The meeting concluded at 11:02 pm with the singing of "It is Truly Meet."

Approved Unanimously at the 2014 Diocesan Assembly during the First Plenary Session on July 22, 2014 at St Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral.