

**St John The Divine
Minutes of the Mid-Winter Meeting
Antiochian Village 2005**

The Meeting opened with a prayer at 7:40 pm.

We began with ice breakers and then a visit from Bishop THOMAS who brought greetings from Metropolitan PHILIP.

He hopes that we never forget what our name is – St. John the Divine. We're expected to evangelize and bring the word of God to the faithful. Bishop THOMAS is our new Episcopal overseer and if we need anything, he's here for us, he also thanked us for the consecration gift. He hasn't worn it yet but is waiting for this Sunday. Metropolitan PHILIP wants us to increase the numbers of local chapters of St. John the Divine.

Minutes from summer meetings: Irene Saigh motioned to accept the minutes. Robert Bayouk seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DIOCESE REPORTS

Can Am

Ottawa received 3 more churches into its diocese and they have a new bishop - Bishop ALEXANDER. They have 2 missions growing quite rapidly, St. Catherine's in North Buffalo and further north of Buffalo in Hamilton, Ontario. They haven't found a church yet, but are growing rapidly. There may be a 3rd one forming in Bari, Ontario. Camp Transfiguration is growing also. Directors are focusing on getting at least 2 children from each parish and also to broaden their committee. Halifax, Nova Scotia is hosting the conference, May 19th – 22nd. This year they needed to raise more funds for the budget. Bishop Antoun suggested \$1 per baptized soul.

Fr. Joseph Purpura from Department of Youth really wanted to raise the level of the bible bowl. The goal is to have teens really adopt the scripture and make it alive to them, instead of having them just memorize it. Each parish will receive an interactive bible CD on Romans. For each chapter, there is the text, commentary, key themes, St. John's commentary on how I apply this chapter to my life, practice questions and an interactive quiz. The conference themes for next year will be on the Book of Acts. We need to make sure they get into the hands of the teens. The teens are trying very hard to raise money to educate their youth workers. They need the Fellowship's help to recruit parish youth workers to enroll in the St. Stephen's Youth Ministry Program. Just accepted their first class of 9 people.

Mid West

Bishop MARK is the new bishop for the diocese of Toledo and the Mid West.

Funds were raised to help send mission parishes to sacred music institute it is called Midwest sacred music for missions fund.

Fall encounter weekend was held by one of the missions. They did a great job.

Parish life council planning group started something new. They realized that they need to learn from their mistakes and meet will past chair, present chair, and future chair.

Western

The Western region has a very in depth conference planning manual they created. Irene will send a copy to Gigi and we can get it from her if needed.

Mission awareness – got to goal of \$250,000 by the endowing ORTHODOXY forever campaign. They are in the process of identifying a new web master and their future plans include a finding new leadership.

New England

Footlamps monthly workshop series has gotten off to a great start. One evening a month, a different church hosts a workshop. They will continue with the theme of family and social issues.

Combined choir of the diocese of Worcester and New England released a CD of hymns of the Divine Liturgy. All monies are earmarked for charities. They had their 20th annual Christmas concert with over 500 people in attendance.

Online mailing list helped to improve communication throughout region

Also, they are trying to increase the amount of local Fellowships but struggling with disseminating information throughout the parishes. Joan Farha said that they are hoping to obtain one Fellowship contact per parish, regardless of whether or not they have a Fellowship chapter.

Gigi spoke of the executive board terms expiring this year. We all need to cultivate leadership. If we are leading, we need to have an idea of who can follow you, so you can copy them on what you're doing throughout your term. Each diocese should have a officer manual, something to pass onto the next officer, a month to month guideline.

They're working on putting together a packet to pass onto the next set of officers.

Parish life conference was very successful, but unsuccessful financially. There's a lot of frustration from parish to parish regarding hosting the conference.

Fr. Michael Abdelahad expressed frustrations that the convention/ conference format is not successful and meaningful. The New England region is struggling because they don't have a leader. Fr. Michael feels that it's just not working anymore. Conference experience is biased. There are a lot of registrants but nobody's attending the events.

Sean Buscay mentions that anything any region has to advertise can be done on the website.

Each bishop has been asked to appoint an information officer for their diocese.

South East Region

South East region is very busy with Camp St. Thekla, it has been a huge success.

They have lost three parishes and Wednesday December 15th Bishop Basil was enthroned, it was an amazing event. They had a fall gathering and retreat

Discussion took place on the purpose of the Fellowship and the attempts to define the organization.

Bishop THOMAS does not feel that the Fellowship is dwindling. He feels that it's had a rebirth. He said that we're not an organization that is going to have just one specific task/function. He feels that we're here to do whatever needs to be done, as Christ did.

Western Region

The Western Region has made their new ministry to focus on college age and young adults. A college track was created for conferences. They are struggling with getting all the parishes to pay assessments so they will create a template letter that explains to the parishes what the Fellowship does. They hope this will increase the income. More activities have been provided on a local level such as outreach projects and deanery retreats.

Fr. Michael Abdelahad said that this might be the model that works. "If I was going to start a school, I'd start with the lower grades and develop the older grades when the lower ones are ready to move up."

Broke for the night at 10:20 pm.

Reconvened Saturday at 10:10

Eastern Region

Eastern Region is working on a DVD about missions for the parishes to be able to see how missions work. At their fall meeting they put together military care packages including needed items and a note from the teens to the soldiers. They are also putting together a pamphlet about the purpose and activities of a Fellowship to help foster interest in the local parishes to start a chapter. You can call John Moses at 1-800-853-3289 for the pamphlet.

Treasurers Report:

The diocese of Ottawa is not included because Michael did not receive their assessment before the money was wired. Currently a more defined financial policy is being worked on. If the \$500 for speakers or camp funds is needed from NAC let Gigi know and she will send you the request form.

Lynda motioned to accept the Treasurers Report. Seconded by Robert Bayouk. All were in favor.

Coordinator's Reports

It is important we work on taking some things off the Fellowship's slate. The festivals are Christian Education and Youth Department and they don't need to be on the Fellowship's agenda. Irene Saigh "we have so many arm that are holding so much, but the body is weak."

Gigi said that maybe there could be a president of a Young Adult Fellowship an Adult Fellowship, and a Senior Fellowship and then have a Fellowship council. We want to start letting go of the things that are holding us. There are boards and better places for some of the projects. Every diocese is going to work differently because each has their own bishop. As a North American Council, we need to set an example.

Bible Bowl

Make sure you make a room reservation for your regions winning team in Detroit. Ester will be sending out a mailing

Food For Hungry People

This will be the last time that they will be reporting to this body.

Report and results have been circulated. Last year was a record breaking year, with a collection of \$185,717.00. They are hoping to raise \$200,000.00 this year. Food for Hungry People has a department in the Archdiocese and so they don't need to report here. This will give us more time to do other things.

Discussion took place regarding the responsibilities of the Fellowship and how to proceed with weeding out the festivals. Gigi is going to speak Carole Buleza.

Library Project

Discussion took place on the future of the project. Would giving people different options (amount of books, soft vs. hard bound) help our parishes to bring Orthodoxy into our libraries. Sonia and Jamil will be on the committee and Sara will work on the future of the project.

When we start a project, we should plan where it will end up and the expected duration with the Fellowship.

Special Projects

No new special projects have been worked on in the past 6 months.

Young Adults

The Greek Young Adults have expressed an interest in alternating years of who hosts the young adult retreat. This year it's the Greeks turn and it will take place on October 21-23 at Holy Cross Seminary. Sonia will help to coordinate the conference between the Antiochians and Greeks. By this year's conference in October we should have the location and dates for 2006 and a joint committee should be formed. Gigi will contact Katrina.

Archdiocese Convention

Make your reservations

Summer Camps

Almost every diocese has a camp. It's wonderful. Money is available from NAC

Word Magazine

Thanks for contributing to the Fellowship Footnotes in the Word. Claudia will let you know when it's your diocese time to contribute.

Visors

Let Gigi know if you want any gigishadid@yahoo.com

Retreat and Speaker

Each region has \$500 from NAC for speakers. The speaker database will be put on line.

New Bishops

NAC gave all of the new bishops engolpions and crosses. All the bishops have sent thanks to the NAC Fellowship.

Video Project

Chuck Nassif is working on the video project. He wants a person from each region who would be helpful in creating and being a resource. A plan was presented.

Mike Srour motioned to accept the proposal. Todd Mokhiber seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Constitution

There is a draft that has been completed. This document is much cleaner cut and more detailed than the old, as the constitution should be. We have until April 1st to forward comments to Micheal Srour. All changes will be made by April 20th to the secretary to make the revisions. It needs to be done 90 days before meeting. We will vote on it in Detroit.

Parish Ministry Sunday

A packet was distributed with a layout of the various ministry teams. On ministry Sunday, they highlight and display the work of each team. This allows new members to join the various teams.

St. Nicholas 110th Anniversary

Irene motioned to purchase a full page add in the journal for the 110th anniversary of St. Nicholas Cathedral, in Brooklyn, NY. Robert Bayouk seconded the motion.

Discussion: Fr. John Nosal said that it's special because it's the mother cathedral of the archdiocese. This is the exception not the rule All were in favor. Motion passed.

IOCC – Tsunami Relief

The IOCC is collecting money for care packages.

We will give money and they can use it for whatever they see fit. *Linda motioned that the Fellowship makes a donation to the IOCC for the tsunami relief of \$1000. Robert Bayouk seconded the motion.*

Discussion: this is the greatest natural disaster. If we have the money, then we should give it. Joan suggested \$2500. Tina spoke about the responsibility we have to our regions and parishes to do the right things with their money.

Linda amended her motion to state \$2500 instead of \$1000. Robert Bayouk seconded it. All in favor. Motion passed.

A question was asked, if anyone knows somebody who's interested in mission work, would NAC be willing to sponsor him/her. We want to start thinking about doing a mission trip for our North American Council. Todd Mokhiber will assist in going through Jordan (OCMC).

This is a great project that assists in sending people out to do mission work. Gigi will talk to Jane Tadros, Special Project's Coordinator. By the summer meetings we will have information about a mission trip for the NAC. We will give a need-based scholarship. Gigi recommended that the outgoing presidents attend meetings with the new presidents for the sake of continuity and smooth transitions.

NAC Missions Statement

A draft copy of the mission statement was distributed.

Fr. Michael Abdelahad moves to accept it. Joan Farha seconded it. All were in favor.

First we need to clean up the body, then we can assess all of the remaining projects and look at the future of them, estimated life expectancy, a pull-out plan, estimated cost. We should have a minimum of 1 new project per year. We will maintain a long term project manual.

Cathy and Joan will help Gigi in creating a long-term manual form/journal.

Fr. John Nosal spoke about how much we need to be involved in assisting and supporting our bishops to ensure a smooth transition. We will talk about it more fully at our next meeting. How can we make our bishops look great?

We talked about the importance of the need for support from the bishops. Bishops need to help us to define our needs and bring them to Metropolitan PHILIP.

Nominating Committee

The NAC executive officers are all transitioning out. If you're interested in running for an office speak to Fr. John Nosal.

Fr. Michael Abdelahad motioned to adjourn. Mark Morrow seconded the motion. All were in favor.