

MINUTES OF THE SPRING SESSION OF  
THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
**Diocese of the Midwest Chancery**  
**Chicago, Illinois**  
**2-4 May, 2011**

**Present were:**

His Beatitude, JONAH, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America, and Canada,  
*Chairman*

His Eminence, NATHANIEL Archbishop of Detroit, and the Romanian Episcopate

His Grace, NIKON, Bishop of Boston, of New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese

His Grace, TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia, and Eastern Pennsylvania, (*Secretary*)

His Grace, BENJAMIN, Bishop of San Francisco, and the West

His Grace, ALEJO, Bishop of Mexico City, and the Exarchate of the United States of Mexico

His Grace, MELCHISEDEK, Bishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania (*Interim Chancellor*)

His Grace, MICHAEL, Bishop of New York and New York and New Jersey.

His Grace, MATTHIAS, Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest.

His Grace, MARK, Bishop of Baltimore, Administrator of the Diocese of the South

His Grace, IRENEE, Bishop of Quebec City, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada

**Absent was:**

His Grace, IRINEU, Bishop of Dearborn, Auxiliary Bishop of the Romanian Episcopate

**Monday, May 2, 2011**

**SESSIONS I and II**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH opened the Spring Session of the Holy Synod on Monday, May 2, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. with the singing of the Paschal Troparion and “The Grace of the Holy Spirit...”

**Address of the Metropolitan**

**HEARD:**

Metropolitan JONAH presented his written report and offered further oral comments concerning his recent leave of absence and offered some proposals for moving forward.

The members of the Holy Synod each offered responses to the address of the Metropolitan. They discussed the relationship of the Holy Synod with the Metropolitan in the past and for the future.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod began the process for establishing clear policies and procedures for the Holy Synod to allow for better communication and accountability within the Holy Synod.

### **Pastoral Issues**

#### **HEARD:**

The Holy Synod discussed several areas of concern in the Church, including a case of clergy interference in another diocese, an unresolved clergy misconduct case and concerns about a monastic community.

#### **DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod received the assurance of His Beatitude's definitive action in the case of the monastic community and will prepare official documents in reference to the clergy misconduct case. The Holy Synod also acted decisively in the case of the clergy interference case.

**Tuesday, May 3, 2011**

### **SESSIONS III, IV and V**

#### **Review of Minutes of Sessions I and II**

#### **HEARD:**

Bishop TIKHON presented a draft of the private minutes of the previous day's meetings. Members of the Holy Synod submitted corrections.

#### **DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod approved the minutes of the May 2, 2011 sessions of the Spring Session and appended their signatures to the document.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **HEARD:**

Bishop BENJAMIN presented four resolutions related to the Holy Synod.

Discussion followed.

#### **DECIDED:**

The following four resolutions were approved by the Holy Synod with the understanding that they would be further reviewed in the ongoing development of policies and procedures for the Holy Synod:

### **Resolution 1 – LOCUM TENENCY**

Be it resolved this day, May 3, 2011, by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, meeting in the City of Chicago, IL, pertaining to Article VI, Section 8 of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America which states “In the event of a vacancy in the office of diocesan bishop, a locum tenens, appointed by the Metropolitan, shall convoke and preside over the Diocesan Assembly whose sole purpose at this time shall be the election of a new diocesan bishop,” that the Metropolitan shall appoint a locum tenens from among the other hierarchs of the Synod and not himself, so as not to burden the Primate with supervision of multiple dioceses.

### **Resolution 2 – the Officers of the Church**

The Holy Synod affirms Article II, Section 7, m, which places within the competence of the Holy Synod the “appointment, upon the recommendation by the Metropolitan Council, of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer and other officials whose competence or service extend beyond the boundaries of a single diocese.” The Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America is distinct and separate from the chanceries of the various dioceses, including the Diocese of Washington DC. At this time, it is understood that the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America is located at 6850 N. Hempstead Turnpike, Syosset, NY 11791. It is resolved this day, May 3, 2011, by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, to understand “and other officials...” in the Statute cited above to mean and encompass the chancery staff and membership of the various offices and departments of the OCA which function under the authority of the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan being the presiding officer of the Synod. The officers of the Orthodox Church in America are confirmed by the Synod upon recommendation of the Metropolitan Council and are dismissed from service by the Synod upon recommendation of the Primate, as their service is to all the dioceses of the Church. Thus the chancery of the Orthodox Church in America is understood to be the Synodal Chancery, the other hierarchs, including the Metropolitan, having their own diocesan chanceries.

### **Resolution 3 – the Permanent Lesser Synod**

Be it resolved this day, May 3, 2011, by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, meeting in the City of Chicago, IL, in accordance with Article II, Section 6 of the Statute that the Lesser Synod be considered the executive committee of the Holy Synod and empowered to meet every second month to exercise oversight of all matters except those excluded by Article II, Section 7, c, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America on behalf of the entire Synod. The membership of the Permanent Lesser Synod shall consist of the Metropolitan, the Secretary of the Holy Synod and two other hierarchs elected by the entire Synod. The Lesser Synod is charged with oversight of the execution of policies and decisions of the entire Synod and those of the Metropolitan Council blessed by the Synod. As Primate, the Metropolitan shall be the chairman of the Permanent Lesser Synod. The Metropolitan, as the Chairman of the Synod, shall seek and receive prior agreement of the Lesser Synod for all programs and initiatives relating to the external and internal affairs of the Church. The Lesser Synod also exercises oversight of the officers of the Church and

its various departments and offices on behalf of the whole Synod. The term of service on the Lesser Synod shall be for a period of one year.

#### **Resolution 4 – the Chancellor**

Be it resolved this day, May 3, 2011, by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, meeting in the City of Chicago, IL, that the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America is the chief of operations of the Synodal Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America and is accountable to the entire Synod of the Orthodox Church in America. He manages the day to day operations of the Synodal Chancery, the other officers, departments and offices of the Church.

#### **Episcopal Matters**

##### **HEARD:**

In closed session, the Holy Synod considered several episcopal matters.

#### **Officer's Reports**

##### **Report of Treasurer**

##### **HEARD:**

Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer, presented her report (attached).

##### **DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod heard the report of the Treasurer and thanked Melanie Ringa for her work.

##### **Report of Secretary**

##### **HEARD:**

Fr. Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary, presented his report (attached).

##### **DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod heard the report of the Secretary and thanked Fr. Eric Tosi for his work. The Holy Synod will review the agenda for the upcoming All American Council in Seattle.

#### **External Affairs**

##### **HEARD:**

Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky of the Department of External Affairs presented his report. He addressed several issues within the internal life of the Orthodox Church in America and summarized recent developments in world-wide Orthodoxy.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod heard the report of the Department of External Affairs and thanked Fr. Leonid for his work.

**Meeting with SMPAC**

**HEARD:**

The Holy Synod heard a presentation from the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC). The SMPAC reviewed their expanded white paper and the requested documentation for it, both of which had previously been presented to the Holy Synod. They offered their thoughts on several specific cases now under review and expressed their deep concern for the proper and unequivocal implementation of the current Policies, Standards and Procedures of the OCA on all levels of the Church and in all cases.

They spoke of the critical need for the Holy Synod, the clergy and the faithful of the Church to be educated in the proper response to allegations of sexual misconduct and noted their great concern over a prevailing attitude which prefers the ignoring of these problems or hopes for their disappearance.

The SMPAC assured the Holy Synod that their documents and their concerns were solely a means to document lessons learned, not to bring accusations against any individual person or organization. They expressed their fervent desire to receive the Holy Synod's assurance, not only that proper policies are put in place, but most importantly that they be followed.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod thanked the members of the SMPAC for their presentation and for their dedication and commitment to the critical matter of clergy sexual abuse. They also expressed their gratitude for their professional advice and counsel in these matters and asked for their continued guidance to the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod acknowledged the errors and failures documented and pledged to both continue their review of the SMPAC report and to address any of the failures and weaknesses so that they are not repeated in the future.

The Holy Synod also made several requests of the SMPAC to provide concrete aids so that the hierarchs might better educate their clergy and faithful in these matters and to help them better evaluate and respond to cases of sexual misconduct.

**Interview of Episcopal Candidates**

**HEARD:**

The Holy Synod interviewed two potential Episcopal candidates.

**Board of Theological Education**

**HEARD:**

Bishop TIKHON presented the report of the Board of Theological Education (BTE) and presented for approval the candidates for ordination to the diaconate. Other matters related to theological education were discussed.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod approved the candidates as presented by the Board of Theological Education.

**Clergy Matters**

**HEARD:**

In closed session, the Holy Synod considered several clergy cases.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod acted on the clergy cases presented. The actions taken will be reflected in the official clergy changes prepared by the Chancery office.

**Clergy Awards**

**HEARD:**

Fr. Eric Tosi presented the list of clergy awards from the Diocesan Hierarchs.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod reviewed the list and approved those clergy who had been presented for awards.

**Lesser Synod**

**HEARD:**

In accordance with the adopted resolution on the Lesser Synod, the Holy Synod discussed the filling of those position.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod elected the following members of the Holy Synod as members of the Lesser Synod:  
Metropolitan JONAH, Chair  
Bishop NIKON  
Bishop TIKHON, Holy Synod secretary  
Bishop BENJAMIN

**SMPAC Report**

**HEARD:**

The Holy Synod heard the request of the governance committee of the Metropolitan Council that it be provided a copy of the SMPAC report. The Holy Synod also heard a report concerning the improper distribution of the report.

**DECIDED:**

The Holy Synod blessed the OCA legal committee to receive a copy of the SMPAC report.

The Holy Synod instituted a spiritual court to investigate the alleged distribution of confidential and sensitive documents to unauthorized recipients.

**SIGNED:**

His Beatitude, JONAH, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America, and Canada,  
*Chairman*

His Eminence, NATHANIEL Archbishop of Detroit, and the Romanian Episcopate

His Grace, NIKON, Bishop of Boston, of New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese

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