

Resolution of Diocesan Assembly, Oct 12-14, 2012

We the delegates of the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America, with the blessing, and under the guidance of His Grace Bishop Peter, give thanks to God for the many blessings He has poured out upon our Diocese in the past three years: several new mission parishes have been established, five parishes have either begun or finished the building of new temples; and we have begun two new monastic communities.

The Assembly began with a great sense of unity of purpose and spirit with a Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral at Des Plaines, IL. We were honored to have many of the Diocesan clergy celebrating the Divine Liturgy together, along with His Grace Bishop Longin of the Serbian Patriarchate, and with His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae of the Romanian Patriarchate in attendance. It was a special blessing to have the choral talents of the Sretensky Monastery choir at the service. We were reminded afresh of the blessing of God on our unity as clergy and parishes within the Diocese, and the presence of the Sretensky choir called special attention to our connection to the land of Russia. With that in mind, the delegates expressed their thanks to God in this the fifth anniversary year of the reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 132:1 LXX).

Bishop Peter reported the news that the Synod of Bishops has now blessed the establishment of two monastic communities: a men's community now begun in Houghton, MI, and a women's community in Des Plaines, IL. We call upon our faithful to support financially these new monastic efforts, especially as they are in their earliest stages, and are in the greatest need of outside help.

The Assembly gives thanks to God for the good report from the Pastoral School of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America. Archpriest Martin Swanson, Dean of the school, informed us that the school currently has 62 students, with three graduating this past spring, and six anticipated to graduate in 2013. The school has become truly international: in addition to students from North and South America, there are students enrolled from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and Romania.

The Assembly reviewed a detailed report of the financial affairs of the Diocese, including the support given by the member parishes. We were made aware of the need for continued and improved levels of financial support by the parishes, both in terms of their tithe of regular income as well as their support for various special donations.

The Diocesan Assembly was also the occasion for the first meeting of the St John Kochurov Society. Formed for the express purpose of providing assistance for various needs in the Diocese, the Society has expressed its desire to have a representative in each parish of the Diocese. The Society decided that it should focus its resources on youth and education, missionary efforts, and monasticism within the Diocese.

The Assembly was reminded that future growth of the churches in the Diocese is dependent on the continued strength of our ministry to the children, youth, and young families of our parishes.

We strongly urge and support diocesan and parish efforts to address the needs of our youth. Among the efforts highlighted was the ORPR camp, which is a major resource for our youth. The desire was expressed that the Diocese explore offering family-oriented camps or retreats at the facilities at Vladimirovo as well. Steps were taken to facilitate sharing of information among parish church schools.

We were blessed by the singing of the Sretensky choir and the English-language diocesan choir. The beautiful singing of these choirs reminded us of the high value the Russian Orthodox Church places on the liturgical arts. The Assembly also had the opportunity to participate in an all-English-language Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral, featuring a diocesan choir with representatives of many of our parishes. The Cathedral Choir and the diocesan choir sang a glorious antiphonal vigil and hierarchal Divine Liturgy for the patronal feast of the Cathedral.

We call upon the faithful to support wholeheartedly their parishes, and in turn for our parishes to support the work of the Diocese. If we are faithful stewards with the little God has given us, He will bless us with greater. But if we are unfaithful in what we have been entrusted with, even that will be taken away from us (Matthew 25:14-30).