

Clergy Retreat Resolution
Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
March 9/22, 2012

We, the clergy of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America, give thanks to the Shepherd of All, our Lord Jesus Christ, for this opportunity to meet at our diocesan center at Holy Virgin Cathedral in DesPlaines (Chicago), Illinois, under the graceful protection of the Mother of God.

The Reconciliation within the Russian Orthodox Church occurred on the Feast of the Ascension, 2007. Churches of our diocese will celebrate the five-year anniversary of the Reconciliation with a special prayer of thanksgiving, on Sunday, May 20, and the Feast of the Ascension, May 24, 2012. Where possible, this occasion can also be remembered with concelebrated services to manifest our unity in Christ. We are thankful for the fruits which have come from our fraternal communion and we look forward to the fruits which our unity will bring in the future.

We welcome new clergy who will be serving in our diocese: Priest Tarasii Maximtsev, Priest Zachary Rose, Priest Antonii Alekseyenko, Hieromonk Timothy (Tadros), Hieromonk Innokenty (Reichert), Deacon Leontii Naidzions, and Deacon David Companik.

We were saddened to learn that our brothers, Archpriest James Rohr and Deacon Gregory Dobrov, are ailing. We ask the prayers of all, that our heavenly Physician may quickly grant health and strength to them and to our ailing brother, Archpriest Paul Bassett.

We would like to express our sympathy for the faithful of St. Panteleimon's Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, who recently suffered the loss of their main dome in a severe storm. We thank our merciful Lord God that our churches in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Muddy, Illinois, were spared damage from tornadoes.

"Let all things be done decently and in order," says the Apostle Paul. After discussion of various church protocols and liturgical practices, we affirmed the necessity of observing and following a unified form and a common practice, according to the tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

We were grateful for a valuable, informative, and edifying presentation on missionary work and volunteerism, by Fr. John Moses of the Eastern American Diocese. We hope to implement similar volunteer programs in our diocese.

New regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate all employers to provide employees with benefits which must include coverage for abortifacient drugs and other procedures which offend the Christian conscience. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America has issued a declaration in protest of these unethical regulations, and we clergy of the Chicago and Mid-America Diocese agree with and support the Hierarchs' efforts to secure religious freedom for Christians in the United States.

We look forward to meeting together again at the Diocesan Assembly in October, 2012.

We pray that the mercy of God and the protection of the Most Holy Mother of God will be with all the faithful of our diocese throughout this year, and we urgently request your sincere prayers for us.

Unanimously accepted by the clergy in attendance.