



## **CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

***January 16 – 17, 2012***

***Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center – Dunlap, CA***

### **CALL TO ORDER AND DESIGNATION OF PRESIDING OFFICER**

The 2012 Clergy-Laity Assembly was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos who led the delegates in an Opening Prayer Service.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos then nominated Fanis Economidis as the Presiding Officer of the Assembly, and Kristen Bruska as the Secretary. These nominations were approved by acclamation of the Assembly.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos welcomed the clergy and lay delegates to the Ranch, and explained that the change in date for this year's Assembly was due to several circumstances, including the ecclesiastical calendar, the availability of Saint Nicholas Ranch, and the upcoming Clergy-Laity Congress.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos introduced the new Metropolis Chancellor, V. Rev. Archimandrite Apostolos Koufallakis, who has been in his new position now for just over two months. He also welcomed the guest speakers, Rev. Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou, President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; and Theo Nicolakis, Chief Information Officer for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Department of Internet Ministries and Information Technology. His Eminence stated that a full schedule of enriching presentations and enlightening discussions will be offered at the Assembly, and encouraged active participation by all those in attendance.

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS – HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS**

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos presented his Keynote Address, focusing on the theme "Weaving a Tapestry of Faith". In his compelling remarks, Metropolitan Gerasimos emphasized that the bonds – the tapestry – that forms the foundation of our faith begins with our family, as they are our first experience in a community of learning and a demonstration of unity. Extending to our parishes, we must also weave a tapestry with regard to the ministries offered, keeping in mind the diverse ages and needs of our faithful. We must be welcoming to visitors, inclusive to all, and be careful to not become an exclusive ethnic club based on finances or political affiliations. It is important to also cultivate a family atmosphere within our communities, to develop friendships that are not just superficial, but rather are strong and supportive relationships with people who will encourage us on our journey to salvation. Another significant part of the tapestry of our church is the relationship between our parishes, Metropolis and Archdiocese. These are not three individual institutions, but part of one family in Christ. We are all working together for the Glory of God and are not competing with each other. On the contrary, each must exist in support of the other. The ministries of our Metropolis and

Archdiocese are crucial to the development of our parishes and their direct service to their faithful stewards.

### **WELCOME – METROPOLIS COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT**

Fanis Economidis welcomed everyone to Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center, a cornerstone ministry of our Metropolis that has been serving thousands of our faithful for over 30 years. Fanis thanked Metropolitan Gerasimos for the confidence he has placed in him to lead the deliberations of the Clergy-Laity Assembly. Fanis asked the delegates to take some time later in the day to review the minutes, reports and financial statements which will be addressed during tomorrow's Assembly meetings.

The first guest speaker for this year's Assembly is a distinguished clergyman from our Archdiocese, who is currently in his 12<sup>th</sup> year as President of Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Father Nick brings with him a wealth of experience and will share with us some practical ways we can "weave a tapestry of faith" in our communities, as both clergy and lay leaders.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION – FATHER NICHOLAS TRIANTAFILOU**

Father Nick provided a very thought-provoking presentation on the Assembly theme "*Weaving a Tapestry of Faith*". He challenged our parishes to become living and thriving examples of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through our ministry within the church community, and by serving others in the greater community, just as Christ served all. He challenged the leaders of our parishes to not become an LNPRCC – Legal Non-Profit Religious Country Club, but rather a CSSLBB – a Caring Sharing Serving Loving Body of Believers. As part of our personal commitment to Jesus Christ, and part of our responsibility as leaders of the church, we must follow the AAA rule: Affirm the word of God; Appropriate it in our hearts; and Apply it in our daily lives. By keeping in mind these simple yet powerful words, we can accomplish much more by working together with Christ as our guide.

### **GUEST PRESENTATION – THEO NICOLAKIS**

Fanis introduced the second presenter for this year's Clergy-Laity Assembly, Theo Nicolakis who is the Chief Information Officer for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Department of Internet Ministries and Information Technology. Theo is a graduate of Gordon College, Holy Cross School of Theology and New York University. In his position with the Archdiocese, Theo is responsible for the Archdiocese's website, social media, oversees all technology, telecommunications, network computing infrastructure and application development for the Archdiocese.

Theo's presentation offered many insights into the ways that the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is using technology to support the needs of our parishes, the spiritual development of our faithful, and the spreading of Orthodoxy throughout the world. Theo reviewed the many resources available for our parishes – for free – including Bulletin Builder, Orthodox Web Builder, hosting of parish websites, live internet broadcasting, Orthodox Marketplace, Online Bookstore, Orthodox Jobs, parish listservers, educational and ministry resources and more. For individuals, the Archdiocese website, [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org), has a very useful Online Chapel, people can receive Daily Scripture Readings via email, various apps, Iconograms and many other useful tools and educational opportunities. Theo's presentation was enthusiastically received and was enlightening to all those in attendance.

## **REPORT OF METROPOLIS COUNCIL**

The Metropolis Council spent about 8 hours in meetings immediately preceding this Assembly. Per the Uniform Metropolis Regulations, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos is the President of the Metropolis Council. Fanis Economidis was elected Vice-President, and thus provided the following report on the deliberations of the Council which met for two days preceding the Assembly.

Fanis stated that the protection of the assets of our Metropolis is of the utmost importance to us and we are taking steps to make sure that all the valuables of our Metropolis – Liturgical items, iconography, and vestments, to name a few, are adequately covered. Likewise, the Council is recommending to each parish that they take photographs and videotape these items, and prepare a corresponding list of these objects. This documentation should be kept in a safe and secure place so that, in the event of a loss, you have documentation of these items to help determine adequate replacement value for the restoration of your church's property.

We are here at Saint Nicholas Ranch and enjoying the beautiful surroundings of God's creation and one of the cornerstone ministries of our Metropolis. This Ranch is here for everyone, and I am pleased with the progress we have made in developing new and innovative programs, as well as upgrading and expanding the facilities to meet the needs of our parishes and congregations. In addition to completing both lodge buildings with brand new furniture, two full-size basketball courts, which can be converted to four volleyball courts, have recently been installed on the property thanks to the generosity of the Kallins family. We will break ground on the Alex and Faye Spanos Faith and Heritage Center in the middle of May, and anticipate completion by November. On behalf of this entire Assembly, we extend our gratitude to Michael Pappas and his staff for their hard work and tremendous hospitality during our time together.

Each member of the Metropolis Council serves on a committee which works throughout the year to provide guidance and assistance to our parishes. Some examples of these are:

- The Arts and Architecture Committee is under the leadership of Fr. Peter Salmas. Any parish building or significantly remodeling any portion of their facilities is required to submit the plans to the Metropolis for review **prior** to securing permits and beginning any construction.
- The Real Estate and Insurance Committee, under the leadership of George Psihogios is responsible for reviewing all documentation regarding the purchase, rental or lease of any facility.
- The Legal Committee, under the leadership of John Buzas, and our Legal Counsel Maryanne Murphy, provide assistance to parishes needing bylaws review and approval, guidance on employment matters, tax issues, and more.
- Keep in mind that on our Metropolis website in the "Resources" section, we have also posted the guidelines for Art and Architecture and Real Estate Transactions so you can have this information readily available to guide you as you take important steps in your parishes.

Last year we discussed at great length the National Ministries Commitment of our Metropolis, which has been an area of significant importance to each of your communities, and also to the ongoing operations and growth of our Metropolis. Fanis reported that, thanks to the leadership of Fr. Jon Magoulas, our parishes responded with faith and we reached 92% of our goal which totals \$2.4 million. Only six parishes did not meet their goal, with two of these communities making a

commitment to fulfill their remaining obligation during the first six months of this year, as well as complete their 2012 obligation in a timely manner. This has been a tremendous accomplishment and His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos and the Metropolis Council are very grateful for this effort. We now have a new goal in front of us to reach \$2.7 million for 2012. Last evening you heard from Theo Nicolakis who shared with you so many resources which are available to our parishes from the Archdiocese for free. Many times we hear the question, “what does the Archdiocese do for my parish?” This is just one example of where your National Ministries Commitment contribution goes and what it provides for our parishes. In fact, in the very back of your binders, you have a one-page description of all the National Ministries of our Archdiocese and how we benefit from them. Fanis encouraged the delegates to share this information with their parishes so they understand the bigger picture of our Archdiocese and how we, as a Metropolis, and as our parishes, are all part of one large family that comprises the Body of Christ.

Another important item on our agenda today is the approval of the Metropolis budget. As part of this proposed budget, we will need to raise nearly \$200,000 in additional donations to meet our projected expenses for 2012. In the next few weeks, the Metropolis Financial Development Committee will be meeting to develop an aggressive plan to identify ways we can secure these donations, including the promotion and expansion of the Faith Forward Metropolis Stewardship program. The Metropolis Council voted unanimously yesterday that all its members will participate as contributors to Faith Forward. You can see the information on this program on the Metropolis website – again on the **Resources** page in the **Documents** section. This is of paramount importance to us and we hope you will join us to be a part of our ongoing growth and development of our Metropolis.

As you heard from His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, Fanis Economidis and Isidoros Garifalakis were appointed as the co-chairs of this summer’s Clergy-Laity Congress. Later in the meeting, Fanis will share more information on this event, as it will take full cooperation from our clergy and lay leadership to extend the hospitality and *philoxenia* that makes our Metropolis special.

In following up with Fr. Nick Triantafilou’s inspiring presentation yesterday, we asked that a resolution be drafted to recognize the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Cross School of Theology. We will be presenting this Resolution later for adoption by this Assembly.

For many years, the Metropolis and Archdiocese were blessed with the tremendous expertise and enthusiastic volunteerism of Elenie Huszagh who served as the Chair of our Legal Committee. Elenie is no longer able to provide her services and the Metropolis Council unanimously voted to designate her as Legal Committee Chairman Emeritus.

The members of the Metropolis Council and Archdiocesan Council serve for a period of two years which began in July 2010 following the Clergy-Laity Congress. The current members’ terms will conclude this summer following the Congress in Phoenix. The Council is comprised of 8 elected clergy, 8 elected laity, and 8 additional people (both clergy and laity) appointed by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos. In addition, we must also elect 1 clergy and 2 lay representatives to serve on the Archdiocesan Council. We requested nominations from our parish priests which were submitted to the Metropolis. The election committee, chaired by Fr. Earl Cantos, with committee members Peter Eliades and Mary Lofton, will present a proposed slate for election later today.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Fanis asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the 2012 Clergy- Laity Assembly. A motion was made by Father John Hondros, seconded by Spiros Filios, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

### **ELECTION OF METROPOLIS COUNCIL**

The election committee, led by Father Demetrios-Earl Cantos, with members Peter Eliades and Mary Lofton, presented the following slates for the 2012 – 2014 term of the Metropolis Council:

#### ***CLERGY NOMINATIONS (8 TO BE ELECTED)***

- Fr. Andrew Barakos
- V. Rev. John Constantine
- Fr. Theodore Dorrance
- Fr. Luke Palumbis
- Fr. James Retelas
- Fr. Peter Salmas
- Fr. Anthony Savas
- Fr. Peter Stratos

#### ***LAITY NOMINATIONS (8 TO BE ELECTED)***

- John Buzas
- James Eleopoulos
- Greg Kyritsis
- John Kouretas
- Ted Laliotis
- Chris Pallis
- George Psihogios
- Paul Sogotis
- Dr. Olympia Tachopoulou
- Dr. Eve Tibbs

#### ***ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL (1 CLERGY, 2 LAITY TO BE ELECTED)***

- Fr. Aris Metrakos
- Isidoros Garifalakis
- Valerie Roumeliotes

Following introductions of the nominees, the election was held with the following outcome:

- All eight Clergy nominees were elected
- All three Archdiocesan Council nominees were elected
- Eight Laity nominees were elected:
  - John Buzas
  - Greg Kyritsis
  - Ted Laliotis
  - Chris Pallis
  - George Psihogios
  - Paul Sogotis
  - Dr. Olympia Tachopoulou
  - Dr. Eve Tibbs

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Treasurer Chris Pallis reviewed the Statement of Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year 2011. He provided information on the various fundraising initiatives of the Metropolis, and other major sources of revenue including the Archdiocese Allocation as derived from the National Ministries Commitment. Expenses were also carefully explained, which provide for the operations of the Metropolis Office and Metropolis House, as well as a review of the Metropolis Restricted Accounts for 2011.

Fanis Economidis presented the review of the Budget and our performance for the year. Revenue was \$793,286, as compared to expenses of \$952,861. This is primarily due to unrealized income from the Archdiocese Allocation because our parishes collectively did not reach 100% of their obligation to the National Ministries Commitment. Fanis assured the Assembly that the Metropolis takes this matter very seriously, and we are working closely with parishes to fulfill their obligations to the Archdiocese so that this significant source of revenue which is vital to the ongoing operations of our Metropolis will be realized in the coming year. In addition, the Metropolis made several adjustments and reductions to expenses to be proactive in anticipating this revenue shortfall.

A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Ted Laliotis, seconded by Spiros Filios. Motion carried unanimously.

Fanis then reviewed the proposed 2012 Budget for the Metropolis, which totals \$1,153,200. Again, the major source of revenue to support this budget is the Archdiocese Allocation of \$675,000 which represents 25% of the contributions made by our parishes to the National Ministries Commitment. A motion to approve the budget was made by Father Tom Zaferes, seconded by Father Jim Pappas. Motion carried, with one opposing vote.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

Given that Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Metropolis of San Francisco drafted a resolution directing that each parish in the Metropolis sponsor an event to honor this occasion, as Holy Cross is the primary institution that prepares young men for the Holy Priesthood who ultimately serve the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. A motion to approve this resolution (full copy attached) was made by Father Peter Salmas, seconded by Father Steven Tschlis. Motion carried unanimously.

The Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church presented a resolution to be considered by the Assembly and, if approved, then submitted to the Archdiocese for discussion at the 2012 Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress. The resolution contained two major points:

1. That the dollar amount for the Parish Clergy be excluded as part of the formulation from the expenses reported to the Metropolis and Archdiocese.
2. That the annual Church Festival be excluded as part of the formulation from the expenses reported to the Metropolis and Archdiocese.

It was clarified that #2 is already provided for in the current process for determining the National Ministries Commitment for each parish. Pertaining to #1 above, this recommendation is out of order and will not be accepted by the Archdiocese. A motion to accept resolution #1 was made by Spiros Filios, seconded by Andrew Tujios. Motion failed.

### **2012 BIENNIAL CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS**

This summer, from July 1 – 5, the Archdiocese has selected Phoenix, Arizona as the host site for the 2012 Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos appointed Fanis Economidis and Isidoros Garifalakis as co-chairs of this event. Jeannie Ranglas will serve as a co-chair for the National Philoptochos Convention. We had heard many rumors that the Congress would once again come out west, and this fall we were officially informed by the Archdiocese that our Metropolis would be the location. While the Archdiocese will oversee a significant portion of the responsibilities

of planning the Congress, there will be still be obligations on the part of our Metropolis. The Metropolis cannot rely solely on the few communities in Arizona, so this will need to be the undertaking of our entire Metropolis and we will appreciate your support and participation to showcase the hospitality and *philoxenia* of the west coast.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS AND CLOSING PRAYER**

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos thanked everyone for their enthusiastic participation in this year's Assembly. He reminded us that, as we prepare to depart for our homes and communities, we must always remember we are children of Christ's love, and we need to act like this in all our activities – within our families and communities – and wherever darkness prevails, we need to bring the love and light of God to these areas.

A closing prayer was offered and the 2012 Clergy-Laity Assembly adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Bruskas