



METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

## **CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

***February 24 – 25, 2014***

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

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

The 2014 Clergy-Laity Assembly was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos who led the delegates in an Opening Prayer Service, assisted by Archimandrite John Constantine.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos announced that the Metropolis Council Vice President, Fanis Economidis, is unable to be with us due to some serious health challenges being faced by his wife, Cynthia. We are remembering them all in our prayers.

His Eminence appointed John Buzas as the Presiding Officer of the Assembly. John is a member of the Metropolis Council and the Chair of the Metropolis Legal Committee.

John thanked His Eminence for asking him to preside over the Assembly and will endeavor to make this gathering be both efficient and productive.

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

Metropolitan Gerasimos spoke on the theme of this year's Clergy-Laity Assembly, which also happens to be the theme of our Metropolis Strategic Plan, "*Where there is no vision, the people will perish,*" Proverbs 29:18.

In his keynote address to the Assembly, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos related the Strategic Plan as "an icon of the future of our Metropolis, the Metropolis that we want to have not only now, but also the Metropolis that we want our children and grandchildren to have, the Metropolis that is not yet realized. Our work now is to begin to build this Metropolis so that our children and grandchildren have a great inheritance."

Metropolitan Gerasimos also emphasized the need for unity in the Church, and stated that diversity is also valued, all within the teaching of our theology and through following Holy Scripture. Our Metropolis may be embarking on a Strategic Plan, but that does not mean we are separating ourselves from the work of our Archdiocese and its departments. On the contrary, the plan incorporates the mission statement of the Archdiocese and builds upon it to meet the needs of the people in our Metropolis. The plan has helped us craft a vision for our future, core values which will guide us to that vision, and goals that we will work together to implement in the coming months and years.

Metropolitan Gerasimos concluded his remarks by stating, “For this plan to succeed you must get involved with the goals, offer your service to the committees, and when you are asked, be ready to share your gifts so that the goals can be achieved. We cannot outsource the development of our Metropolis to someone else. We cannot expect someone else to raise our children and keep them connected to their Faith. We must do this and together we can.”

### **STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION**

Strategic Plan facilitator, Bill Marianes, offered an inspirational overview of the planning process which began in July 2012 with a team of 50 clergy and lay leaders from throughout the Metropolis. He stated that our Metropolis is making history as we stand collectively prepared to embark on an ambitious and inspirational journey. Bill feels that our plan is solid, well thought-out, and is rooted in our faith.

Bill then introduced the nine Task Force Coordinators who each presented an overview of their scope of work, along with a timeline for the implementation of the 37 Strategic Objectives contained within the Strategic Plan. The Task Force Coordinators are Dr. Eve Tibbs (Education); Father Steve Tsihchlis (Liturgical Life; Philanthropic Outreach); Father Theodore Dorrance (Missions and Evangelism); Ted Vavoulis (Stewardship), Dr. Dave Matty (Youth); Presvytera Donna Pappas (Specialized Ministries – Wellness; Metropolis Organization and Development); Cliff Argue (Communications); George Demos (Finances); and Greg Kyritsis (Parish Organization and Development). These people have identified captains from throughout the Metropolis with whom they will work to bring this plan into full realization. The delegates enthusiastically welcomed the Strategic Plan and expressed their eagerness to become fully engaged in this exciting roadmap for the future of our Metropolis.

Following dinner, the Assembly reconvened at 8:30 p.m. and the delegates participated in an ongoing discussion regarding the plan, with many favorable comments being offered and several people coming forth to volunteer their time to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Bill concluded his presentation by acknowledging the support and leadership of several people who assisted him in various capacities of the Strategic Planning process: Father Aris Metrakos, Fanis Economidis, Archimandrite Apostolos Koufallakis and Kristen Bruskas. Bill especially commended the leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos whom he said has demonstrated unbelievable courage throughout this journey, and is the epitome of Christ’s love in everything that he does.

### **THE CHALLENGES FACING OUR ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE**

His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas of the Dardanelles addressed the Assembly and spoke about the many challenges faced by our Mother Church. There are several restrictions imposed by the Turkish Government which prohibit the growth of the Orthodox faith in Turkey. In addition, many of our sacred properties have been destroyed or desecrated and are no longer in the possession of the church. Likewise, Metropolitan Nikitas spoke about the many other areas in the world that are in crisis and also have caused great struggle for Orthodox Christians. His Eminence reminded us that we must be grateful for the opportunities we have and must also keep in our prayers our Orthodox brothers and sisters who are suffering under political oppression.

## **DAY TWO**

The Assembly reconvened on Tuesday, February 25 following Divine Liturgy. An opening prayer was offered at 10:45 a.m. by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes as distributed was made by Paul Sogotis, seconded by Mary Lofton. Motion carried unanimously.

## **METROPOLIS COUNCIL REPORT**

John Buzas thanked His Eminence for entrusting this responsibility to him in the absence of Fanis Economidis. He stated that he is honored to be asked to carry on with the important proceedings of the Assembly, and then offered a brief summary of the meeting of the Metropolis Council which was held immediately preceding this Assembly.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the Strategic Plan and the Metropolis Council is personally and collectively committed to the implementation and success of this plan. The Council is ready and willing to move forward in a new direction, with a new vision, and with faith in God to follow the road map that the Strategic Plan provides and embark on this exciting journey as one Body in Christ. A provision for the funding of programs within the Strategic Plan was discussed and is included in the Metropolis budget which will be presented later during the Assembly.

Regarding the budget of the Metropolis, our Metropolitan, Chancellor, staff and volunteer leadership have been working diligently to keep our expenses under control and I think you will be pleased with their efforts. Our Treasurer, Michael Syrengelas will provide more details during his report.

Today we will also hold elections for eight clergy and eight lay members of the Metropolis Council, and one clergy and two lay people for the Archdiocesan Council. These positions are vital to the leadership of this Metropolis and we have an excellent slate of candidates for your consideration.

John pointed out to the delegates that detailed reports from our many committees and ministries are included in each delegate's binder. He encouraged everyone to please take time to review these reports as they contain valuable information for your parishes and the leaders of these can be tremendous resources for you.

John concluded his remarks by thanking everyone for their participation in this Assembly. This is one of the largest turnouts we have had and it shows your commitment to your work as leaders in your parishes and for our Metropolis.

## **ELECTIONS**

This year we are holding elections for the Metropolis Council and Archdiocesan Council. The Metropolis Elections Committee is comprised of our Metropolis Chancellor – Archimandrite Apostolos Koufallakis, Jeannie Ranglas and Isidoros Garifalakis. Through the Office of the

Chancellor, our clergy were notified in writing and asked to submit nominees for these positions. A slate of 12 laity and eight clergy for election to the Metropolis Council were presented to the Assembly as follows:

**CLERGY NOMINEES**

Father Andrew Barakos  
V. Rev. John Constantine  
Father Theodore Dorrance  
Father Dino Pappademos  
Father Luke Palumbis  
Father Peter Salmas  
Father Anthony Savas  
Father Peter Stratos

**LAITY NOMINEES**

Spiro Beckas  
John Buzas  
George Demos  
James Eleopoulos  
Gerry Kamilos  
Greg Kyritsis  
Ted Laliotis  
George Psihogios  
Paul Sogotis  
Michael Syrengelas  
Dr. Olympia Tachopoulou  
Dr. Eve Tibbs

The following nominees were presented for the Archdiocesan Council:

**CLERGY NOMINEE**

Father Aris Metrakos

**LAITY NOMINEES**

Isidoros Garifalakis  
Rocky Sisson

A motion to close the nominations was made by Paul Sogotis, seconded by Kathy Petsas.

The Elections Committee then provided brief biographical information on each candidate and ballots were distributed. A total of eight clergy and eight laity are to be elected to the Metropolis Council. Following the tabulation of votes, the following people were elected to serve on the Metropolis Council for a term beginning following this summer's Clergy-Laity Congress and concluding in 2016l:

**CLERGY ELECTED**

Father Andrew Barakos  
V. Rev. John Constantine  
Father Theodore Dorrance  
Father Dino Pappademos  
Father Luke Palumbis  
Father Peter Salmas  
Father Anthony Savas  
Father Peter Stratos

**LAITY ELECTED**

John Buzas  
George Demos  
Gerry Kamilos  
Greg Kyritsis  
Paul Sogotis  
Michael Syrengelas  
Dr. Olympia Tachopoulou  
Dr. Eve Tibbs

In addition, Father Aris Metrakos, Isidoros Garifalakis, and Rocky Sisson were elected to the Archdiocesan Council.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Financial Report was presented by Metropolis Treasurer Michael Syrengelas. He began by reviewing the 2013 Year-End Financial Statements. The Metropolis ended the year with a slight deficit of \$18,810. Donations still need improvement, while expenditures continue to be managed efficiently by the Metropolis staff. The Balance Sheet shows our Total Current Assets of \$2,490,401. This includes several restricted funds including the Hellenic Heritage Center, the Gala, Elios Culture Fund, the Saint George and Saint Katherine Mission Fund, and the All Saints Foundation.

Michael briefly reviewed the Profit and Loss Statement which provides more detail to support the budget report. The Net Income of \$889,488 includes proceeds from the Gala as well as a bequest left to the Metropolis for Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center.

The 2014 Budget for the Metropolis was presented. This includes an anticipated \$696,134 as our portion of the Archdiocese Allocation. Father Aris Metrakos provided a brief explanation on the National Ministries Commitment and the importance of each parish's participation and timely submission of the requested documentation, and their payments to the Archdiocese. Father Aris reiterated that the amounts allocated to each parish are not at all subjective, but rather based on data submitted by each community, with proportionate amounts allocated to parishes based on the goal set forth for us by the Archdiocese.

It was noted that the registration fees for Summer Camp and Greek Village Camp now are processed through the Metropolis which explains part of the budget increase. Overall, the projected revenue and expenses for 2014 are \$1,263,900.

Jim Vorrises suggested that since we are non-profit we consider using the term "Receipts" instead of Revenue, and "Surplus" instead of profit.

A motion to approve the 2014 Metropolis budget made by Father Peter Salmas, seconded by Jim Vorrises. Motion carried unanimously.

## **SAINT NICHOLAS RANCH AND RETREAT CENTER**

Michael Pappas presented a brief report on the progress of Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center. He said that bookings have increased and that the Ranch has very few open weekends through the remainder of the year. He would still like to see an increase in parishes utilizing the Ranch for retreats, and emphasized the strong collaboration they have with the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life Giving Spring. Michael expressed his thanks to the Metropolis and the parishes for their financial support throughout the year, and hopes that they can continue to explore other ways to increase their revenue.

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos commended Michael and his staff for their excellent work, and especially for the hospitality during the Clergy-Laity Assembly.

## **YOUTH AND ADULT MINISTRIES**

Paul Gikas offered a brief presentation on the Youth and Young Adult Ministries of our Metropolis. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the development of the Summer Camp and Greek Village Camp programs. Both of these were recently featured at the Folk Dance and Choral Festival in an effort to encourage greater enrollment and participation. Paul showed a promotional video about Summer Camp, and while he realizes that many parishes and regions also offer summer camp programs, he encouraged people to consider sending their children to the Ranch for an enriching week-long experience, and the opportunity to make new friends from throughout the Metropolis.

Paul is also working closely with the Youth Task Force from the Strategic Planning Committee to expand other areas of youth ministry, including programs for young adults, a stronger online presence and moms and tots.

## **RESOLUTION**

A resolution from the Saint Demetrios Church in Tucson, Arizona was presented for discussion. Their parish priest, Father Demetrios-Earl Cantos, provided a brief explanation on the background and history of the resolution. The resolution focuses on the importance of being inclusive of all people regardless of their ethnicity. Following considerable discussion and revisions, a motion was made to accept the resolution by Shota Mkheidze, seconded by George Papailias. Motion carried with three nay votes.

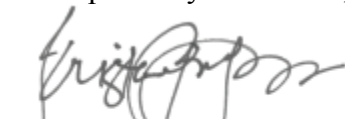
His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos stated that this resolution is not necessary and thus it will not be sent to the Archdiocese for consideration at the Clergy-Laity Congress.

## **CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT**

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos thanked everyone for their eager and enthusiastic participation. He especially commended John Buzas for his excellent skills in presiding at the Assembly, and asked that we continue to keep Fanis Economidis and especially his wife, Cynthia, in our prayers.

With their being no further business to discuss, the Assembly adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Bruskas



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## **Statement of Belief & Call to Action**

With full recognition and understanding that Greek Orthodoxy refers to Eastern Orthodox Christianity and is inclusive of all Orthodox ethnicities and traditions, and in order to fulfill the Great Commission\* of Christ and to live a full Orthodox Christian life, I faithfully and prayerfully state the following:

1. That I accept that every person is made in the image and likeness of God;
2. That I respect all in our Orthodox community, regardless of their ethnic heritage or national background;
3. That I will embrace all in the Orthodox community with Christ-like unity, harmony, forgiveness and love; and
4. That I will speak out with love against the mistreatment of any person.

### \*Matthew 28:16-20: "The Great Commission of Christ"

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

*This Resolution was unanimously passed by St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Tucson, AZ at their Spring Parish Assembly held on Sunday, February 9, 2014. This Resolution was presented and subsequently modified by the Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly on Tuesday, February 25, 2014. The Resolution passed by a majority vote, with three opposing votes.*