



METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

## **CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

*April 26 – 27, 2017*

**Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center – Squaw Valley, CA**

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

The 2017 Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly was called to order at 2:00 p.m. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos presided over the opening prayer service, assisted by Rev. Father Peter Salmas.

Metropolitan Gerasimos recommended Fanis Economidis to be the Presiding Officer and Isidoros Garifalakis to be the Secretary. A motion to accept this recommendation was made by Rev. Father Peter Salmas, seconded by Rev. Father Gary Kyriacou. Motion carried unanimously.

A special welcome was extended to our guest speaker. V. Rev. Archimandrite Dr. Nathanael Symeonides, who will offer a presentation on the recent Holy and Great Council. Father Nathanael serves as the Director of the Office of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

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

In his Keynote Address, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos elaborated on the theme of this year's Assembly, "Building Unity Through Love", and how it relates to our work as a Metropolis and in our parishes, but beyond the local boundaries and extending to the Archdiocese and Ecumenical Patriarchate. Metropolitan Gerasimos remarked that our work as a Metropolis does not occur in a vacuum. It must be placed within the wider context of our Archdiocese and its many ministries. Our mission is to "build up the body of Christ," as St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "until we all attain to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." We build up the body through our ministries to the people in our parishes and to those outside of them. We are seeing more and more that parishes with a wide variety of interests and programs are the most vibrant parishes, with bright futures.

That is one reason we created the Strategic Plan – to nurture vibrant parishes. So, for this Strategic Plan to be effective, we must be committed to its vision and be ready to work together. Not so that we can say, "look, we've accomplished a goal of the plan," but to say, we are serving our people and bringing them closer to Christ through the life of your parish.

It is especially important for clergy and lay people to work together in a cooperative and collaborative manner. When clergy and lay people build their unity, through trust, through mutuality, by listening to one another and to hold one another accountable to being the Church in the world, in a spirit of love, we become that shining light on a lampstand. From the beginning of the Church, this cooperative spirit has been taught and preached. Saint Ignatius of Antioch encouraged those who read his letters to be as a choir, each singing his part in harmony, or to be as fine-tuned as a lyre. Or as St. John Chrysostom said, those entrusted to the care of the Church must build it up to a state of healthiness, to a state of beauty, to overcome any wrinkle or spot (On the Priesthood, Book IV, ch. 2). All of us are entrusted with that work and we must each do our part in the ministry we are given.

For these reasons, our theme for this Assembly, “Building unity through love... ‘keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,’” was selected. What unites us as a Metropolis is our Faith and our Heritage, our love for Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church and our way of life, which means our love and concern for one another because we are the Church. We cannot forget that when we care for the institutions of the Church, those of our parishes, our Metropolis, our Archdiocese, and our Ecumenical Patriarchate, we are showing our care for Christ and for one another. This care must be expressed peacefully, without the rancor and polarization we see in the world around us. The Holy Spirit binds us to one another, uniting us as the Body of Christ, the Church.

Metropolitan Gerasimos also spoke of his experience in participating in the recent and historic Holy and Great Council stating that it widened many perspectives on the life of our Church, from how the Council affirmed many things that we take for granted in the US, such as religious diversity and pluralism. On this example, we must concern ourselves and pay attention to the world outside the borders of our Church, whether our ecumenical and interreligious engagements, to the global involvement and connection of our Archdiocese to the rest of the Orthodox world.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY V. REV. ARCHIMANDRITE DR. NATHANAEL SYMEONIDES – *Facing the Mirror at the Holy and Great Council: What we learned about our identity and mission in the world.***

Father Nathanael gave an in-depth presentation on the Holy and Great Council and the months of preparation to bring Orthodox leaders from throughout the world together for this important meeting. Though not all jurisdictions were represented, Father Nathanael stated that this did not diminish the spirit of this gathering, and that the dialogue which started needs to be continued and expanded, and sooner than another 1,200 years so as to address relevant topics that affect our faithful and many important pastoral aspects of ministry. He also shared an informative video that summarized the work of the Council and demonstrated the spirit of brotherly love that emanated from the open and honest communication that was cultivated by the Hierarchs in attendance and encouraged by the compassionate leadership of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Following the presentation by Father Nathanael, the delegates engaged in further dialogue with questions pertaining to the Holy and Great Council.

## **RECESS**

The Assembly recessed for Great Vespers and Dinner. A Ministries Pavilion was held in the Alex and Faye Spanos Faith and Heritage Center during which the delegates met with the Metropolis ministry leaders and obtained information and resources to expand their efforts at their parishes and also become more engaged in the work of the Metropolis.

## **DAY TWO**

Following Divine Liturgy and a thirteen-year Memorial Service for His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, of blessed memory, the deliberations of the Clergy-Laity Assembly resumed at 11:00 a.m. with a prayer and the singing of *Christos Anesti* led by Metropolitan Gerasimos. He offered brief remarks and encouraged the delegates to go back to their communities and take the message of the good works of the Metropolis and our ministries so that we may all grow in Christ.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the 2016 Clergy-Laity Assembly was made by Dr. Tanya Spirtos, seconded by Paul Pries. Motion carried unanimously.

## **REPORT OF THE METROPOLIS COUNCIL**

Fanis Economidis reported on the meeting of the Metropolis Council which immediately preceded the Assembly. He shared that the Council spent considerable time analyzing the budget for the Metropolis, taking into account several factors, including the expansion of our ministries which have been strengthened through the efforts of our Strategic Plan. Fanis remarked that last evening was a perfect example of this progress during our evening reception and Ministry Pavilion which afforded each of us the opportunity to interact with the leaders of our ministries, learn more about these programs, and take ideas back to our parishes.

We have been investing resources into this area, and this investment has included the addition of new staff members to lead these ministries. Later on in this meeting, you will learn more about this and how the budget of the Metropolis must grow to respond to these needs. Part of what is making this growth possible is the revenue from the Metropolis Gala in 2016 for which the proceeds were designated to support our ministries. This is a clear demonstration of putting these funds to good use for their intended purpose. I am pleased to report that at our Gala in November 2016 at which we honored the extraordinary leadership of Gerry and Jeannie Ranglas we raised \$260,000 in support of our Metropolis ministries.

Fanis reminded the delegates that the binders contain written reports on the ministries of our Metropolis. He encouraged everyone to read this information and share it with people at your parish. What we are doing is for you. We want to offer the best resources to strengthen our parishes and parishioners and you will find in these reports some tangible programs that can help you, whether you are a clergyman or a layperson.

Fanis also congratulated our parishes on their exceptional participation in the National Ministries Commitment program of our Archdiocese. Our communities collectively contributed over \$3 million dollars, which was the amount assessed to our Metropolis by the Archdiocese. This

resulted in a significant bonus for our Metropolis which will be further detailed during the financial report.

He closed by offering his gratitude for the participation of our parishes and their commitment to our Metropolis. Fanis commented that he is honored to serve as the Vice President of the Metropolis Council and work with so many wonderful people to advance our efforts and truly make a positive difference for our parishes.

### **FINANCE REPORT**

Fanis Economidis presented the Metropolis Budget Report for 2016 as well as the proposed Budget for 2017. The new budget includes an expanded area for ministry support made possible through the funds raised at our Gala events in support of the Strategic Plan and ministries development. The 2017 budget also provides for salary increases for the Metropolis Staff who have not received cost of living or merit increases in over five years. While the 2016 year-end budget did reflect a deficit of \$130,018, this was in large part due to the delayed payment by the Archdiocese of our bonus for 2015 of \$100,470 which was paid in early 2016.

Kristen Bruskas reviewed the Profit and Loss Previous Year Comparison which provided further details into the income and expenditures for the Metropolis. This included details on areas such as Contract Services, Office Supplies and Printing, Patriarchal Synod Travel, Payroll and Benefits and our Ministries Allocation. In addition, revenue from our year-end fundraising appeal as well as an explanation of the revenue and expenses associated with our Metropolis Summer Camp program were also reviewed.

A motion to approve the 2017 Metropolis Budget was made by Rev. Father Peter Salmas, seconded by Rev. Father Ted Pantels. Motion approved unanimously.

### **RANCH REPORT**

Fanis Economidis reported on the progress of the Ranch. Their operations continue to improve with bookings expanding significantly over the past several years. With the completion of the Alex and Faye Spanos Faith and Heritage Center, the Ranch now has more space to offer groups for their meetings. Thanks to the generosity of the people who attended the Thyranoxia as well as the Clergy-Laity Assembly delegates from last evening's Ministries Pavilion, we have been able to provide for the majority of the furnishings for this building. We still need to finish the offices as well as the displays in the Metropolitan Anthony Gallery. Special thanks are due to the committee who worked on the Thyranoxia and furnishings – Jeannie Ranglas, Natalia Orfanos, Michael Pappas and Kristen Bruskas.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Metropolitan Gerasimos thanked everyone for their attentiveness and engagement in the Clergy-Laity Assembly. He remarked that it is not a small effort for our clergy and laity to lead our parishes as these can be difficult times with many challenges, but the Lord will provide the path that will ultimately lead to salvation.

He especially thanked Fanis Economidis for his tireless service as Vice-President of the Metropolis Council and the many ways he offers of himself for the betterment of our Metropolis as a committed steward, a trusted advisor and treasured friend.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Rev. Dr. Christopher Flesoras from Saint Anna in Roseville, CA suggested that we consider a reflection of our Metropolis Ministries in relation to the National Ministries, identifying opportunities for collaboration, utilization of shared resource materials, and the allocation of funding. He stated that good ministry is happening at the parish level that should be promoted and shared.

Father John Alexandres from Prophet Elias in San Bernardino, CA thanked the laity in attendance for their participation in the Assembly, but also for their dedication to their respective parishes and the leadership they provide.

Brent Noyes from Saint Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles, CA asked if any thought had been given to renovation of the barn for possible utilization as an auditorium or conference center, maintain the exterior and redoing the interior. Fanis stated that this would fall under the jurisdiction of the Board of Directors of Saint Nicholas Ranch; they will be exploring several areas of possible facility usage and growth in the coming years.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With their being no further business to discuss a motion to adjourn was made by Rev. Father Peter Salmas, seconded by V. Rev. Archimandrite John Constantine. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m. with a closing prayer and the singing of *Christos Anesti* led by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos.

Submitted by,



Isidoros Garifalakis  
Secretary