

**Fellowship of St. John the Divine**

**Fall Encounter Meeting**

**Terre Haute, Indiana**

**October 28-30, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 11 AM with a prayer by His Grace, Bishop MARK.

Sayedna spoke about the decline in attendance. He stated people want something more than Business Meetings. Sayedna spoke about the gathering of Teens in Canton – he would like to see more Retreats. He asked if we need a Spring Meeting.

Joe Zogaib, Council Leader, explained there are administrative things that need to be discussed. It is the “home stretch” coming into the Parish Life Conference.

Meetings should be more focused on speakers – less on business.

Sayedna spoke about ad’s publicizing the Parish Life Conferences. They are focused on sightseeing trips. The Conferences should be more focused on Orthodox Workshops.

We need to re-vamp the PLC’s. There can be workshops for chanters, Church School, Parish Council and many more. It is quite costly to attend the different workshops at the Village and elsewhere. We should bring these wonderful programs into our own backyard.

The Teens are pushed aside at the Conventions. They should be allowed to chant. There is a tremendous gap from 15 to 35. The children go off to college, get married and some never come back. We need to see what we can do differently to keep our children – change the course of things.

Joe Zogaib stated that he has appointed Paul Fuller to connect us with people away at college. Joe stated that under Cathy Snyder's leadership we have had many workshops.

Fr. Joe Abud, our Spiritual Advisor, concurred that we have been going in that direction.

Sayedna asked about our relationship with the OCF. Joe stated there is no relationship at the present time.

Joe stated we are trying to make it a more dynamic organization. One of our goals is to bring the college students back. We should invite college students to be a part of our family so they are not alone on a holiday.

Campus Ministry: In the past we have donated \$500.00. This money has been used to purchase and send book marks to college students. We need to figure out what we want to do.

Spring Meeting could be a short business meeting – have a speaker and a Community Service Project. Sayedna stated that priests do not want to be away from their parishes during Great Lent.

Cathy Snyder stated that we will not have continuity. She expressed a concern about losing people – we have worked with the Ladies and the speaker was for both groups. Priests are not encouraging people to come.

Sarah stated we should make sure we get a representative from each church.

Fr. Joe stated the issue is with the Teens, Ladies and Fellowship. The clergy are now looking for their own Retreat. Sayedna is seeking opinions from each group.

Sayedna expressed his wishes for a Fall Meeting and Parish Life Conference. Have 2 meetings only. There is nothing to prevent the Fellowship from meeting during the Canton Basketball Tournament.

Esther Simbol stated this would be a way to support the Basketball Tournament. Have the Fellowship meet in conjunction with it. She also suggested rotating cities. The Fellowship could meet on Saturday evening.

Distance plays a part – Iowa, Minneapolis, Wisconsin. Fr. Joe stated we now have Winter Camp and many other opportunities for people to take advantage of. There is limited time, money and travel. Sayedna suggested a tournament for the Western part and one for the East.

Nicole Dahdal, President of their Senior SOYO group (ages 19 to 30), said it is good for them to be with the OCF group. The younger people want to join their group and this helps them transition into the group.

Joe Zogaib suggested Chicago as a good place for a Basketball Tournament. (Central location) Sarah stated that if they see us supporting them they will be more comfortable joining us. Have everyone get together on Friday night and we could have a meeting or retreat on Saturday.

Fr. Joe asked how would this play out on a Diocesan level.

Discussion about meeting in January or in March in Toledo.

Fr. Joe thanked Sayedna for being with us. “We want to move forward with your vision. We are here to be your sheep. We will follow where you lead us.

MINUTES: Will be published on our website.

Joe asked everyone to introduce themselves.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Cathy Snyder presented the report. Beginning balance was \$20,023.63. Income: \$10,500.00; Expenses: \$7,493.60. Ending balance \$23,030.03.

Cathy stated that invoices will be sent out in January.

Cathy stated that NAC has a grant of \$500.00 for speakers which we can apply for.

Cathy stated that the proceeds from the Parish Life Conference in Chicago, in the amount of \$8,300.00, will be put into a CD.

TEAM LEADERSHIP REPORTS: Sarah Najjar reported that she has all chairmen for the Festivals and that information for the Creative Festivals will be mailed out in January. Information is also available on the Internet. Photography will include digital pictures this year. Pictures eligible for consideration should be taken from June to June and must go along with the Conference Theme.

Discussion about trophies. They are not durable. Sarah is looking into this matter.

COMMUNICATIONS: Joe Zogaib stated that there will be one contact from each parish so Fellowship information can be sent to that individual for distribution. Information will also be sent to the Priest and Parish Council chairman.

Fr. Joe suggested having a cover letter from Sayedna go to parishes explaining the Fellowship Organization and what activities are going on. Esther stated that mailing the information is better than e-mail because people read the e-mail and delete it – they do not pass it on.

Linda stated that the 2005-06 Directory has been completed and will be e-mailed to everyone on Sunday. Hard copies are available also.

INTERNET TECHNOLOGY: Joe stated it is important that we get someone to post information on our Website. Nicole Dahdal stated that she is getting her Masters in Internet Technology and that she would be willing to take on this position.

Joe also spoke about getting a Newsletter put out. Articles for the Newsletter can come from different churches and Leadership Team members.

BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE: NAC has a history project in the works at the present time. Our archives are at St. George Cathedral in Toledo.

LONG RANGE PLANNING: Paul Fuller will be our connection to churches.

Fr. Joe asked if we can get a list of OCF students through the local churches. Joe Zogaib stated there is a website [www.ocf.net](http://www.ocf.net) which maintains the site to contact people.

PLC: Josie Katzbach passed out information on the Parish Life Conference, which will be hosted by St. Matthew the Evangelist Orthodox Church in North Royalton, June 28<sup>th</sup>-July 2, 2006..

MISSION TEAM LEADER: Anna Kurien

The Mission Endowment Fund is at \$250,000.00 – our new goal is \$750,000.00.

Anna spoke about the Missions and stated they need help, advice and stated that the Wish List for Missions lets people know what they need.

At the Spring Meeting, if we meet in Toledo during the basketball tournament, we could plan a Mission Visit to Ann Arbor or Peoria. Anna will check with Missions and contact Joe.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Joe thanked the parish from Cicero for doing a great job on the Parish Life Conference.

Joe passed out the Overall Goals for the Fellowship:

1. Become a Fellowship of congregations, rather than a Fellowship of individuals.
2. Strengthen communications between diocesan and local Fellowships by having one contact person per parish. Support and sustain these local Fellowships.
- 3 Work toward supporting missions, both locally and through the Mission Endowment Fund.
4. Improve website content and usefulness
5. Bridge relationships with local college students by connecting the Fellowship with local Orthodox Christian Fellowships.

Sarah Najjar spoke about group of college students in Louisville who are paired up with families in Louisville. “Adopt a College Student” – serve as mentor for them. Joe said he would pass this idea on to Paul Fuller.

Joe spoke about the New England Diocese having a monthly workshop series. The churches rotate the workshops. Fr. Joe stated this would also work on a Deanery Level. The Fellowship could encourage this. It would be cost effective. Joe will pursue this idea.

HISTORIAN: At the present time Runge Yared has been taking care of the Archives. Joe will check with her on where the information is. He will also check with the Village and see if there can be a Midwest Archives set up there.

NAC DELEGATES MEETING: February 3-5, 2006 at the Village. Delegates will be Fr. Joe Abud, Joe Zogaib, Linda Simon and Anna Kurian.

PROTOSYNGELOS ELLIS KHOURI MERIT AWARD: Esther Simbol spoke about the award and stated people do not know what it is about. She suggested that the award be retired and put at the Village. Fr. Joe stated that individuals who deserved to be honored were honored. Esther will contact Regina and make arrangements to retire the award.

Fr. Nabil suggested that the award be retired and kept in our own Diocese in the showcase in the Cathedral in Toledo.

Cathy Snyder asked if the Fellowship had done anything in memory of Fr. Elias Meena.

Sarah Najjar moved that the Fellowship make a monetary donation of \$250.00 to Gail Meena. Esther Simbol seconded the motion. Passed.

Discussion about Fr. James Ellison and the circumstances following their automobile accident. St. Nicholas Church is accepting donations for the "Ellison Family." Joe moved that we send \$250.00 to St. Nicholas Church, earmarked for the Ellison Family Fund. Linda Simon seconded. Passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 PM with a prayer by Fr. Joseph Purpura.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda A. Simon