



**PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE WINTER RETREAT OF
THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, New Mexico
22-24 February, 2011**

Present were:

His Beatitude, JONAH, Archbishop of Washington, and New York, Metropolitan of All America, and Canada, Chairman

His Eminence, NATHANIEL Archbishop of Detroit, and of the Romanian Episcopate

His Grace, NIKON, Bishop of Boston, of New England, and of the Albanian Archdiocese

His Grace, TIKHON, Bishop of Philadelphia, and of Eastern Pennsylvania, (Secretary)

His Grace, BENJAMIN, Bishop of San Francisco, and of the West

His Grace, Bishop MELCHISEDEK, Bishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

His Grace, MICHAEL, Bishop of New York, Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

His Grace, MARK, Bishop of Baltimore, Auxiliary to the Primate and Administrator of the Diocese of the South. (Non-Voting)

The Very Reverend Archimandrite MATTHIAS, Bishop-elect of Chicago and the Midwest. (Non-Voting)

Absent were:

His Grace, ALEJO, Bishop of Mexico City, and the Exarchate of the United States of Mexico

His Grace, Bishop IRENEE, Bishop of Quebec City, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada

His Grace, Bishop IRINEU, Bishop of Dearborn, Auxiliary Bishop of the Romanian Episcopate

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

SESSION I

Report of Metropolitan JONAH

HEARD:

Metropolitan JONAH presented his written report on various issues facing the Holy Synod and the OCA at this time.

Discussion followed.

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod received His Beatitude's report and requested a copy of it along with the supporting documentation referenced therein.

SESSION II

SMPAC Memo

HEARD:

Metropolitan JONAH presented his response to the February 10, 2011 memorandum of the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee of the Orthodox Church in America.

Discussion followed.

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod will request documentation within the shortest delay from the SMPAC and will review it in conjunction with its review of the above referenced documents from Metropolitan JONAH.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH will fulfill the final recommendation of the investigative report concerning an on-going issue.

Other Issues

HEARD:

A discussion was held on the various issues affecting the life of the Church.

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod established a list of priorities for this retreat.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

SESSION III

Trip to Moscow

HEARD:

Metropolitan JONAH presented a written report from his recent trip to Moscow.

Discussion followed.

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod will review this report at the upcoming Spring Session of the Holy Synod and will offer a further affirmation of the autocephaly.

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs was invited into the meeting.

HEARD:

Metropolitan JONAH asked Archpriest Alexander Garklavs to offer a 30-minute presentation of his appeal.

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs presented his position on the request of Metropolitan JONAH that he resign as Chancellor of the OCA.

Discussion followed with questions asked by the members of the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod thanked Archpriest Alexander Garklavs for his presentation.

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs left the meeting.

DECISION:

A decision was deferred until later in the meeting to allow for further discussion.

SESSION IV

Clergy Matters

HEARD:

A review of recent clergy cases was reviewed.

DECIDED:

Draft letters are being prepared to address the clergy cases referenced above.

The Holy Synod's Concern for the Health of His Beatitude, Jonah

HEARD:

The Holy Synod discussed matters affecting the primatial service of His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH. Holy Synod members affirmed their love and obedience to the Metropolitan and reminded him that love and obedience are also reciprocal between the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod. There must be mutual obedience.

Metropolitan JONAH was asked to absent himself from the meeting.

Discussion followed.

Metropolitan JONAH returned to the meeting.

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod took the following actions and reviewed them with His Beatitude:

1. The Holy Synod accepted Archpriest Alexander Garklavs' resignation as Chancellor effective immediately.
2. The Holy Synod expressed concern for the Metropolitan's health. Once again they affirmed their love and concern for him and their earnest desire to see him succeed. After further discussion, the Holy Synod determined that a sixty day Leave of Absence for His Beatitude would be beneficial. Metropolitan Jonah accepted to do so. The Synod asked him to request to do so, as it would be better seen that he acknowledged the need for this. Metropolitan JONAH then requested a Leave Of Absence for not less than 60 days during which time he would see a physician and devote himself to his own spiritual and physical health without concern for the burdens of the primatial office. This could include a time of retreat at a monastery. His Grace Bishop Benjamin asked if he was ready to make this decision or if he needed additional time and the Metropolitan said he did not need more time to make the decision.

3. The Holy Synod appointed Archbishop NATHANIEL as Administrator of the OCA for the length of His Beatitude's leave.

4. The Holy Synod appointed Bishop MELCHISEDEK as interim Chancellor.

5. The Holy Synod relieved His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH from his responsibilities as Locum Tenens of the Diocese of the South and appointed Bishop NIKON Locum Tenens of the Diocese of the South with Bishop MARK continuing as administrator.

6. The Holy Synod relieved His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH from his responsibilities as Locum Tenens of the Diocese of Midwest and appointed Bishop TIKHON as Locum Tenens of the diocese of the Midwest with Archimandrite MATTHIAS continuing as administrator

HEARD:

Bishop BENJAMIN conveyed to His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH, the above decisions of the Holy Synod. He noted that these decisions were made out of love for His Beatitude and out of concern for the spiritual and physical health of the Primate.

The members of the Holy Synod emphasized that it was their desire for His Beatitude to sincerely take this time to address issues of his well-being so that he could most effectively fulfill his responsibilities as Primate of the Church.

Metropolitan JONAH thanked the brothers for their concern and acknowledged that a leave of absence would be beneficial and noted that he had not had much time off since his election as Primate.

Bishop TIKHON asked His Beatitude if he needed any time to reflect upon these matters.

Metropolitan JONAH declined and confirmed that he would abide by the counsel of his brothers.

DECIDED:

A. The Holy Synod accepted the request of Metropolitan JONAH for a leave of absence for 60 days.

B. Bishop MICHAEL will meet with Archpriest Alexander Garklavs on Friday to convey to him that the Holy Synod accepts his resignation. He will also meet with the other members of the staff and inform them of the above developments and appointments.

C. The Holy Synod will issue a press release, to be dated Friday, February 25, 2011:

Upcoming Events

HEARD:

A discussion was held on the upcoming Holy Synod/Metropolitan Council meeting, the Assembly of Bishops and the All American Council.

Thursday, February 24, 2011

SESSION V

Final Review

HEARD:

The Holy Synod reviewed the decisions from the minutes from the previous days.

Bishop TIKHON presented a draft of the Press Release.

Metropolitan JONAH inquired about several upcoming events which he had been scheduled to participate in.

The Holy Synod recommended that it would be best for His Beatitude to begin his leave of absence immediately and allow the Administrator, the Interim Chancellor and the members of the Holy Synod to assume the responsibility for those events

Metropolitan JONAH agreed to this recommendation.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am

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