

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST
DELEGATES MEETING
General Assembly Meeting
October 15, 2005

The meeting began at 1:15pm with a Call to Order by Kyra Pelachik, Fellowship President. His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH led us in the opening prayer.

Josh Geleris spoke about his missions trip visiting orphanages in Albania. He described the efforts of Dr. Charles Linderman, to serve over 30 orphans. He receives 1/3 of his income from the state and 1/3 from his own means. Josh asked that we assist this community, as there is struggle for faith there. The church is very packed, and almost all were Muslim. People in Albania want to believe, want to understand. For 70 years there had been no faith allowed. See the websites: www.lindermanmission.org and www.ocmc.org.

Teen SOYO President Amanda Haddad addressed the attendees. Teen SOYO is involved in many things. Their Special Olympics is tomorrow. All of the parishes received icons and info about this day. Please support Teen SOYO in this event. January is Education month. We are asking that you educate the teens on abortion. Do whatever you can to push events forward.

Antiochian Women President Samia Habib addressed the attendees. There is a Spring Retreat in April. The Antiochian Women have collected money and disbursements have been sent to Louisiana and Texas in support of those injured by the hurricanes. The women are working hard on the Retired Clergy Project. Also they discussed attending the PLC in San Diego. They plan to get the word out about all these events. Three women delegates from each parish would be in attendance at the PLC.

The Fellowship of St. John the Divine President Kyra Pelachik discussed that there were 22 parishes represented at their General Meeting. She spoke of the intentions to have events in all the Deaneries this year. Bishop JOSEPH is planning to visit Northern and Southern California to meet with the Young Adults. Next His Grace will visit the other Deaneries and work on growing the Fellowship organizations. Also, a Young Adult Conference for all the Deaneries has been discussed with a target of Labor Day weekend. The plan is to have it in Northern California this year, and then move it around to the other Deaneries in cities like Seattle and Tucson.

All of the organizational reports were approved by parliamentary procedures.

Lew Malouf, Chairman of the Diocese Conference Coordination and Planning Committee (CPCC) addressed the body about PLC and Delegate Meetings planning. Lew thanked St. Peter, San Dimas, for hosting this year's Delegates Meeting and gave special thanks to Jackson Brown talking to 30 hotels in his quest to provide the best solution for this meeting. Further, Lew indicated that the approach of utilizing the San Dimas Center, rather than a hotel, for the meeting, worked out very well for all

attendees. Lew then introduced the PLC Focus Group that has been formed to provide additional input to the CPCC. This Group is under the direct administration of His Grace and under the chairmanship of Lew. All attendees were encouraged to provide any input or ideas that they have to the members of the Focus Group, as follows:

Clergy: Father Jon Braun, Father Kevin Scherer and Father Joseph Corrigan
Antiochian Women: Judy Pappoff and Kh. Jan Finley
Teen SOYO: Lauren Malouf, Mark Ajalat and Mark Crawford
Fellowship: Kyra Pelachik and Michael Habib
St. Ignatius: Isabel Elac and Nelson Mamey
CPCC and At Large: Georgette Malouf and Edward Deeb

These members were picked because they have attended many PLCs, some have chaired PLCs and all have good input. The Focus Group is not trying to replace the CPCC, but providing additional input.

A question was raised as to why we always pick expensive hotels. Lew indicated that we do not select expensive hotels. Rather, we select hotels that can support our 1,000+ attendees and then negotiate the best possible prices and benefits. Lew also mentioned that if we were to hold a PLC of this magnitude at a conference center or college campus, we would have to hire and direct the services of approximately 200 people to provide the same services that the hotels provide.

Tony Karam, the 2005 PLC Vice Chair spoke about the PLC 2005 in San Francisco. He thanked us for attending. He said there were few challenges, but that with the help from the planning volunteers and the CPCC, they were able to overcome these challenges. There were 823 attendees. However, there were many cancellations caused by the deaths of two parishioners in the area. Overall, it was wonderful and successful. The PLCs Net Income was almost \$28,000 of which 45% was disbursed to the Diocese Organizations. Tony suggested that all attendees sign up 6 months in advance for the PLC Events. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol of San Francisco, recommended that everyone place an ad in the Souvenir Journal as this is how we cover the expenses for the PLCs. The Journal should also have a page included that advertises for the next year's PLC.

Fr. Hanna Sakkab of St. George, the host parish of 2006 PLC in San Diego spoke next. He described his history first. He came from Lebanon after being a priest for 51 years. He hasn't seen a parish in the Middle East as active as those in our Diocese. Or a bishop as active as Bishop JOSEPH. "Here we are happy in conferences to see each other. How beautiful it is to participate in worshipping the Lord in Christ. We like to serve you: you are the hosts, we are the guests. The reason we have PLCs is for transformation. The central point of life has to be our Lord and Savior. Emphasis for PLC's should be on spirituality; the past meetings and past PLC's were wonderful in this area."

Lorice El-Khouli and Rosemarie Robles are the Co-Chairs for the 2006 PLC to be held at the Sheraton Harbor Island. Normally, this hotel and all of the larger hotels in San

Diego are very pricey. However, they have negotiated a great rate of \$125/night. There will be a raffle for a free room for 4 days. Registering early will help you get your name in for the raffle. The dates are May 24-28, 2006. There will be church services in memory of loved ones with small holy bread. There is a donation of \$25 in advance for someone special. There will be a special room for the Young Adults where they will learn religious songs and have a scavenger hunt. "Come early and make it a vacation time." There is the Scripps Museum, Birch Aquarium, Legoland, and Historic Balboa Park. There will be a 10% discount with United Airlines and coupons for other discounts in goodie bags. Many activities will be spiritually focused. \$125 room discount is good for the 8 day window, so people can come early and stay late. All the details of the conference will be on this website: www.stgeorgesd.org.

Theme scripture for the PLC 2006: ***Joel 2:28: "It shall come to pass that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."***

The Bible Bowl will be on Book of Acts. There will be a Hospitality Event on Thursday Night, a Dinner Event on Saturday Night, and after-Bible Bowl Social Event on Saturday Night and the Awards Brunch on Sunday.

Parishioners from St. George stood, they were thanked for being here today and for being our hosts for 2006.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2006 PLC Schedule and Prices. The motion was passed.

2007 PLC will be at the Double Tree Hotel in Portland Oregon at a price of \$99.

2008 PLC will be at the LA Airport Marriot in Los Angeles at the price of \$109.

2009 PLC will be at the Santa Clara Marriott in Santa Clara at the price of \$109.

2010 PLC will be at the JW Starr Pass Marriott in Tucson at the price of \$119.

These are really very low rates for 2-5 years from now. Additionally, we have negotiated for the free use of all of the meeting rooms and the inclusion of approximately \$30,000 (normal rates) of audio-visual equipment.

The 2006 Delegates Meeting will be hosted by St. Michael, Whittier, California.

All organizations were requested to submit their \$250 checks, immediately, so we can assist the host church in offsetting their costs.

October 11th was the 10th Anniversary of Bishop JOSEPH's assignment as our Spiritual Father. The Clergy have, graciously commissioned a new set of vestments for His Grace in honor of this occasion.

Bishop JOSEPH next addressed the Assembly:

"I have three goals, three objectives in my ministry. The first is to be a loving father for all of you. The second is to be a good and faithful servant to Jesus Christ and to all of you. The third is to keep reminding you of your salvation. It is so important. The more I remind you of it, I hope then you will be more serious about it and find more fruit in your life. I want to give you encouragement in this journey. I quoted for the Fellowship from the Bible that "if you are not worthy of this kingdom, it will be taken from you and given to another." So don't let anyone take this kingdom from you. I would deny myself and sacrifice anything to achieve this object. Your salvation is more important to me than my needs. Thank God for your faith, your hearing faith.

In conclusion of this very successful Delegates Meeting, think of what you heard from Josh Geleris. Imagine those people in faraway churches. Our people are working hard to raise up and save money to visit churches. What an exalted cause they are doing, and they are young people. They are trying to spread Orthodoxy everywhere, even though at their age their lives are filled with temptation. Thank you to all the organizations and officers and all involved with the Delegates Meeting.

Finally we need to revitalize education in our diocese. Education of your youth is so important. I need the adults to be educated. I learn from you. Even if you have been born Orthodox or are of Orthodox heritage, or have received the faith through parents, we need to rediscover the Orthodox Faith interiorly. Everyone should get involved in conventions and conferences to rediscover this. Like in the early church, some areas we are preaching to the people inside the walls of the church, but some are doing well, but the people outside the church are unpreached. We have to think about those people who live outside. I have never been stopped by Orthodox people while jogging. Why? Orthodox people have nothing to say? We should be the next generation missionaries. Even beyond the walls of the church. So visit other churches.. Go and feed the hungry. I read and know the parishes that feed the homeless. Feed the hungry and give them preaching. This is your moment. Christ was humiliated and laughed at, but we do this for our salvation.

He quoted **Luke 4:18:**

'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The eyes of all those in the room were on him. Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' Are we faithful to Him? Or are we blind? **All you workers in the organizations: have this ministry. Be prepared for these words to be fulfilled in time. Let your eyes, your whole being be prepared for this type of missionary work. It's time I preach to you this way. It is my judgment if I do not. Now we are ready to go door to door. If we have time for the Hafli, then we have time for service.**

So to do this kind of service, we need these tools: Confession: Don't hide your sin, because it will fester and kill you. Try to get help on this journey. I cannot approach the chalice without being ready for holiness, otherwise I will get more judgment. Have a life of prayer. Prayer will lead me toward Him and toward you. Toward more purity. I can't be a Father without a life of prayer. In the Jesus Prayer we empty ourselves. The more we empty ourselves, God will honor us with His kind of noble ministry. I have to be a new creation. Also love, humility, and forgiveness. These three are connected. You cannot love if you are not humble. You cannot love and be humble if you cannot forgive. You cannot forgive if you are not loving and humble. I know churches where people approach the chalice every Sunday and they are arguing. So you say 'I love you, but not enough to forgive you.' So is this love then? We have to change our mind. Our body is a temple. You are a reflection of the Holy Theotokos. How can you keep this body as a good reflection? Who will teach our values to the next generation? We are unworthy of this task.. Yet it is ours. I don't want to hear that Christian people are careless about their values. We are responsible to pass down the values from our Fathers. It is the Orthodox Way."

Bishop JOSEPH led the delegates in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15.