Special Diocesan Assembly
Diocese of the West
Orthodox Church in America

Arizona Grand Resort and Spa
Sierra Ballroom 2 & 3
Wednesday, July 16, 2025, 1:45 pm; Phoenix, Arizona

Call to Order at 1:52 PM by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

Opening Prayer by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

His Beatitude appointed Diocesan Chancellor Archpriest Kirill Sokolov as Clergy Vice-Chair.

Appointment of Officers and Tellers

Secretariat:
Priest Andrew Smith
Ms. Katie Huff

Tellers:
Archpriest Alexander Vallens
Priest Damian Kulp
Deacon John Gallagher
Matushka Elaine Meholick
Matushka Sophia Sokolov

The slate was accepted by verbal acclamation.

Roll Call for Quorum

Diocesan Council Secretary Priest Andrew Smith performed a roll call of the official registered delegates.

Address of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon
His Beatitude asked the Council to remind itself of the sacredness of this Assembly. It is always striking when we have something so sacred in a place that perhaps looks less sacred. But somehow wherever we happen to be, that place is transformed when we gather with our bishop and our priests and our monastics and our faithful. Our sacred purpose is to be the Church. The Lord gives us the means to do this.

Aside from practical matters that must be considered, we are here for a sacred task to nominate a new bishop for the Diocese of the West. We are grateful to have the newly

retired archbishop of this Diocese here with us. We honored him yesterday, but we want to continue honoring him over the next days and months.

We are here today very much because of His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin. He has been the image of Christ through his patience, humility, and humor. We are grateful for his service, prayers, and labors in bringing the Diocese to where it is and to move it along to select a successor.

We are honored that he was here at this All-American Council to welcome the Orthodox Church in America before he officially retired yesterday. Many years to His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin. Please accept the love of the entire Diocese and the Orthodox Church in America.

The Assembly gave His Eminence a hearty round of applause.

His Beatitude continued, stating that the Holy Synod has the responsibility of identifying and vetting candidates for the Holy Episcopacy. We are a small Church and do not always have an abundance of candidates. We also want to exercise care in the selection of candidates. There is a lot of prayer and consideration that goes into this before the vetting process takes place. Even if there is one candidate, this does not diminish the sacredness of the task. There is indeed one candidate, Archimandrite Vasily (Permiakov). His Beatitude has been working with him over the past two years, discerning his candidacy. A first step in that discernment by His Beatitude was inviting Fr. Vasily to accompany him on some important travel. He has been interviewed by the Holy Synod. He has visited the Diocese of the West on numerous occasions and participated in retreats as well as the consecration of a church. Fr. Vasily has worked with His Eminence as well. This is the process that led us to this moment.

The official vetting process of the Holy Synod to discern candidates begins with three hierarchs performing an initial interview of the candidate, after which a recommendation is made. Then there is a more intense than usual psychological evaluation. Then the candidate is brought before the full Synod for more interviews. In addition, Fr. Vasily has been invited to several Synod meetings as an observer. He is undoubtedly a fully vetted candidate.

As with the Dioceses of Alaska and Eastern Pennsylvania in recent years, there is only one candidate at this nominating assembly. Our task is to consider the persons the Lord brings to us. His Beatitude believes the Lord is bringing Fr. Vasily to this Assembly.

Nomination

His Beatitude opened the floor for nominations for bishop of the Diocese of San Francisco and the West.

Archpriest Lawrence Margitich offered the name of Archimandrite Vasily in nomination as bishop of our Diocese.

Priest Edward Henderson seconded the nomination.

Final Vote

Fr. Kirill instructed the Tellers to distribute the ballots and gave voting instructions to the delegates.

Credentials

Fr. Andrew gave the following report:

1 Hierarch
1 Retired Hierarch
58 Clergy Delegates
40 Lay Delegates

Total present: 100

Announcement of Results

His Beatitude announced there was only one vote against and 99 in favor. Fr. Vasily is officially nominated by the Diocese of the West for consideration of the Holy Synod for election to the See of San Francisco.

The next step is for His Beatitude to call the Holy Synod together to make the final election this afternoon.

His Beatitude asked that the Secretariat note in the minutes that the Tellers invalidated 8 extraneous ballots that had been passed out to non-registered delegates.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon

The Assembly adjourned at 2:29 PM with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet"

Respectfully submitted by,

Priest Andrew Smith, Secretariat

Katie Huff, Secretariat

Approval of Diocesan Hierarch

+TIKHON, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, *Locum Tenens*