

2011 SOYO Leadership Conference

Chicago, Illinois

July 24-27, 2011

July 24, 2011

- I. **Opening Prayer** - led by Fr. Purpura at 7:15 PM.
- II. **Call to Order** - Laney Wagoner calls meeting to order at 7:20 PM on July 24 , 2011.
- III. **Roll Call** - Laney Wagoner conducts roll call.
 - A. **Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:** Grace Khoury & Melissa Khoury (late)
 - B. **Diocese of Miami and the Southeast:** Fr. Philip Rogers late; Joel Finley absent
 - C. **Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and Upstate New York:** Alex Younes (late) & Karla Samman (arriving Tuesday)
 - D. **Diocese of the East:** All Present.
 - E. **Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest:** Elizabeth Ayoub (late)
 - F. **Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:** All Present
 - G. **Worcester:** Carolyn Saba, Michelle Hourani, & Gizelle Hourani (travels delayed); Chris Abdelahad (arriving Monday); Fr. Joseph Kimmett & Greg Abdalah (travels delayed)
 - H. **NAC:** Hiba Ojaimi (arriving Tuesday) Jason Ioannides (absent)
- IV. **Get to Know You (Icebreaker)** - Fr. Purpura explains SOYO Bingo; then, MC Challenge: everyone breaks into pairs and interviews one another--then teens present their interviewees to the room.
- V. **Welcome** - Fr. Purpura reviews a few housekeeping rules for meetings. Laney Wagoner introduces the NAC board and explains absences on the board. Fr. Purpura then talks about the importance of emails and goes over the schedule.
- VI. **Executive Reports**
 - A. **Secretary: Mara Schuler (given in the absence of Jason Ioannides)** - She asks to have the minutes from the 2011 Mid Winter Meetings approved. Dana Zawahri

moves to accept the minutes; Cathryn Kruse seconds the motion; the motion passes and the minutes are approved.

B. Treasurer: Jonn Spencer - He reviews the amounts stated on the report. The NAC bank account contains \$5,796.89. Gloria Petrelli moves to accept the Treasurer's Report; Brooke Romley seconds the motion; the motion passes and the report is approved.

C. Vice President/President: Laney Wagoner - She presents the President's Report in the absence of Hiba Ojaimi. The former White House Director of Drug Free Communities is coming to talk to us this week. NAC has been involved with OCCHY (packet to be discussed later), the Good Samaritan Project, PVC (continuing to work on since its inception at the Palm Springs Convention in 2009), and Special Olympics. Jacque Wakim & Cathryn Kruse move to accept the President's Report; Grace Khoury seconds the motion; the motion passes and the report is approved.

D. Chairman of the Department of Youth: Fr. Joseph Purpura

i. **Expectations** - Fr. Purpura asks SOYO officers to share their personal expectations for the week and how they intend to grow during Leadership Training. We also review the expectations outlined at last year's LT.

ii. **Binder** - Previous and returning officers share testimonials of how to use the SOYO Leadership binder throughout the year: as an address book, as a reference for how to take minutes, as a conversation starter at meetings (ie. OCCHY), etc.

-10 minute break at 9:00 PM; meeting resumed at 9:10 PM-

VII. Al-Kafaat - Myriam Shwayri presents. She talks about the history and mission of Al-Kafaat and briefly outlines the procedures for selling items at the group's booth. She explains how Al-Kafaat is working with the Archdiocese to expand their mission, and how the Archdiocese is supporting the construction of a new complex.

-10 minute break at 9:50 PM; meeting resumed at 10:00 PM-

- VIII. **Housekeeping** - Fr. Purpura hands out 40th Anniversary DVDs and discusses important business that Treasurers need to take care of with Jonn Spencer (signature cards). A signed copy of a constitution for each Diocese was given to all the board members.
- IX. **Appeal for Orthodox Unity in North America** - Fr. Purpura reads the Appeal for Orthodox Unity in North America, drafted on July 25, 2006 by that year's SOYO officers and addressed to all the Orthodox Bishops of North America. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops has since established 13 committees--including Committee for Youth, chaired by Bishop Thomas, and charged with initiatives 2 and 3 from the Appeal. Tomorrow we will discuss the matter further and more in-depth, as our predecessor's efforts to get the ball rolling have begun to come to fruition. Fr. Purpura wants to share with the Assembly our thoughts on Orthodox Unity in October.
- X. **Fr . Purpura** - No Liturgy tomorrow morning; meeting will start at 10:00 AM. Later in day, we will break off by office for discussions/workshops. Fr. Purpura also announces a scavenger hunt that will occur later in the week and Kh. Kathleen instructs everyone to answer questions on a personal index card which is then collected.
- XI. **Closing Prayer** - Fr. Fouad leads us in the closing prayer at 11:35 PM.
- XII. **Meeting Adjourned** at 10:35 PM.

July 25, 2011

- XIII. **Opening Prayer** - led by Bishop THOMAS at 11:04 AM on July 25, 2011. His Grace says a few words pertaining to Youth Departments in various jurisdictions and SOYO's relationship to them. Fr. Purpura opens the floor to questions for His Grace.

XIV. **Open Discussion** about last night's post-meeting activities, getting to know each other, etc.

XV. **Metropolitan PHILIP** arrives at 10:48 AM, accompanied by **Bishop ANTOUN**. His Eminence raises the question, "What are you going to do after age 19 [after graduating SOYO]?" The answer: join the Fellowship of St. John the Divine. Metropolitan PHILIP also urges us to educate ourselves in the Orthodox Faith, warning that failure to do so would make the task of spreading our faith across the United States and Canada impossible. "The gems of Orthodoxy are not floating on the surface [...] we must plunge into the depths to discover them." After opening the floor to questions, Metropolitan PHILIP talks about about Orthodox Unity, and how we must strive to achieve it (especially in this day and age) by taking the initiative to reach out to those in other jurisdictions; and about the significance of his clergy collar. He encourages our participation in the Bible Bowl and Oratorical Festival. He tells us to look at Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) as a pan-Orthodox movement with the goal of bringing together Orthodox college students to discuss the importance and future of Orthodoxy in North America.

A. **Digression to OCCHY** - Gloria Petrelli takes the floor to explain SOYO's (and specifically her) involvement in OCCHY and to describe the problem of substance abuse among today's teens; Fr. Purpura extrapolates and other teens share their own personal stories and experiences with friends and classmates who have been affected by drug/alcohol use. Metropolitan PHILIP promises that these issues will be brought to the Clergy Symposium.

-5 minute break at 12:07 PM. Meeting resumed at 12:12 PM. Fr. Purpura announces a **change in schedule**: lunch break (12:18 PM), with meeting to resume at 1:10 PM-

XVI. **Meeting Adjourned** at 12:15 PM on July 25, 2011.

XVII. **Call to Order** - Laney Wagoner calls the meeting to order at 1:16 PM on July 25, 2011.

XVIII. **Order of St. Ignatius** - Guest Speakers Dan Abraham (outgoing Chair), Mary Winstanley O'Connor (incoming Chair), and Christine Bezreh. Mr. Abraham gives a brief history of the Order (started 50+ years ago by Metropolitan PHILIP for parishioners who would make a lifetime commitment to the Archdiocese). **Over 4,500 members today.** The Order have been pivotal to the growth and upkeep of the Antiochian Village; additionally, they provide scholarships for campers--last year over 750 campers were recipients. **The Order is the primary sponsor for Leadership Training,** provides scholarships for college students to attend OCF's College Conferences, and supports married seminarians and their families. Mr. Abraham emphasizes the importance of learning to give from the heart and expresses the sincerest hopes of the Order to expand and gain new members so that it may continue to support the endeavors of Orthodox youth throughout the Diocese; he explains the concept of "paying it forward," hoping that we will someday pay forward our knowledge of Orthodoxy & leadership to future generations of Teen SOYO. Mr. Abraham mentions that we are very blessed to have Metropolitan who is willing to listen to us, the teens, and work with us to help accomplish our goals. Being a leader, he continues, is about following the path God has laid out for us, and having the courage to take positions that may not necessarily be the most popular. Moreover, advisors are significant in their role as mentors and aids to the officers. Ms. Winstanley then speaks about specific projects funded by the Order.

XIX. **Breakout Groups** - Fr. Purpura splits us into groups based on office; we will reconvene at 3:30. Before breaking, Jonn Spencer and Jennifer Purpura are surprised with a Birthday cake!

XX. **Closing Prayer** - led by Fr. Pupura at 3:42 PM.

July 26, 2011

XXI. **Call to Order** - Hiba Ojaimi calls the meeting to order at 2:30 PM on July 26, 2011.

XXII. **NAC Board Election Speeches** - Each officer running for an office made a short speech. Speeches were as follows: Dana Zawahri (President), Laney Wagoner (President), Brooke Romley (Vice President), Melissa Khoury (Vice President), Matthew Shportun (Treasurer), Grace Khoury (Secretary), Tim Markatos (Secretary).

XXIII. **Recap of Office Breakout Sessions** - Each office met together in separate meeting rooms to discuss their officer duties (on July 25, 2011).

A. **Presidents/Vice Presidents** - Mr. Abraham and Ms. Winstanley from the Order spoke to them about effectively being a good leader. Suggestions were made to be more involved with the Antiochian Women and Order of St. Ignatius. They also learned that the best way to be a good leader is to be a good follower--a good **listener**--to be selfless and willing to sacrifice, to ask for advice when needed, and to be sure to have fun (so that others will be inspired to follow).

B. **Secretaries** - Ms. Bezreh from the Order spoke about the 5 W's and responsibilities of a Secretary: Take roll call; Outline your minutes before the meeting to stay stress-free during meetings. Organization is key, and stick with big facts (not details). Get minutes approved and update your diocese with them. Secretaries should not be afraid to speak up. Keep updated credentials.

C. **Treasurers** - Importance of organization; not making assumptions about finances. Monthly treasury reports to keep the board up to date. How to use Quicken®. Collecting dues. The job is not about making money.

XXII. **Fr. Purpura** takes feedback about the Office and Diocese Breakout Sessions and briefly discusses next year's Leadership Training at the Antiochian Village. Fr.

Philip will be officially handling all feedback about this year's Leadership Training so that improvements can be made next year. He welcomes Jane Tadros, President of the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, who introduces herself to the teens and speaks on behalf of the Fellowship.

XXIII. **Activity! Break:** Each Diocese breaks off to create a plan for their own (fictional) McDonalds with the ultimate goal of world domination. The Dioceses then present their plans. While the judges tabulate their votes, Fr. Purpura explains how this activity was an analogy for how to work together as a board to run your Diocese. McDLaw's gets 1st prize, Worcester & New England gets 2nd prize.

XXIV. **Election of new NAC Board for 2011-2012**

A. 2011-2012 NAC Board

- i. President - Laney Wagoner was elected by popular vote.
- ii. Vice President - Melissa Khoury was elected by popular vote.
- iii. Secretary - Tim Markatos was elected by popular vote.
- iv. Treasurer - Matthew Shportun was elected by popular vote.

XXV. **Fr. Purpura** outlines the evening meeting's schedule and asks us to consider what we can do to achieve unity and what we personally want to see accomplished.

XXVI. **Closing Prayer** - led by Fr. Philip at 4:55 PM.

XXVII. **Meeting Adjourned** at 4:56 PM on July 26, 2011.

Evening Meeting

XXVIII. **Call to Order** - Melissa Khoury calls the meeting to order at 7:33 PM on July 26, 2011.

XXIX. **Opening Prayer** - led by Fr. Josh at 7:33 PM.

XXX. **Hellenic College Presentation** - Greg Abdallah introduces Adam Pantazelos and Rassim El Massih from Hellenic College/Holy Cross in Brookline, MA.

Adam speaks briefly about his own years at and the majors offered by the College. Adam introduces Deacon Nicholas Belcher, Dean of Holy Cross, and lists the scholarships offered by the College. Seminarians at HC/HC are required to attend the manifold services at the College Chapel, while students of the College choose to attend. Adam presents a video prepared by the school and which interviews various professors and students of HC/HC. Subsequently, Rassim, a current student, shares some of his experience at HC/HC. He stresses that the school is not the perfect place for everyone, but is certainly a great place to be for those for whom church, worship, and service are important. Adam concludes by explaining the Semester of Faith program and CrossRoad. Website: www.hchc.edu.

XXXI. **OCCHY Open Forum** - Fr. Antony Bahou leads us in a feedback-based discussion about OCCHY. (see attached for notes)

-Fr. Antony Bahou calls for a break at 8:37 PM-

-Meeting resumes at 8:47-

XXXII. **Diocesan Reports**

A. **Diocese of Toledo & the Midwest:** Gloria Petrelli; No SOYO Left Behind (NSLB) helped increase attendance at events. Goal at beginning of year was to create committees. Public Relations Committee: 3 girls from different parishes in charge--responsible for communications with everyone in Diocese, made a video featuring the different parishes. Goals for year include getting more involvement from fringe dioceses. Establishing Service and Fundraising Committees, hoping to get members from these fringe dioceses. New thing: Diocesan Challenge. New challenge (ie. "go do something pan-Orthodox") each month; parishes will compile pictures and share at PLC. Hoping to continue NSLB successfully. Want to get more people involved and "come back".

- B. Diocese of Miami and the South:** Mara Schuler; created website and twitter to make more info available online. Increased credentials; sent out monthly updates by email. Helped give ideas of what parishes should do each month. Continued Good Samaritan Project. 5 parishes represented at Delegates Meeting; had service project. Money for Missions project has \$5000 goal to be raised to help all the mission churches in the region. All info about all projects made available in packets for parishes at PLC. Service project in Memphis and visit to St. Paul Skete. Want to have several simultaneous pan-Orthodox retreats (SOYO-sponsored) throughout region with same themes.
- C. Diocese of Wichita and Mid America:** Danielle Sackllah; over 150 teens at basketball tournament. Third annual Winter Camp in Wagoner, OK. Two separate retreats in Texas. Main goal to continue NSLB--of the 50 parishes in the diocese, only 23 attend SOYO events/pay dues. YES! Trip in Oklahoma City. Planning on having 3 retreats and hoping for better attendance.
- D. Diocese of Ottawa ,Eastern Canada, and Upstate New York:** Karla Samman; Big goal to reach \$8000 so as not to have to worry about spending. Want to be more involved in OCCHY because of prevalence of drug issues in region. Want to double number of attendees at Annual Retreat; hopefully create another tier of age levels. Focus on helping teens understand how to treat priests properly. Newsletter every 2-3 months updating teens on goings-on. Really want to have a big fundraiser--shirts socks, etc. (Eastern Diocese offers to give them their socks)
- E. Diocese of Worcester and New England:** Chris Abdelahad; Diocesan Spring Meeting in Lawrence included opportunity to make lunches for the community. Lenten Retreat in NH--"What Up With Lent?"--was well attended. Next year's retreat featuring guest speaker Katrina Bitar. Bishop Thomas spoke at PLC; received lots of goodies from St. Katherine College in

CA. Have been getting lots (and lots and lots) of financial support from New England Council of Churches.

F. **Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:** Cathryn Kruse; very successful fall gathering; service project of writing letters to soldiers overseas. Many parishes participated in YES! and FOCUS trips. Fr. Joshua Makoul came to talk at Desert Deanery Retreat during Lent. This year's Winter Camp was the biggest ever--had more teens than Summer Camp did. Metropolitan EPHRAIM spoke at PLC meeting. Hope to start Southern California Deanery and focus more on service aspect of SOYO--perhaps bi-monthly retreats, keeping very connected as a Diocese.

G. **Diocese of the East:** Hiba Khouri; 2 retreats, one in December (Presenting Yourself in Social Situations), and one during Lent (visiting Holy Protection Monastery). Placed greater importance on dues and their being collected. Fall gathering held at Antiochian Village with ~120 attendees. Spring gathering at York, PA (not as great attendance), spoke about SOYO Socks and Dues. PLC in Baltimore, MD: 200 teens attended. SOYO Socks were the name of the game--they have been selling them for 2 years, and they REALLY want to get rid of them. Monthly officers' phone conference.

XXXIII. **Fun-tivity** led by Erin Learned and Elizabeth Ayoub. Teams formed by offices tried to each reach a goal of making \$30,000. Afterwards, Erin reads off comments made during the activity to exemplify how it turned into a competition. The activity worked as an analogy for how we need to work together as Dioceses to thrive and succeed.

XXXIV. **Orthodox Unity** - Fr. Purpura recaps and announces that Fr. Antony Bahou will lead us in an open dialogue about Unity tomorrow to help us prepare for our role at the Assembly of Bishops and to make sure we give our imprint.

XXXV. **Guest Speaker** - Fr. Purpura prepares us for tomorrow's guest speaker and summarizes what her topics of discussion will be--how do we have a voice, and how can we help fellow teens? He emphasizes that we are all here representing Christ, and primarily for the interest of young people throughout our Archdiocese. Fr. Purpura mentions how we have really made our Archdiocese's name known to the Federal Government and wants to contribute a voice--but we will remove OCCHY from our meetings so that those who want to help can be a part, but those who do not, do not need to. He reaffirms the goal of raising our awareness and reiterates how large of an impact we made on Metropolitan PHILIP.

XXXVI. **Alex Younes** - Alex tells a story about growing up in a community where Orthodox unity was heavily emphasized. He uses a metaphor to explain how casting judgments causes us to lose momentum. To understand unity, we must understand the Cross: once we have an established relationship with God, we can do what He wants us to, and with His guidance. Unity has deep roots, but we shouldn't expect it to simply be handed to us; small steps towards big goals. Don't be egotistical: this goal requires humility, gentleness, and self-submission. Be mindful: finding Christ in others is the ultimate goal of our life.

XXXVII. **Guests:** -Laney Wagoner introduces guests: former officers Liz Mamey, Vanessa Kinan, and Mary Saia.

XXXVIII. **Closing Prayer** - led by His Grace Bishop THOMAS at 10:37 PM.

XXXIX. **Meeting Adjourned** at 10:39 PM.

July 27, 2011

XL. **Meeting Called to Order** at 10:45 AM on July 27, 2011.

- XLII. **OCF** - Ms. Jennifer Nahas, newly appointed executive director of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), says a few words. OCF is a national effort to connect Orthodox college students to each other, Christ, and the Church. Currently, there is a focus on stabilizing existing OCF chapters. Ms. Nahas asks for us to write down our expectations for OCF. She shares that a recent survey found that 94% of OCF-connected students are currently very involved in the Church, and she briefly discusses Real Break and College Conference.
- XLIII. **FOCUS North America** - Fr. Justin Mathews. Nicole Shadid gives a personal testimonial about Youth Equipped to Serve (YES!), the core ministry of FOCUS. There will be a Pittsburgh YES! Trip on Friday, September 23. Fr. Mathews is looking for YES! ambassadors, teen leaders who have gone on previous trips and who want to connect with others who are interested/inspired/impassioned to serve the poor. katrina@focus.na.org (Katrina Bitar's email). Scholarships are available for those who cannot afford to go. He shares their goal to create FOCUS chapters and centers in 100 cities. His Grace Bishop THOMAS arrives and briefly speaks about the FOCUS program in Pittsburgh and the Tackle Poverty campaign.
- XLIV. **St. Katherine College** - Ms. Lindsay Buhler talks about St. Katherine College, an independent Orthodox Christian College in San Diego, CA. The college is not exclusively for Orthodox students and has both Liberal Arts and Science branches. Ms. Buhler hopes to spread the word about the college and asks us to help her out by sharing information with the teens of our dioceses. Email: lbuhler@stkath.org. Nicole Vassos helps hand out coffee mugs.
- XLV. **Metropolitan PHILIP** visits. His Eminence tells us we must reach out to other jurisdictions if we wish to achieve Orthodox unity and leave a moral impact on America, and that the purpose of reaching out is to learn from one another. He hopes to bring up this topic at the Episcopal Assembly next year.

- XLV. **Special Olympics** - Melissa Khoury explains that, since SOYO puts together Special Olympics, more of us should try to be involved with it. Laney Wagoner encourages officers to apply to be counselors, in spite of the competitiveness of the process.
- XLVI. **Friday Night Vigil** - Fr. Antony Bahou gives an example of how it is run at his local church--teens come for Lamentations service, have spaghetti dinner, and then stay through the night (in shifts) from 11:00 PM-7:00 AM to sleep or listen to the readings. Several officers share how they run Vigils at their own parishes.
- XLVII. **PVC** - We discuss the levels to which Dioceses share PVC among their teens.
- XLVIII. **No SOYO Left Behind** - Dana Zawahri talks about how her Diocese (Midwest) used NSLB in the past year. They got credentials and had frequent check-ups; had a public relations committee that stayed in touch with the smaller churches to keep them in the loop; had a Facebook page for frequent contact. Availability is the key to NSLB. Laney Wagoner adds that priests are not to be counted on for answering emails--they're very busy enough as is. Other officers share how they communicate in their own Dioceses. Jonn Spencer suggests that one of the acting secretaries at these meetings write down all of our ideas separate from the minutes.
- XLIX. **Good Samaritan Project** - Mara Schuler briefly explains the Good Samaritan Project, wherein SOYO chapters are asked to take part in and document service projects, then share a scrapbook at the PLC. Mara stresses that materials and projects must be made accessible to the chapters in order for the GSP to work.
- L. **Open Discussion on Orthodox Unity** - Fr. Antony Bahou takes the floor to discuss Orthodox unity. (see attached for notes)
- LI. **Closing Prayer** - led by Fr. Antony Bahou at 12:57 PM.
- LII. **Meeting Adjourned** at 12:57 PM on July 27, 2011.

Post-Lunch Meeting (Wrap-Up)

- LIII. **Meeting Called to Order** at 2:09 PM on July 27, 2011.
- LIV. **NAC Discussion** - Laney opens the floor to discussion about what officers want to see NAC do this year. Suggestions are made for NAC to use better communication with the dioceses. Laney asks if there are any committees we would like to see happen; specifically, a Public Relations Committee to organize and share pictures and information from each of the Dioceses. Tim Markatos suggests that he email all the secretaries monthly asking for an update from each Diocese, to be shared with NAC. He will condense everyone's reports into one single report to be distributed to everyone. Jonn Spencer suggests cutting out the middleman and sending reports directly to the Presidents of other Dioceses. Finally we decide that Tim will email everyone monthly (starting in August), give deadlines each month to send in updates, and will share updates in a compiled and condensed form at the Mid Winter Meetings, where we will determine if this method of communication is successful. Laney suggests having regular Presidential conference calls, to much agreement.
- LV. **Mid Winter Meetings** - We've been invited to attend the Mid Winter Meetings in Florida with the Fellowship, Ladies, and Order. We will return to this topic later.
- LVI. **Keri-Lyn Coleman**, former White House Administrator for Drug-Free Communities, talks about how we as young people have a voice in the conversation about drugs and how we can have a role in our communities to help effect change. She shares a presentation that defines coalitions and talks about environmental strategies and how we can implement them. Coalitions all work towards a common goal but meet separately; unlike programs, which target individuals in the short-term, coalitions aim to change policies and

practices in the long term. Additionally, responsibility in a coalition is diffused throughout the community. One way for teens to get involved: Project Sticker Shock (label alcohol products with warnings about their legality). Important questions to answer: (1) What do we know? and (2) What do we need to know? We then break up by Diocese to brainstorm a bit about problems and problem solving. Fr. Purpura steps in and offers to handle the next steps in the process.

LVII. **Break for Fun Activity**, wherein we have a scavenger hunt for interesting facts about one another.

LVIII. **Florida Decision** - Presidents and Vice Presidents vote on whether or not we want to hold our Mid Winter Meetings in Florida or at the Village. Popular vote goes for the Village, though we may not have a final say in the matter. Fr. Purpura will bring this up with the other groups and let us know of the final decision about where we will have our Meetings.

LIX. **Fr. Fouad** - Father tells us that tonight (Bible Bowl) will be our first event after Leadership Training; he wants all of us to be there rooting for ALL the teams, for we are all one team working towards the same goal. He talks about next year's Bible Bowl assignment--Paul's Letter to the Romans--and next year's Conference Theme--"The Bible [...] fills us with eternal joy"--and tells us how the Bible gives us opportunity. He says our enemy is our own ego, and the one thing we should not do is destroy ourselves; he then reads a passage from Romans to illustrate this point. We are exactly like Adam, except we have the Bible: our second chance. He tells us that the reason organizations can fail to reach their goals so often is because they question God without saying a word. The Lord Himself made the Bible available and free for us. "You don't go to Church for Communion." We can't lead if we are not willing to follow.

LX. **Fr. Purpura** asks if we want to have Leadership Training next year; overwhelmingly unanimous agreement in favor of having it again. **Leadership**

Training Feedback will be handled by Fr. Philip. Kh. Kevorkian thanks Fr. Purpura for organizing everything.

XL. **Unity Committee** - Melissa Khoury asks if this is the only committee we want to establish--for the time being, yes. Those who wish to be on the committee will speak to Melissa after the meeting is adjourned.

XLI. **Closing Prayer** at 4:34 PM.

XLII. **Meeting Adjourned** at 4:36 PM on July 27, 2011.

XXXI. (attachment) OCCHY Discussion (7/26/11 Evening Meeting)

The following are notes taken during our open discussion on OCCHY with Fr. Antony Bahou, and consists of anonymous comments from the present officers. Points that were deemed most important by the group are included here in boldface.

- Feels like we're just hearing a priest saying "Don't do this, don't do that", would be more helpful to hear from someone who has fallen and gotten back on track.
- Should be more brief and to the point.
- Feels as though we aren't quite getting our message across to other teens; can we come up with another way?
- Feels like OCCHY is just giving us a lot of info, but no ideas of what to do about it--ie, what to say if a friend asks us about abuse problems.
 - More personal, condensed, specific.
- Anonymous survey at a PLC or retreat would be a good idea to gauge how teens are feeling about the subject, so then a priest could review the surveys and address some specific issues.
- Some of the frustration started last year when OCCHY was first presented with no clear indication of what SOYO's role would be in everything.
- Not everyone can be a part of OCCHY in that there are only various small coalitions for us to participate in.
- Feels patronizing in a way; some parents see the literature and say, "No, my kids don't hang out with those types of kids/they don't do that."
- Youth Ministry at PLCs (for example) is fractured when teens go off and do drugs on their own: OCCHY should be able to help us deal with these types of situations. It can be very hard to talk about drug use/abuse when you're just a teen.
- **OCCHY is important, but it needs to be more action based.**
 - We know the problem exists; what do we do about it?
- We shouldn't need all these facts about why not to do drugs: all we need to know is that it's **illegal and harmful**.
- First-hand witness of people affected by drug use/abuse is very effective deterrence.
 - Statistics can be difficult to understand (for some people). We need visual evidence.
- Perhaps have an OCCHY-focused night at a Diocesan retreat? Have under-21 counselors lead a discussion.
- There's a reason people are doing drugs (escapism?) We should focus more on finding alternatives.
 - We need to provide less-dangerous forms of escape (retreats, mission trips, etc.) for our teens.

- Statistics can feel paternalistic at times: the doings of adults-trying-to-tell-you-what-and-what-not-to-do.
- (IDEA) Reenactments of drunk driving accidents, etc. can be effective ways of informing teens of the reality and consequences of such things--they also hit home on a personal level
 - (IDEA) Videos depicting said consequences (example of texting-while-driving accident)
- Many drug-using teens know about the illegality and perniciousness of their actions, but such is not enough to make them stop.
- CONSISTENCY: Don't just bring up OCCHY once; make it a constant presence.
- Important to remind teens (even non-Orthodox) that Orthodoxy is the Church of forgiveness: remind them that "it's not about the past, it's about the future and what you're going to do with it."
- Get to the root of the problem: target why kids are turning to drugs.
- OCCHY is not us going out into the world to stop people from using drugs. It's a bunch of small coalitions, about whose gongs-ons we hear very little.
- 22 of us want to be more directly involved in OCCHY.**
- Maybe priests can get involved to help us out in talking to our peers?
- If propaganda (billboards, guest speakers, commercials) were really so effective, this wouldn't be such a prevalent issue.
- Too much time on OCCHY; not enough time on Leadership Training.
- Would we say that we're dealing with a spiritual thing here? YES. Therefore, we must look at it like any other sin.
- (IDEA): Develop a step-by-step program built specifically to educate us on how to approach the issue with peers.
- We need to be more involved and more aware.
- Tie in to No SOYO Left Behind--no Teen left behind.
- If you want to make such a big change, it's by living your life the way you want to live it.
- Lead by example.
- In spite of all the minutiae, we are enthralled by the idea and want to make a difference.
- The goal of OCCHY: raise awareness.

L. (Attachment) Discussion on Orthodox Unity (7/27/2011 Meeting)

The following are notes taken during our open discussion on Orthodox Unity with Fr. Antony Bahou. Included are important questions raised by Fr. Antony, sample answers from officers, ideas we came up with for how to achieve unity, and other miscellaneous comments pertaining to the topic.

What does it mean to say "We are all One body of Christ"?

-We all partake of Communion--body and blood of Christ--every Sunday.

Would a body of any kind work if a body part were working on its own? No!

-All the parts of the body must work together in order to accomplish what the body is meant to do.

Our goal is to begin a significant movement in North America & Canada, to join all the Orthodox Youth together as One body of Christ.

Why are there so many different jurisdictions?

-Because Orthodoxy came to America in waves of immigrants who all wanted to have their own culture, language, tradition.

-Now, however, we are accountable, and must spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in English if we are to convert people to Orthodoxy.

There are many young people leaving the Church.

(Syriac and Armenian: ancient languages used in the Christian world)

-In churches where these languages are primarily used young people find it impossible to connect.

What is our vision?

-In Palm Springs: Greek, Antiochian, Coptic, and Romanian churches--they could all get together.

-In Austin: Different jurisdictions reach out to each other to get participation from one another's youth.

-We agree that kids want to get together, regardless of what church they're from.

What could we do on a state level to lead to an Orthodox Youth Congress?

Ukrainian Archdiocese has an NAC-type board; Greeks just have GOYA at individual chapters.

Possible Model: Send one representative from each jurisdiction (state level) to represent at a Youth Congress.

Are the others pushing for the same thing we are?

-One thing: Newly-formed Episcopal Assembly. Doing lots of work striving for Orthodox unity in this country.

-Second thing: Fact that we know so many people on the local level want to get together, but lack of body of teens leading us in this.

This year we could try: in each city our officers are from, go visit other churches for Liturgy and talk to the priests.

Draft a letter reaching out to leaders in other groups.

We would be starting the movement; not necessarily the governing body. **Invite other representatives to come to our meetings and discuss the logistics.**

YAL (Young Adult League) : Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

In Chicago, invited 80 parishes to pan-Orthodoxy meeting--8 attended.

Speak at CrossRoad (it's very pan-Orthodox)

Start now!

Shall we draft a letter to send to everyone?

~**Right now**, we need to (1) create a vision/statement for what we want to accomplish; and (2) **form a committee with 1 rep. from each diocese**

Where do we want to be 5 years from now?

What can we have accomplished by February (Mid Winter Meetings)?