



minutes

OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SPECIAL CONVENTION

1. METROPOLITAN PHILIP opened the special General Assembly at 10:00 AM, with prayers.

2. REV. FR. GEORGE D. KEVORKIAN, Hierarchical Assistant, presented the report of the Department of Statistics and Credentials:

Eight hundred thirty-two (832) delegates of a possible nine hundred (900) were present in person or by valid proxy and constituted a quorum to conduct business.

3. REV. FR. GEORGE D. KEVORKIAN read the Message from His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV.

4. METROPOLITAN PHILIP appointed the Convention Officers:

- a) Dr. George J. Farha, Vice Chairman
- b) Mr. Charles R. Ajalat, Chancellor
Mr. Robert A. Koory, Chancellor
- c) Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Parliamentarian
- d) Mr. Daniel J. Abraham, Grand Rapids, MI (Sergeant-at-Arms)
Mr. Donald C. Howard, Davie, FL (Sergeant-at-Arms)
Mr. William D. Morrison, Wheaton, IL (Sergeant-at-Arms)
Mr. George N. Nassor, Little Falls, NJ (Sergeant-at-Arms)
- e) V. Rev. Michael Ellias, Brooklyn, NY, Acting Secretary
Dr. John D. Dalack, Staten Island, NY, Secretary

5. METROPOLITAN PHILIP introduced and welcomed Metropolitan Maximos of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. His Eminence then introduced the members of the Board of Trustees of the Archdiocese:

Bishop Antoun, Bishop Joseph, Bishop Basil, Rt. Rev. Paul M. Doyle, V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar, Dr. George J. Farha, Mr. Ralph Abercia, Alan G. Abraham, Mr. Daniel J. Abraham, Mr. Charles R. Ajalat, Mr. Edward F. Assile, Dr. Anthony S. Bashir, Dr. David G. Bojrab, Mr. Daniel E. Braun, Dr. John D. Dalack, Mr. George G. Darany, Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, Mrs. Laila R. Ferris, Mr. Philip A. Haddad, Mr. Joseph F. Hanna, Mrs. Elaine Heider, Dr. Donald C. Howard, Mr. Anton K. Khoury, Mr. Robert A. Koory, Dr. Sam H. Kouri, Dr. Raymond J. Kyriakos, Dr. Alan E. Matook, Mr. William D. Morrison, Mr. William J. Nassir, Mr. George N. Nassor, Miss Ruth A. Nimee, Mr. Walter Parhamovich, Mr. Mansour Rayan, Dr. Raymond J. Rishwain, Miss Jean Sam, Dr. Joseph J. Samra, Dr. Eugene J. Sayfie, Mrs. Gizelle B. Shadid, and Mr. Kory W. Warr.

6. METROPOLITAN PHILIP's Address to the Special Convention of 2004

7. DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS — Mr. Charles R. Ajalat, Mr. Robert A. Koory, Chancellors

On behalf of the Department of Legal Affairs, the Chancellors, Mr. Charles R. Ajalat and Mr. Robert A. Koory, introduced the June 7, 2004, version of the Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese, a copy of which had already been distributed to all

delegates. Dr. George J. Farha moved that the General Assembly approve this version of the Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese, a copy of which had already been distributed to all delegates. Dr. George J. Farha moved that the General Assembly approve this version of the Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese; and V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar seconded.

Mr. Robert A. Koory then moved that the Amended Constitution just introduced be amended to incorporate the particulars contained in the document entitled: *Changes to the June 7, 2004 Version of the Amended Constitution that was Distributed to all Delegates*, a copy of which had also been distributed to all delegates, and Mr. Charles R. Ajalat seconded this motion to amend.

Both Dr. George J. Farha, the original mover, and V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar, who seconded the original motion, accepted the changes as a friendly amendment; therefore, the floor was then opened for discussion on the motion to approve the Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese, as distributed and amended.

After a lively discussion that lasted a few hours, Dr. Eugene J. Sayfie moved that the General Assembly approve the Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese by acclamation, and Dr. John D. Dalack seconded. The delegates unanimously approved and accepted the Amended Constitution by acclamation.

8. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE — Mr. Robert H. Laham, Chairman and Treasurer

- a) Presentation of the Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2004

In the absence of Mr. Robert H. Laham, the Treasurer, Comptroller, and Chairman of the Department of Finance, Mr. George N. Nassor, the Assistant Treasurer, opened the floor for questions and comments concerning the Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2004. A copy of this report was distributed to all delegates, and, prior to this Special Convention, a copy had previously been sent to all the parishes and missions in the Archdiocese.

During the discussion, the point was stressed that every means should be employed at the parish level to communicate the information in the report to as many of the faithful as possible.

Mr. Michael A. Hamwey moved, and V. Rev. George H. Shalhoub seconded the motion, to accept the Financial Report for the Fiscal year Ended January 31, 2004. The motion passed unanimously with the profound thanks of the Metropolitan to the Department.

- b) Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31 2006

Mr. Peter S. Dacales, the Assistant Comptroller, presented the Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2006, a copy of which had previously been distributed to all delegates.

During the discussion of this budget, it was pointed out that the \$265,000 increase in Parish Assessments is based on an increase of the assessment per baptized soul from \$30.00 to \$35.00, to help cover the increased expenses associated with the addition of three bishops and two chanceries, the establishment of a Local Synod, the new Department of Communications and Information, and the reactivation of the Department of Planning and Future Development.

It was also pointed out that a recent actuarial study has shown that the Retired

Clergy Housing Allowance Fund must be increased by several millions of dollars if it is to meet the anticipated needs of the next ten years. Even more would be needed if the maximum monthly benefit is to be increased from its present level.

Rev. Fr. Simeon B. Corona moved, and Mrs. Jacque Kouri seconded, acceptance of the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2006, which included the recommended increase in Parish Assessments from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per baptized soul. The motion passed unanimously with an expression of thanks. The Metropolitan addressed the need to stress tithing as a spiritual principle.

9. IMPLEMENTATION of the New Structure of the Self-Ruled Archdiocese — Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Hierarchical Assistant

- a) Duties and Responsibilities of the Metropolitan and Diocesan Bishops

Fr. Kevorkian noted that a new Clergy/Laity Reference Manual is in preparation to supersede the outdated Priest's Guide.

- b) Geographical Boundaries of the Dioceses

Fr. Kevorkian noted that the boundaries of the new dioceses had been set based on two principles. First, the new boundaries would permit each bishop to visit each parish or mission in his diocese once a year. Second, the boundaries reflected the historical regions and made changes with as little disruption as possible.

Before proceeding to the next item on the agenda, Mrs. Laila R. Ferris, the President of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOCWNA), presented to His Eminence a check in the amount of \$238,400 to complete AOCWNA's 2004 Orphanages Endowment Project. With the addition of these funds and a bequest from the late Katherine Ajar, the Orphanage Endowment Fund has reached its goal of \$1,000,000.

The Antiochian Woxmen then announced that its new project will be to raise at least \$500,000 over the next five years in support of the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund, with the theme, "We must care for those who have cared for us." The Metropolitan congratulated all of the Women for their outstanding accomplishments.

10. NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES for the Office of Diocesan Bishop — Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Hierarchical Assistant

- a) Introduction of Candidates

A photograph and brief biography of each of the seven candidates had previously been sent to all parishes and missions in the Archdiocese, and the same information was distributed to all delegates.

Rev. Fr. George Kevorkian introduced in alphabetical order six of the seven candidates — visa problems prevented Rt. Rev. Fr. Michel Boghos from leaving Canada to attend this convention — and asked each of them to share with the General Assembly his vision for the future of the Archdiocese.

- b) Voting by Secret Ballot

After Rt. Rev. Daniel S. Griffith, Rev. Fr. Andre Issa, Rt. Rev. Thomas Joseph, Rt. Rev. Daniel Keller, Rev. Fr. Mark A. Maymon, and Rt. Rev. Rafeek Mufarrij each shared his vision for the future of the Archdiocese, the delegates voted, and the ballots were collected for counting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Walter Parhamovich moved adjournment, and Dr. Alan E. Matook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the General Assembly of the Special Convention of the Antiochian Archdiocese adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
V. Rev. Fr. Michael Elias,
Acting Secretary*