

**Minutes of the Sixteenth Diocesan Synod of the Eastern Diocese of the  
Polish National Catholic Church  
October 10, 2020**

**Hosted by Blessed Trinity Parish  
Fall River, MA**

The Sixteenth Diocesan Synod of the Eastern Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church was held via Zoom because of the coronavirus pandemic. Diocesan Bishop Paul Sobiechowski called the Synod to order at 10:14 am and welcomed all clergy, delegates and guests. He asked Father Senior Robert Nemkovich to lead us in Morning Prayer assisted by Kathy Nemkovich (see addendum). Karen Sobiechowski sang the National Anthems of America and Poland.

The agenda was accepted with one addition (Youth Commission report) on a motion by Michael Zarek, seconded by Raymond Pieczarka.

**Mandate report:**

Kathy Nemkovich gave the mandate report which listed 14 clergy, 14 parish delegates, 11 Diocesan Council delegates, 2 organizational delegates and 14 guests. After roll call the totals revealed 36 delegates and 12 guests.

The oath of office was administered to the delegates by Bishop Sobiechowski after which Father Senior Nemkovich installed Bishop Sobiechowski.

The invocation was offered by Father Senior Joseph Krusienski.

**Greetings to the Synod:**

\*Bishop Sobiechowski read greetings from Martin Wachna, CEO of the Polish National Union of America. (see addendum)

Greetings were extended via Zoom to the delegates by

\*Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky (Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church of America),

\*Bishop Paul Hewett (Diocese of the Holy Cross-G4 Anglican Member Church),

\* Robert Bradbury, Vice-Chairperson of Blessed Trinity Parish.

**Synodal appointments** were announced by Bishop Sobiechowski:

**Vice chairpersons:** Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak and Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich Jr., administrative seniors of the diocese;

**Parliamentarian:** Attorney Paul Chello;

**Recording Secretaries:** Marilyn Folcik, Janice Klimczak;

**Mandate Committee:** Kathy Nemkovich, chairperson, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich Jr, Jack DeTemple;

**Rules and Regulations:** Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, chairperson, Laurel Curylo, Blesser Justin Daviault;

**Grievance Committee:** Thomas Zarek, chairperson, Laurel Curylo, Rev. Thomas Walsh;

**Resolution Committee:** Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd, chairperson, Tom Zarek, Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Laurel Curylo, Larry Gagnon.

Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Synod and most reports had been sent to delegates prior to our convening at Synod. Following are notes on the discussions:

**Minutes** of the 15<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Synod were accepted on a motion by Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd and seconded by Blesser Justin Daviault.

The **Treasurer's Report** was given by Cindy Hebert and accepted on a motion by Father Senior Joseph Krusienski, seconded by Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd. It was mentioned that in the 2019-2020 report the Eastern Diocese had a drive to raise money for the Clergy Pension Fund. Donations sent in by parishes were matched by the diocese. In addition, the diocese also gave \$10,000. Total sent to the Clergy Pension Fund was \$31,512.60. The Diocesan Council has decided to donate \$25,000 this year and again, will match funds given by parishes.

Prime Bishop Mikovsky reported he was moved by the generosity of the Eastern Diocese and thanked the diocese for setting a good example. He also informed us that the Clergy Pension Fund now has oversight by the Prime Bishop.

The **Financial Committee Report** was given by Raymond Pieczarka and accepted on a motion by Michael Zarek, seconded by Michael Kuchar. Mr. Pieczarka reported that the balance of diocesan funds when the report was written was \$2,298,434.00 but \$82,000.00 has been made via investments in the last three weeks, bringing the total to \$2,380,434.00. These are monies which fund the work of the diocese.

The auditors books were found to be in order and their report was accepted on a motion by Kathy Nemkovich, seconded by Mary Tudryn.

**Bishop Sobiechowski passed the synod gavel to Father Senior Nemkovich Jr.**

**Diocesan Bishop's report:**

Bishop Sobiechowski reported that, in the last few weeks since his report was sent to delegates, Holy Cross Parish in Enfield, CT has been closed and the parish committee suspended. Bishop Sobiechowski, represented by Father Senior Krusienski and Father Senior Soltysiak have presented merger proposals to the congregation, which were refused. Sacramental records are in the possession of the diocese.

The Diocesan Bishop's report was received on a motion by Robert Bradbury and seconded by Cindy Hebert.

**Reports of the Administrative Seniors** were received on a motion by Father Robert Koerber, seconded by Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd.

Father Henryk Woś, editor of the *Messenger*, the **Diocesan newsletter**, thanked all clergy and laity for their cooperation. His report was received on a motion by Blesser Justin Daviault, seconded by Brenda Richard.

Robert Bradbury, **Diocesan webmaster**, reported that parish websites need more content and must be kept current. Motion to receive the report was made by Laurel Curylo, seconded by Deb Lehman.

The **Clergy Circle** (Koło Kapłanów), report was received by Father Henryk Woś, seconded by Brenda Richard.

The **Diaconate report** was received on a motion by Father Henryk Woś , seconded by Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd.

Bishop Sobiechowski reported on the **SS Peter and Paul Grant Program** which makes funds available for evangelization programs within communities if parishes apply. Many parishes have applied and received grants but many have not. Bishop suggested those with ideas to please make application as soon as possible. Report received on a motion by Mary Tudryn, seconded by Robert Bradbury.

#### **Sub-Central Organizations:**

**United Women's Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament**—written report, no questions.

**Young Men's Society of the Resurrection**—Father Thomas Walsh spoke of the possibility of hosting a national golf tournament in the future.

**Eastern Diocese United Choirs**-no written report—Bishop would like to revitalize the choirs within the diocese to support local parish choirs.

**District 3 Polish National Union**—MaryAnn Zarek, District Director, thanked those who support PNU and asked for more support of raffles which fund activities within the diocese.

Motion to receive the reports was made by Brenda Richard, seconded by MaryAnn Curylo.

**Father Senior Nemkovich returned the gavel to Bishop Sobiechowski who passed it to Father Senior Soltysiak.**

#### **Diocesan Commission Reports:**

The **Archives Commission** report, submitted by Genevieve Grenier, diocesan archivist, was received on a motion by Kathy Card, seconded by Deb Lehman.

**Liturgical Commission** report was received on a motion by Robert Bradbury, seconded by Rev. Adam Czarnecki.

**Matrimonial Commission** report was received on a motion by Michael Zarek, seconded by Mary Tudryn.

A motion to receive the **Mission and Evangelism** report was made by Father Senior Robert Nemkovich, seconded by Mary Ann Zarek.

**School of Christian Living Report**—there was no written report. Bishop mentioned that the National SOCL provides materials for classes. Teachers need training and encouragement. He suggested we teach adult education classes and would like to see teachers on the SOCL board.

The **Scouting report** was delivered by Michael Kuchar who would like to develop a list of scouts from all parishes of the PNCC throughout the country. Report received on a motion by Rev. Robert Koerber, seconded by Rev. Paul Dudek.

The **Youth Commission** report was received on a motion by Brenda Richard, seconded by Rev. Adam Czarnecki.

Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd gave the report of the **Strategic Planning Committee** which was received on a motion by Father Senior Robert Nemkovich, seconded by Kathy Nemkovich.

### **Father Senior Soltysiak returns gavel to Bishop Sobiechowski who passes it to Father Senior Krusienski.**

Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd and Larry Gagnon gave a history of the Strategic Planning Committee which researched the use of media by parishes including websites and Facebook and offered training and encouragement to all.

The committee also investigated how parishes make their presence known within their communities and used a matrix over the span of six months.

Suggested focus areas for the future were: commitment, tradition, branding and goals for growth.

The synod broke for lunch at 12:47 pm and returned at 1:06 pm.

Larry Gagnon and Kathy Nemkovich led the break-out sessions for laity in which the following suggestions were made to accomplish the goals of the focus areas:

- Need for a person from the PNCC to act as a director
- Develop a standardized message with consistency and uniformity
- Question of funding
- Possibility of having one person in each parish on the Strategic Planning Committee
- Annual review to check progress
- Information on parish Facebook pages should be posted on personal Facebook pages
- Parish Facebook pages should be kept up-to-date and be relevant. Facebook is now known as a site for the older age group. Some people may be looking for memories,

beliefs

--Perhaps a teenage member would be helpful

--A Resource library coordinated with the General Church to provide standardized information about our beliefs

--Parishes should be aware of the demographics of their communities to make their outreach efforts more successful

--Success is not only measured in numbers but in a change of heart. The Holy Spirit will lead.

Father Senior Krusienski facilitated the Clergy break-out group after which Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd, who had been observing both groups, rejoined everyone and recapitulated the ideas from both groups. Many ideas were similar and she consolidated the ideas of both groups: (see addendum for report)

Commitment:

--strong support by clergy and laity is evident but questions arose as to how parishes will react.

--Recruiting will be difficult

--A coordinator would be helpful

Tradition:

--A clear, standardized message is necessary in all publications

--Re: Community engagement, present demographics should be researched for each parish—do not depend on demographics from the past—they change

Re-education:

--Information must be shared, delivered in person

--Resource library is necessary

Reports:

--Some kind of measurement is needed.

--Ideas should be shared across the diocese

Because seniorate **caucuses** could not take place, Bishop Sobiechowski asked the three administrative seniors to hold seniorate meetings within the next month to elect one clerical and two lay delegates to the diocesan council. Bishop will re-appoint present at-large members as well as diocesan council officers.

There were no grievances brought before the **Grievance Committee**.

A motion to accept the Strategic Plan as promulgated by the Strategic Planning Committee was made by Kathy Nemkovich, seconded by Father Senior Robert Nemkovich and passed.

Laurel Curylo of the Resolution Committee read the Resolutions of the XVI Synod after which a motion was made to accept the resolutions as read by Robert Bradbury, seconded by Rev. Paul Dudek and passed. (see addendum)

Bishop Sobiechowski announced **Diocesan Commissions:**

**Chaplains:** Eastern Diocese United Choirs, Rev. Paul Lukaszewicz; Eastern Diocese Youth Commission, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich ; Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak ; Young Men's Society of the Resurrection, Rev. Thomas Walsh; Scouting, Rev. Adam Czarnecki; Eastern Diocese Mission Commission, Rev. Robert Koerber.

**Preparation for the Diaconate:** Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, chairman; Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Rev. Henryk Woś, Rev. Andrzej Tenus, Rev. Henry Smolinski, Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd.

**Liturgical Commission:** Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, Chairman; Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, Rev. Henryk Woś, Rev. Andrzej Tenus.

**Matrimonial Commission:** Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, chairman; Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, Rev. Andrzej Tenus, Rev. Henry Smolinski, alternate.

**Mission and Evangelism:** Karen Sobiechowski, chairperson; Rev. Robert Koerber, Chaplain; Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, Rev. Henryk Woś, Kathryn Nemkovich, Sally Watson, JoAnn Menzia, JoAnn O'Connell, Robert Bradbury.

**School of Christian Living:** Very Rev. Soltysiak, chairman; Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Rev. Thomas Walsh, Nancy Reilly, Rev. Robert Koerber, Blesser Justin Daviault.

**Scouting:** Michael Kuchar, chairman; Rev. Adam Czarnecki, Chaplain; Rev. Robert Koerber.

**Archives:** Genevieve Grenier, chairperson; Rev. Robert Koerber.

**Financial Commission:** Raymond Pieczarka, chairman; Cynthia Hebert, secretary; Robert Beaurivage, Stanley Kosidlo, Trent Taylor, Kurt Patten (CFP-Portfolio manager/MorganStanley/SmithBarney).

**Youth Commission:** Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, chairman; Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, Rev. Paul Lukaszewicz, Blesser Justin Daviault, Michael Zarek, MaryAnn Zarek, Joanne Oliveira, Eric Nemkovich, Brenda Richard.

**Strategic Planning Commission:** Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd, chairman; Laurel Curylo, secretary; Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Larry Gagnon, Thomas Zarek, Rev. Henryk Woś, Robert Bradbury, Blesser Justin Daviault.

**Eastern Diocese Office appointments:** Southwest Seniorate Administrator, Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski; Central Seniorate Administrator, Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak; Northeast Seniorate Administrator, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich; Diocesan Treasurer, Cynthia Hebert; Diocesan Council Recording Secretary, Jo-Ann O'Connell.

The **17th Diocesan Synod** will be held in 2024. Father Senior Krusienski invited all to come to Holy Trinity Parish in Plantsville, CT. The invitation was accepted on a

motion by Brenda Richard, seconded by Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd.

Bishop Sobiechowski expressed his thanks to Blessed Trinity Parish, Father Senior Nemkovich, Kathy Nemkovich and their team for arranging and organizing the Synod under very trying and difficult circumstances. Dr. Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd thanked members of the Strategic Planning committee for their work in planning the break-out sessions as well as the training of participants beforehand.

Bishop Hewitt thanked the diocese for the opportunity to take part in our Synod.

Prime Bishop was pleased to see the enthusiasm and personal commitment of delegates and clergy of the Eastern Diocese.

Motion to adjourn was made at 4:21 pm by Father Senior Joseph Krusienski, seconded by Michael Zarek after which Prime Bishop Mikovsky gave the closing prayer.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Eastern Diocese concluded with the singing of the Hymn of the Polish National Catholic Church, *Tyle Lat My Ci O Panie*, by Karen Sobiechowski.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Klimczak

Marilyn Folcik

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Marilyn Folcik

Recording Secretaries

## **Resolutions of the XVI Eastern Diocese Synod October 10, 2020**

Due to the Coronavirus and the inability to meet face to face, the XVI Synod of the Eastern Diocese convened virtually October 10, 2020. Hosted by Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River MA the Synod was summoned under the authority of Right Rev Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop Ordinary of the Eastern Diocese and attended virtually by the Most Rev Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the PNCC. Very Rev Robert Nemkovich Jr served as the moderator for this virtual Synod. Additionally, Bishop Paul Hewitt, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Holy Cross joined us and presented to the Synod.

The Synod began with a morning prayer which set the tone and inspiration for the proceedings of the day. Through our deliberations, we learned and discussed the following:

Whereas, we are thankful to Bishop Sobiechowski, our senior priests-Very Rev Joseph Krusienski, Very Rev Joseph Soltysiak and Very Rev Robert Nemkovich Jr for the planning and execution of a very successful virtual Synod; additional gratitude is extended to Very Rev Robert Nemkovich Jr for hosting and moderating this Synod.

Whereas we acknowledge the active participation of the delegates, guests, and clergy in fulfilling their discipleship role entrusted to them as members of our Holy Church and through their attendance and commitment in spreading God's word throughout our communities, our diocese and our Church.

Whereas we as delegates, reflect upon the legacy of faith set forth upon us by our organizer, Bishop Francis Hodur, the clergy, and organizers of the Church.

Whereas, we continue to support the endeavors of Future Direction and the overall theme of Discipleship towards increasing growth and membership, lifelong learning and renewed Spirituality among all members; to expanding community engagement efforts; and to enabling joyful responses to God's call to Sacred Vocations and service.

Whereas we acknowledge the work of the Eastern Diocese Strategic Planning Committee who over four years has worked diligently to:

- a. increase the awareness of our church by enabling parishes to use more social media technologies, especially Facebook in promoting masses and special services, and various events and fund-raising activities.
- b. encourage the expansion of community engagement efforts among our parishes as a way of exemplifying our Christian discipleship to help those in need, those in



transition, and those organizations striving to assist others.

Whereas, the Eastern Diocese Strategic Planning Committee presented to this Synod body a four year strategic and action plan devoted to commitment and moving forward, to tradition and branding, to growth by expanding our digital efforts and community involvements, and to reporting our efforts that will measure our success and achievements.

We, therefore, seek the grace and strength from our Lord, Jesus Christ to embrace the work He has entrusted to our care, to be inspired to execute the proceedings of this Synod as we return to our parishes and to stay strong in our commitment and firm in our Catholic faith as members of the PNCC in spite of the everchanging and challenging environment around us. With truth, work, and struggle, we shall and will continue to succeed!

Respectfully Submitted, October 10, 2020 by the Resolution Committee of the XVI  
Eastern Diocese Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church

Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd (Central Seniorate); Laurel Curylo (Central Seniorate); Larry Gagnon (Northeast Seniorate); Tom Zarek (Northeast Seniorate) and Very Rev Joseph Krusienski (Southwest Seniorate)