Resolution of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Diocesan Assembly, October 14-17, 2026

I am the vine, ye are the branches:
He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:
for without me ye can do nothing…
Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.
John 15:5, 8

Lifting up our common prayer to Lord that we may be His faithful disciples, the members of the 2026 Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America assembled following the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God in the God-preserved city of Chicago, Illinois.

Consisting of more than 160 clergy and laity from across the 16 states of our diocese, the Diocesan Assembly is the visible manifestation of the spiritual unity and common life in Christ within the 57 parishes and missions of our diocese. Seeing the vigor and growth of our diocese since our last Assembly in 2022, we give God thanks and recollect the tireless labors of our ever-memorable archpastor, Archbishop Peter, and pray for his blessed repose. We also remember those clergy who have departed since 2022: Archpriest John Sykaluk, Archpriest Victor Trotskyy, Archpriest Martin Swanson, Schema-Archimandrite Benedict (Nelson) and Archpriest Christopher Stade.

Similarly, we express our gratitude to the Synod of Bishops for appointing us a new diocesan bishop, the Right Reverend Spyridon. We were gladdened to have him lead us in prayer for the festal services and to share his archpastoral wisdom throughout the Assembly. In his opening address to the Assembly he reminded us of our great high calling: “Our common purpose is to build up the Body of Christ, preserve the Orthodox faith, serve our people, and pass the living Tradition of our Church to the next generation. Everything we undertake—whether pastoral, administrative, educational, or missionary—must serve this purpose.”

In discussing the reports from the various Diocesan Committees, we have reflected on Bishop Spyridon’s guidance and shared the common, yet unique experience of the Life in Christ in each of our communities. To focus our labors in the coming years, through prayerful discussion we have resolved to:

- Develop a Youth Safety Policy for use throughout the Diocese;
- Charge the St. John Kochurov Society with gathering funds to support clergy, their widows and orphans;
- Clarify the appropriate participation of clergy and parishes in social media through the drafting of protocols;
- Establish the Archbishop Peter Memorial Seminary Scholarship Fund to ensure the continued education of future clergy for our diocese;
- Revise the standards for Parish Assessments to the Diocese; and

- Remind the faithful of the inherent dangers of Artificial Intelligence, particularly when used for content creation.

We heard two engaging talks by Matthew Namee, Executive Director of the Orthodox Studies Institute, about converts to Orthodoxy in America, both contemporary and historical. His talks provided a springboard for us to discuss the practice of catechism, the pressures of parish growth on our communities and the varied influence of the internet on those inquiring and new to the faith. The historical record makes it clear that new converts must live an active parish life by attending services, engaging with fellow parishioners and learning to serve the Church and fellow faithful. Likewise, clerical candidates must be well-trained and not rushed to ordination.

We encourage our faithful, and especially those who are newer to the Church, to beware of imposing any ideology onto the Faith. Whether it be racism, fascism, communism, socialism, antisemitism, zionism, or ecumenism, all of these are rooted in modernism, and are thus antithetical to a truly traditional Christian worldview. Those preaching these ideologies offer the spiritually hungry stones and serpents rather than the True Bread of Life that is found only in Christ.

We express our sorrow over the ongoing persecution and suffering of Orthodox Christians around the world. Our brothers and sisters face violence, displacement, the destruction of churches, and violations of their religious freedom. We call upon our government to defend their rights and protect their ability to live and worship freely.

We urge all the faithful to pray for our suffering Orthodox brothers and sisters, to support them in their time of need, and to remember in prayer both those who suffer persecution and those who persecute them, asking the Lord to grant peace, justice, and the salvation of all mankind.

The overarching theme of the many and varied concerns discussed at this Assembly is the truth that though we all primarily experience the manifestation of God's salvific grace in the context of our local parish, the Lord, Who desires the salvation of all mankind, seeks to use us for the betterment of the diocese as a whole. The effective implementation of all of these resolutions requires us to expand our hearts to pray for and share our gifts well beyond the limits of our parish – to neighboring parishes, the diocesan center and, by extension, the Synod of Bishops. We truly must act *on behalf of all and for all*.

As Bishop Spyridon remarked, "Our diocese faces challenges, but it also has many blessings. We have faithful clergy, devoted parishioners, strong traditions, and, above all, the grace of God, which sustains His Church in every generation. I pray that our diocese will grow stronger in faith, that our parishes will flourish, and that we will remain united in the love of Christ."

Giving God thanks for His many blessings, we send up glory to our Lord for His great mercy to us and to our diocese!