

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

56th Biennial Antiochian Archdiocese Convention

July 27, 2023

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHAPLAIN AND PASTORAL COUNSELING

Your Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, Your Eminence Metropolitan SABA, Reverend Clergy and Esteemed Members of the Board of Trustees and Faithful of the Archdiocese,

Welcome from our Department of Chaplain and Pastoral Counseling!

“I was sick, and you visited Me.” (Matthew 25:36)

Our Mission Statement: The Chaplain and Pastoral Counseling Ministry supports chaplains and pastoral counselors working within the Antiochian Archdiocese. The department organizes retreats, workshops, and courses, as well as posting pertinent articles and web links on this page. Because ministry takes place in a complex, pluralistic world, this department provides clear archdiocesan guidelines to help Orthodox chaplains and pastoral counselors adhere to Orthodox teaching, spirituality, and healing traditions, while also knowing when and how to incorporate scientifically sound clinical interventions.

1. We begin with immense gratitude to our brothers in Christ of blessed memory – Rev. Dr. George Morelli (of blessed memory), the former Chair of this department, for his wonderful ministry and leadership. May his memory be eternal.
2. Fr. Adrian Budica served as interim, helping the Archdiocese on matters of Chaplaincy (see below). *Fr. Adrian apologizes for not being able to attend this meeting in person at this time. He usually serves as pastoral and liturgical coverage in the Diocese of New York.*

Fr. Adrian Budica is a graduate of St. Vladimir Seminary, a Board-Certified Chaplain (BCC – Association of Professional Chaplains), and a Certified ACPE Educator (ACPE – Association of Clinical Pastoral Education). He serves as Director of Field Education at St. Vladimir’s Seminary, where he oversees their Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, and Director of Spiritual Care and Education at Yale-New Haven Health, Bridgeport Hospital. He is attached to St. Nicholas Cathedral (Brooklyn, NY). Fr. Adrian and Chaplain Sarah Byrne-Martelli founded and co-host the AFR Podcast, “The Wounded Healer” – for Chaplains.

3. Endorsements

- a. Fr. Adrian has been offering consultation to our Metropolitan for chaplains (lay and ordained) seeking endorsement from our Archdiocese.

***Board Certification as a Chaplain requires official endorsement from one’s faith group.

b. Fr. Adrian participated in a committee of the Assembly of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops, seeking to offer a more standardized process for endorsement. The committee was led by Metr. Nicholas of Detroit (GOA), the hierarchical overseer of this sub-committee of the ACOBA for Chaplains. It had representatives / endorsers from OCA, GOA, Carpatho-Rus, and ROCOR. Fr. Adrian presented briefly to Metr. Joseph – if our Archdiocese was interested in collaborating with ACOBA and its Chaplains committee for an endorsement – as consultative, i.e., the Metropolitan maintains the right to approve or deny a petition, regardless of the recommendation from the consultation committee.

4. Support and Networking

The number of Orthodox Chaplains in USA has increased significantly in the past 10 years, especially in healthcare settings. Since 2012, St. Vladimir's Seminary requires one Unit of CPE from all its MDiv. Candidates, which offers good exposure to the healthcare setting, with its blessings and challenges (like the multi-faith setting). Many graduates complete additional CPE Units, Chaplain Residencies, and/or pursue Chaplaincy part-time, which can support their parish ministry.

(Speaking of the multi-faith setting, our Archdiocese is to my knowledge, the only jurisdiction who has clear guidelines published for Orthodox Chaplains serving in a multi-faith context – initially for Orthodox military priest-chaplains).

Fr. Adrian and Chaplain Sarah offer consultation and support to those interested in this ministry – by email, phone and Zoom – an average of 1-3 calls every months or so. They advise the inquirers to seek strong relationships with their spiritual fathers, as this ministry will likely stretch them, and their spiritual warfare might feel like increasing, as we strive to do Christ's work. In the words of St. Paul the Apostle (Gal. 6: 1-2), "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"

Because of the Pandemic, we were able to use technology to our advantage: Zoom conference calls (monthly), including some case studies presentations, social media, workshops in parishes – which in turn raise more awareness on this wonderful ministry. In individual and group conversations, we offer support and consultation on issues arising in our daily ministry. This is important, as many Orthodox Chaplains can find themselves feeling isolated in a multi-faith environment (such as a hospital), where they are expected to offer spiritual care grounded in their Orthodox tradition, and respectful of other's faith traditions. We encourage each other to expand their parish participation, including working closely with their parish priest, for example for hospital visits, for workshops and retreats offered in the parish, etc. For example, since publishing her book in 2022 (*Memory Eternal: Living with Grief as Orthodox Christians*), Chaplain Sarah led several workshops in parishes on grief and bereavement from an Orthodox perspective.

A semi-formal gathering of Orthodox Chaplains has taken place every year at the OCAMPR*** annual meeting (since 2016), first as a lunch, now with additional workshops and paper presentations to the larger body.

(***OCAMPR - The Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion, under ACOBA)

Goals: 2023-2028

*Collaborate with the Metropolitan and Auxiliary Bishops to support chaplaincy ministry development, and explore the opportunity for the Department to present at appropriate Diocesan venues

*Expand the department membership and its leadership; consider having a hierarchical advisor (Bp. John for example, has the counselling training and background); create an advisory committee of chaplains, pastoral counsellors, and/or clinical educators to help the chair; consider having a co-chair

*Consider a more formal process for endorsement – with help from a sub-committee of the department and/or in collaboration with ACOBA

*Explore inter-Orthodox jurisdictional collaboration on Orthodox Christian Chaplaincy

*Continue to develop the materials and methods that support chaplaincy

*Continue and grow within the Archdiocese site a web presence for the department

*Continue to engage parishes in workshops that highlight the chaplaincy ministry

*Secure Archdiocese funding to support the work of the department

*Collaborate with the Department of Lay Ministry – many Chaplains are not ordained

We are grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan Saba and the Hierarchs for their support of our work. We are blessed to work with the pastors and parishioners of this blessed Archdiocese.

To all of you who invited us and welcomed us and who gave yourself over to the work of Christ in this world, we express our deep appreciation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Very Rev. Adrian Budica, ThM, BCC, ACPE