



*“Living Liturgy in  
Practice: Orthodox Care  
in a Rapidly Changing  
World”*

*2022 OCAMPR Annual  
Conference*



**NOV 3-5, 2022 | SAINTS PETER  
AND PAUL GREEK ORTHODOX  
CHURCH (GLENVIEW)|  
CHICAGO, IL**

Fellowship, Learning, Networking, and  
Growing as a Community of Orthodox  
Christian Practitioners

# Welcome to the 2022 Conference!

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## *Living Liturgy in Practice: Orthodox Care in a Rapidly Changing World*

OCAMPR exists to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and promote Christian fellowship among professionals in medicine, psychology and religion. Members pursue an understanding of the whole person which integrates the basic assumptions of medicine, psychology and religion within the Orthodox Christian faith.

OCAMPR is for those who seek to understand and experience the best relationship between theology and the healing arts and sciences in order to offer their services in the light of Christ's truth and the Church's healing wisdom.

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- ❖ Gayle Woloschak, Ph.D., D.Min.

## *Thank You!*

The OCAMPR board is grateful to the parish of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church for their warm hospitality. Special thanks to *Rev. Richard Demetrius Andrews - Proistamenos, Elea Valessares Bentley - Parish Administrator, Carolyn Kolbaba - Administrative Assistant*, and the many parish volunteers who assisted with planning, baking, and serving throughout the conference.

The OCAMPR board is grateful to *Ancient Faith Radio* for recording our keynote and plenary speakers, workshops, and paper sessions.



Lunch and Dinner is catered by Jameson's Charhouse  
[www.jamesons-charhouse.com](http://www.jamesons-charhouse.com)

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# Map



- Youth Room
- HS Room
- Room 105
- Atrium
- Fellowship Hall

\* Exhibits, vendors and refreshments are located in the Fellowship Hall.  
\* The Youth Room has comfortable couches for relaxing during breaks.

# Exhibits & Vendors

- ❖ Ancient Faith Publishing <https://store.ancientfaith.com/>
- ❖ AOB Mental Health Ministries [www.assemblyofbishops.org/ministries/mentalhealth/](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/ministries/mentalhealth/)
- ❖ Axia Woman [www.axiawomen.org](http://www.axiawomen.org)
- ❖ Faithtree Resources [www.faithtree.org](http://www.faithtree.org)
- ❖ Lift Up Uganda [www.liftupuganda.org](http://www.liftupuganda.org)
- ❖ Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative [www.orthodoxservantleaders.com](http://www.orthodoxservantleaders.com)
- ❖ OCMC [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org)
- ❖ Orthodox Youth Ministries [www.orthodoxyouthministries.org](http://www.orthodoxyouthministries.org)
- ❖ St. Phoebe Center [www.orthodoxdeaconess.org](http://www.orthodoxdeaconess.org)
- ❖ St. Sebastian Orthodox Press [www.sebastianpress.org](http://www.sebastianpress.org)

# Schedule at a Glance

## Thursday

6:00 - 7:00 pm	Registration, Exhibits
7:00 - 7:15 pm	Welcome: Randa K. Anderson, PhD, President
7:15 - 8:15 pm	Keynote Address: Bishop John Abdalah
8:15 - 9:15 pm	Wine & Cheese Reception

## Friday

8:00 - 8:30 am	Registration, Exhibits, Coffee, Tea (breakfast provided at hotel)
8:30 - 9:00 am	Morning Prayers
9:00 - 10:00 am	Plenary Speaker: Medicine Dn. Theodore Saclarides, MD
10:00 - 10:30 am	Break, Exhibits, Networking
10:30 - 11:30 am	Workshop Session 1 (choose one)
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	Lunch with Professional/Special Interest Groups
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Plenary Speaker: Theological Nina Glibetic, Ph.D
2:00 - 2:30 pm	Break, Exhibits, Networking
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Workshop Session 2 (choose one)
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Break, Exhibits, Networking
4:00 - 5:15 pm	The Assembly of Bishops Mental Health Ministries
5:30 - 6:15 pm	Paraklesis
6:30 - 8:00 pm	Dinner with Guest Speaker: Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry

## Saturday

8:00 - 8:30 am	Registration, Exhibits, Coffee, Tea (breakfast provided at hotel)
8:30 - 9:00 am	Morning Prayers
9:00 - 10:00 am	Plenary Speaker: Psychology Roxanne Louh, Psy.D
10:00 - 10:30 am	Break, Exhibits, Networking
10:30 - 11:30 am	Workshop Session 3 (choose one)
11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Lunch and Annual Business Meeting
1:00 - 2:30 pm	Paper Session (choose one)
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Break, Exhibits, Networking
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Workshop Session 4 (choose one)
4:00 - 4:15 pm	Break, Exhibits, Networking
4:15 - 5:15 pm	Workshop Session 5 (choose one)
5:15 - 5:30 pm	Break, Exhibits, Networking
5:30 - 6:15 pm	Vespers & Blessing of Hands

**The conference concludes with Vespers, but all are welcome to stay through Divine Liturgy on Sunday. There will be a sign up sheet at the registration table for those who wish to dine together at a local restaurant on Saturday evening after Vespers.**

# Keynote Speaker

Bishop JOHN, Antiochian bishop for Worcester and New England



Bishop John was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts. His home parish was St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church. From an early age, he had a desire to serve Christ through the holy priesthood and so, after college, he attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary near New York City. While in seminary, he became engaged to Joanne Josephs to whom he was married in August 1978. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood shortly afterwards. Fr. John and Kh. Joanne are the parents of three children, Gregory, Joseph, and Maria.

On May 25, 2008, after a long battle with cancer, Kh. Joanne reposed.

After his ordination, Fr. John was assigned to St. George Antiochian Church in Little Falls, New Jersey, where he served for a year, after which point he was transferred to St. George Orthodox Church in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, where he served for sixteen years, and then to the St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he served for seventeen years. In Pittsburgh Fr. John studied pastoral care at the Pittsburgh Pastoral

Institute and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary earning a D.Min. in Pastoral Care and Clinical Membership in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. Fr. John facilitated a support group for widows and widowers called THEOS (They Help Each Other Spiritually) for 25 years. Fr. John also served as Dean of the Western PA Deanery from 1987 - 2011. Since 1997 he has been the editor of The Word magazine. Bp. John has also served as spiritual advisor to North American Board of the Antiochian Women and the North American Council of the Fellowship of St. John the Divine.

He taught Priestly Formation at the annual Antiochian House of Studies and worked as a mentor to the seminarians for the House of Studies program, bringing with him pastoral experience and practice. He also has taught for the Graduate School for the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology in Lebanon.

After his wife's repose, Fr. John was elevated to the rank of archimandrite by His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP. In 2011, at the convention of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Fr. John was elected to be the Antiochian Bishop of Worcester and New England and was consecrated by Patriarch IGNATIUS and 12 bishops at the Balamand Monastery on December 11, 2011. Bishop JOHN serves on the Canonical Regional Planning and Theological committees of the Assembly of Bishops and chairs the committee on Clergy Matters. Bishop John also chairs the Assembly of Bishop's Task Force on Mental Health. Bishop John is on the Advisory Board of OCAMPR.

# Plenary Speaker: Medicine

Dn. Theodore Saclarides, MD, Vice Chair of Surgery, Rush University, Chicago  
Deacon, Sts. Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Glenview, IL



Deacon Ted Saclarides was born in Clearwater, Florida and attended St. Nicholas (Tarpon Springs) and Holy Trinity (Clearwater). He received his undergraduate education at Vanderbilt University and his medical degree from the University of Miami School of Medicine. He is a full-time surgeon and currently practices at Rush University where he is the vice chairman of the department. He specialized in surgery for gastrointestinal problems.

Deacon Ted was ordained into the diaconate in 2015 and has served at Saints Peter and Paul, Glenview, IL since then. He has raised 5 children and is a loving Popou to 10 wonderful grandchildren.

# Plenary Speaker: Theology

Nina Glibetic, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies, The University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana



Nina Glibetic is an Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Her main research area is Christian liturgy in the premodern world, especially in the Orthodox tradition. Her work is interdisciplinary and pulls from the fields of liturgiology, theology, Byzantine and Slavic Studies. Glibetic's research and publications have explored topics such as the development of Byzantine eucharistic liturgy in the late Middle Ages, the role of liturgy in the formation of national identity, medieval religious rites for women at childbirth and miscarriage, and the liturgical heritage of early Slavs between East and West.

Glibetic has lectured internationally and held numerous research appointments, including a membership at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and fellowships at Harvard's Dumbarton Oaks, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is concurrently a member of an interdisciplinary research team dedicated to studying the liturgical manuscripts discovered at St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai in 1975. In 2021, pope Francis appointed prof. Glibetic as a consultant to the Congregation for Eastern Churches, making her one of a small number of Orthodox persons to serve in this capacity.

# Plenary Speaker: Psychology

Roxanne Louh, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice, Jacksonville, FL  
Cohost of "Live with the Louhs" on Ancient Faith Radio



Roxanne Louh, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist and Cohost of "Live with the Louhs" on Ancient Faith Radio

Dr. Roxanne Louh, a native of Gainesville, is a licensed clinical psychologist in Jacksonville, Florida, where she uses her extensive training in private practice and as a speaker with expertise in a variety of concerns, including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, marriage and parenting issues, and eating disorders, body image awareness and women's issues. She regularly presents to national groups, universities, area high schools, and church organizations across the country.

Dr. Louh is a highly regarded and respected figure in her profession through both her educational achievements and her training. She received her early education from the University of Florida, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and a minor in food science and human nutrition. She earned her first Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Central Florida. Her second Master's degree and her Doctorate are in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology. A residency at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Medical College of Virginia was followed by full-time work as a clinical psychologist at Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville where she worked in private practice and served as the Clinical Director of Psychological Services at Wolfson's Children's Hospital's adolescent treatment program for eating disorders. She opened her own private practice in 2006.

Dr. Louh continues to dedicate much of her time to community-wide presentations, reaching the public through various news media, social media, radio, educational talks, lectures and blogs, as she strongly believes in the prevention of mental health issues through education and awareness. She has made regular appearances as a guest expert on the show, "The Chat," a local news show similar to "The View," where four cohosts discuss current and newsworthy topics of the day. She is an established member of the American Psychological Association. Together, Dr. Louh and her husband cohost a weekly radio show on Ancient Faith Radio, entitled, "Live with the Louhs." They have also just co-authored their first book, released by the publisher in October of 2020, entitled "Renewing You, A Priest, A Psychologist, and a Plan." Dr. Louh lives in Jacksonville with her husband Nicholas and their two children, George and Gabriella.

# Schedule

Thursday November 3rd		
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	<b>Registration, Exhibits</b>	Fellowship Hall
7:00 pm - 7:15 pm	<b>Welcome:</b> Randa K. Anderson, PhD, President	Nave
7:15 pm - 8:15 pm	<b>Keynote Address:</b> <i>Bishop John Abdalah, Diocese of Worcester and New England of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America</i>	Nave
8:15 pm - 9:15 pm	<b>Wine &amp; Cheese Reception</b>	Fellowship Hall

Friday November 4th		
8:00 am - 8:30 am	<b>Registration, Exhibits, Coffee, Tea</b> <i>(breakfast provided at hotel)</i>	Fellowship Hall
8:30 am - 9:00 am	<b>Morning Prayers</b>	Nave
9:00 am - 10:00 am	<b>Plenary Speaker: Medical</b> <i>Dn. Theodore Saclarides, MD, Vice Chair of Surgery, Rush University, Chicago; Deacon, Sts. Peter &amp; Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Glenview, IL</i>	Nave
10:00 am - 10:30 am	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	
Workshop Session 1 (choose one)		
10:30 am - 11:30 am	<b>Orthodox Expressive Arts: Ancient Mysticism for Modern Practice</b> <i>Eirene Archolekas, MA</i>	HS Room
	<b>Carrying the Liturgy into the World: The Role of a Robust Diaconal Ministry in the Health of the Church</b> <i>Helen Theodoropoulos, PhD, Deacon Perry Hamalis, PhD, Kristina Baktis, MPS, ATR-BC, ATCS, LCAT</i>	Atrium
	<b>Grief and the Healthcare Worker</b> <i>Don Jenkins, MD, Veronica Ibarra, MS, FT, BCC, Hospital Chaplain</i>	Room 105
	<b>The Forgiveness Liturgy- Turning Pain into Joy: A Liturgical Approach to Healing the Depths of the Mind and Soul, Heart and Body Beyond the Limits of Modern Psychology.</b> <i>Corina Gheorghiu, MA, LMFT</i>	Youth Room
11:45 pm - 12:45 pm	<b>Lunch with Professional/Special Interest Groups</b>	Fellowship Hall
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	<b>Plenary Speaker: Theological</b> <i>Nina Glibetic, PhD, Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies, The University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana</i>	Nave
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	Fellowship Hall

Friday November 4th		
Workshop Session 2 (choose one)		
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>All is Well Because the Tomb is Empty</b> <i>Albert Rossi, PhD</i>	Atrium
	<b>Make Us Glad as Many Years as We Have Seen Evil: The Transformational Capacity of Art Therapy in Trauma Treatment</b> <i>Kristina Baktis, MPS, ATR-BC, ATCS, LCAT</i>	HS room
	<b>Interactive Care between Priest &amp; Psychotherapist of the So-called Dissociative Identity Disorder: Some Preliminary Remarks</b> <i>Steven-John Harris, PhD</i>	Youth Room
	<b>Dependency as Basis for Orthodox Care</b> <i>Katherine Karam McCray, MDiv, ThM, PhD Candidate Religious Ethics</i>	Room 105
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	Fellowship Hall
4:00 pm - 5:15 pm	<b>The Assembly of Bishops Mental Health Ministries: An Orthodox View of Mental Health</b> <i>Phillip Mamalakis PhD, LMFT &amp; Sangeetha Thomas, MS, LPC</i>	Atrium
5:30 pm - 6:15 pm	<b>Paraklesis</b>	Nave
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm	<b>Dinner with Guest Speaker from the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry</b>	Fellowship Hall

Saturday November 5th		
8:00 am - 8:30 am	<b>Registration, Exhibits, Coffee, Tea</b> <i>(breakfast provided at hotel)</i>	Fellowship Hall
8:30 am - 9:00 am	<b>Morning Prayers</b>	Nave
9:00 am - 10:00 am	<b>Plenary Speaker: Psychological</b> <i>Roxanne Louh, PsyD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice, Jacksonville, FL and Cohost of "Live with the Louhs" on Ancient Faith Radio</i>	Nave
10:00 am - 10:30 am	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	Fellowship Hall
Workshop Session 3 (choose one)		
10:30 am - 11:30 am	<b>Caring for Our Clergy &amp; Clergy Wives: Sustaining our Leaders</b> <i>Mka. Jennifer Levine, MS; Fr. Sean Levine, MA, MDiv, MS, MFT, DMin (ABD)</i>	Room 105
	<b>Divorce in the Church: Journeying with and through the Grief</b> <i>Hope Evans, BSN, RN; Maria Harduvel Boyle, MS; Christina Elderkin, EMT</i>	Youth room
	<b>Liturgical Medicine</b> <i>Mena Mesiha, MD &amp; Mena Mirhom, MD</i>	Atrium
	<b>A Liturgy of Peace: The Power of Sacred Rhythms</b> <i>Cynthia Damaskos, Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach; Molly Sabourin, BA in Education</i>	HS room

# Schedule

Saturday November 5th		
11:30 pm - 1:00pm	<b>Lunch and Annual Membership Meeting</b>	Fellowship Hall
<b>Paper Session (choose one)</b>		
<b>Group 1</b>		
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>Orthodoxy and Attachment Theory</b> <i>Polixenia Stan, BA in Psychology; Cătălin Andrei Nicolae; BA in Psychology/Sociology; Maricica Pandele, Master degree in Communication Studies</i>	Room 105
	<b>The Ongoing Trinitarian Coffee Hours after Orthodox Trinitarian Liturgy</b> <i>Sebastien Falardeau, MA Spiritual Care, MA Systemic Theology, PhD Candidate Theology</i>	
	<b>Post-abortion Healing</b> <i>Nancy Brown, MA, MFT</i>	
<b>Group 2</b>		
	<b>Monophonic Healing: Administration of Music Therapy in Orthodox Tradition</b> <i>Fr. John D. Schieffler, PhD</i>	HS Room
	<b>Pilgrimage: A Trinitarian Therapy</b> <i>Eirene Archolekas, MA</i>	
	<b>"In a Fallen World" Stories of Unexpected Hope and Healing in a home for Chronic, Severe Mental Illness</b> <i>Stephanie Moore, Program Director, Enriched Living Center</i>	
<b>Group 3</b>		
	<b>An Orthodox Chaplain's Perspective on Physician Aid in Dying</b> <i>Sarah Byrne-Martelli, DMin BCC-PCHAC</i>	Atrium
	<b>Being a Healing Presence Through Listening and Communication</b> <i>Joey Jalaf, DPT</i>	
	<b>The Psychodynamics of Gratitude: An Opportunity for Theological-Psychological Convergence</b> <i>Fr. Isaac Skidmore, PhD, MDiv</i>	
<b>Group 4</b>		
	<b>The Transformative Power of Worship</b> <i>Fr. George Dokos, ThD</i>	Youth Room
	<b>Reclaiming Community: Youth Ministry in Post-Pandemic America</b> <i>Greg Abdalah, DMin</i>	
	<b>The Difficult Path: Navigating a Professional Career as an Orthodox Psychologist for the past 28 years</b> <i>Ary Chistofidis, PhD</i>	
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	

Saturday November 5th		
<b>Workshop Session 4 (choose one)</b>		
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>Living Liturgy in Practice: Missional Identity at the Intersection of Faith &amp; Work Part 1</b> <i>Geoff Whiteman, LMFT, MAMFT, ThM; Kriss Whiteman, MA, PhD Candidate</i>	Room 105
	<b>An Awakening to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit</b> <i>Paula Dranger, MSW, LCSW</i>	Youth room
	<b>Dispassion, Divine Love and the Healing Profession: Practical Insights from the Orthodox Ascetic Tradition &amp; Social Neurobiology</b> <i>Joel C. Klepac, MA, LMFT</i>	Atrium
	<b>Cultivating Compassionate Love for Mental Health and Healing</b> <i>Dn Mark Nicholas, PhD, LMHC</i>	HS room
4:00 pm - 4:15 pm	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	Fellowship Hall
<b>Workshop Session 5 (choose one)</b>		
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	<b>Living Liturgy in Practice: Missional Identity at the Intersection of Faith &amp; Work Part 2</b> <i>Geoff Whiteman, LMFT, MAMFT, ThM ; Kriss Whiteman, MA, PhD Candidate</i>	Room 105
	<b>Saint Luke (the Surgeon) of Simferopol and Crimea as a Model for Living Liturgy in Medical Practice</b> <i>Cathy Creticos, MD; Helen Theodoropoulos, PhD</i>	Youth Room
	<b>Three Steps to Prevent Burnout</b> <i>Dr. Ioana Popa, MD, MTS</i>	Atrium
	<b>Sex in the Forbidden Zone</b> <i>Fr. Jan Michael Veselak, MA Theology, MA Clinical Psychology, Licensed Addiction Counselor and Relapse Prevention Coach</i>	HS room
5:15 pm - 5:30 pm	<b>Break, Exhibits, Networking</b>	Fellowship Hall
5:30 pm - 6:15 pm	<b>Vespers &amp; Blessing of Hands</b>	Nave

# Workshop Descriptions

## **Orthodox Expressive Arts: Ancient Mysticism for Modern Practice**

*Eirene Archolekas, MA, teacher, artist, writer, NYC Dept of Education, various community colleges, Private Practice*

Orthodox dogma and practice has provided a holistic view of the inner workings of the mind and soul that is grounded in positive psychology and can be used to improve mental health. In an interdisciplinary weaving of psychology and Patristics, I will explore how Orthodoxy can be incorporated into clinical practices that can benefit practitioners and patients alike. Indeed, modern psychological approaches, including mindfulness, breath work, and mind-body practices such as yoga, have been influenced by Buddhist traditions. The wellspring of Eastern Orthodox spiritual practice has been overlooked and it is my intention to make the mental health community awaken to the many techniques and concepts that have served to bring balance and health to the mind, body and soul from this ancient tradition. These include the Jesus Prayer as meditational tool, the Divine Liturgy in its dramatic enactment of the Life of Christ as ritual therapy, the focus on "nepsis" or wakefulness, the practice of Holy Confession and the relationship to a spiritual elder for insight into Self and the making conscious the subconscious.

It is in its integration of mind, body, and soul that the field of expressive arts can be combined with the practices of Orthodoxy to bring about self-awareness, emotional regulation, connection, and inter and intra personal awareness. Expressive arts a branch of alternative therapy founded by father/daughter team Carl and Natalie Rogers allows for the creativity in each participant or group to be allowed free expression with intention using more than one modality to arrive at synthesis. Expressive arts stress the "process" over the product. It is a person-centered approach that allows for "unconditional regard" and witnessing of the process by active community members that holds the space or container for the participant to express the deepest, most authentic parts of self, even the shadow parts, in an effort to process and accept what comes up through the creative process. In this workshop, some practical applications of expressive arts through an Orthodox tradition will be explored and experienced, hopefully in a small group setting.

## **Carrying the Liturgy into the World: The Role of a Robust Diaconal Ministry in the Health of the Church**

*Helen Theodoropoulos, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Patristics and Theology St Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology, Libertyville, IL; Dn. Perry Hamalis, PhD, Cecelia Schneller Mueller Professor of Religion; Professor of Religious Studies, North Central College, IL. Holy Apostles (GOA), Westchester, IL; Kristina Baktis, MPS, ATR-BC, ATCS, Art Therapist Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health.*

Through the Divine Liturgy, the whole plan and work of God's "oikonomia" –His process of bringing us into His life and His love, so that we may be in communion with Him –is made present to us. This work of the Liturgy, the salvific and transformative love of God, then goes out into the world through us, the Body of Christ. Historically, deacons have been leaders in this movement of bringing the Liturgy into the world. Within the Liturgy, they are the members of the clergy who are closest to the laity, traversing constantly the space between clergy and laity, and offering the petitions on behalf of the people. This work also enables them to act as the arms of the Church reaching into the community. Historically this is clear in the work of both male and female deacons in ministering to the sick and the poor, bringing the sacraments to those who could not attend at Liturgy, taking time to listen to their concerns and bring their needs to the Assembly for prayer, and in providing catechesis and other services to the community.

What are our needs today, and how can the work of the diaconate, both male and female, minister to those needs in a way that brings the transformative love and life of God into the world? This workshop will begin by looking at the ways diaconal ministry by men and women historically brought the work of the Liturgy into the world. We will then segue to the post-pandemic world of today, suggesting ways in which this ministry is particularly suited to the many needs of our communities. We will conclude by asking the participants to join in an exercise wherein we propose various scenarios and ask all to brainstorm ways in which a fully functioning diaconate, utilizing the service of men and women, could minister in that situation, connecting pastoral care with the liturgical life of the Church.

## **Dependency as Basis for Orthodox Clinical Care**

*Katherine Karam McCray, MDiv, ThM, PhD Candidate Religious Ethics, University of Toronto*

In two sections, theory and praxis, my workshop will explain the importance of Orthodox theology about the human being for ethical theory, and then relate a dependency-oriented expectation for human nature to clinical best practices. Persons with disabilities are a chronically underserved population largely because wellness models which anticipate autonomy often label disability as a pathology rather than an aspect of human diversity. Models for human nature that require independent autonomy inevitably define disability through the lens of deficiency or sin, alienating the disabled experience from what it means to be human. In Orthodox theology, many modern texts follow the pattern of relating disability to representations of sin which furthers the stigma-stress experienced by individuals with chronic conditions. Even if clinicians and clergy are aware of this stigmatization and avoid speaking globally about human fallenness, the stress of such an anthropology on the part of patients can be enough to avoid physical and spiritual care. Thankfully, we have alternatives. I argue that Eastern Orthodoxy can model human nature as radically dependent and in constant states of need because we are created, finite and in flux. Theologically this state is based on our ability to be impacted by environmental factors, what is identified at the Council of Chalcedon as passibility. Passibility defines human nature, even Christ's human nature, so it provides a way to conceptualize dependency and need in a framework that is outside of fallenness. If Christ as the only sinless one was also passible, then a person with a chronic condition or psychosocial disability experiencing extended states of need is not a representation of sin but instead a representation of human nature. For patients who have persistent conditions, comparing their capacities to an unattainable standard creates stigma-stress and can ultimately fracture the clinician-patient relationship. However, many current disability-positive recommendations relate disability literacy to cultural competency. If a clinician is disability aware, stigmatizing behaviors, judgments, and gaps in care can be avoided. I recommend a few methods for Orthodox clinicians to implement disability literacy in action.

## **The Forgiveness Liturgy-Turning Pain into Joy: A Liturgical Approach to Healing the Depths of the Mind and Soul, Heart and Body Beyond the Limits of Modern Psychology.**

*Corina Gheorghiu, MA, LMFT*

Modeled by the Divine Eucharistic Liturgy, the Forgiveness Liturgy is the quintessential way of healing the depth of our wounds and restoring the zest of living. This workshop will present the forgiveness process as an inner liturgy, an offering of all our pain to God as living sacrifice, so that He will turn it into the joy he promised. The workshop will highlight the practical guidelines for the body and for the mind, as provided by the prayers of the Divine Liturgy. As transfiguration of the self, the Forgiveness Liturgy is the radical solution for reparation of all relationships: with ourselves, God, others and the environment. As "therapy of the Holy Spirit" it can be integrated with most modern psychology orientations and coaching, in the medical practice, pastoral care, and hospice work. It is based on the teachings of mother Siluana Vlad of blessed memory, former abbess of St. Siluan Monastery, Iasi, Romania.

## **All is Well Because the Tomb is Empty**

*Dr. Albert Rossi, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, St Vladimir's Seminary*

This workshop will open a discussion about the issue of wellness. Basically, wellness from an Orthodox perspective, is theological as well as personal. All is well, yet all does not seem well in our world, in our church, in our hearts. Orthodoxy is Paradox. The workshop will provide a safe area to examine and discuss these issues.



# Workshop Descriptions

## **Make Us Glad as Many Years as We Have Seen Evil: The Transformational Capacity of Art Therapy in Trauma Treatment**

*Kristina Baktis, MPS, ART-BC, ATCS, LCAT, Art Therapist Penn Medicine Princeton House Behavioral Health*

Exposure to traumatic events disrupts a person's ability to feel safe in relationship to themselves, others, and their environment. Flashbacks and nightmares force a person to relive the traumatic event long after the initial exposure. Further, it is difficult to process traumatic events in talk therapy because traumatic memories are often disconnected from the language centers of the brain rendering these experiences unspeakable. How can someone begin to heal from the isolation and suffering of trauma? Art therapy is recognized as an effective trauma treatment. It offers a way to express, organize and transform the unspeakable within the context of a supportive relationship. This experiential workshop will blend art therapy theory, Orthodox Christian theology, and case studies to illustrate the impact of relationships and creativity in healing from traumatic events. Participants will be invited to have an active role in the process by making their own art. No previous artistic experience is necessary.

## **Interactive Care between Priest & Psychotherapist of the So-called Dissociative Identity Disorder: Some Preliminary Remarks**

*Steven-John Harris, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Center for Depth Psychology, Inc.*

For the life of the parishioner who has experienced severe and debilitating trauma resulting in what was formerly named, "Multiple Personality Disorder" (now DID), there are many spiritual and psychological realities that demand important attention toward healing. For example, a major concern is how dissociative defenses can both protect the person while also creating significant psychopathology which can leave an individual vulnerable to both impaired living and attacks by evil forces—even possession. This presentation will consider the dialogue between theological and psychological realities, including areas of overlap between the two domains. The overlap and distinctions may need important attention between priest and therapist, including communication and their unique contributions to the process. The presenters, a psychologist, and a priest, will use a case presentation to illustrate these key points leading into a discussion of the main concerns relevant to this challenging and important work towards the formation of an interactive approach that requires both theological and psychological perspectives and teamwork.

## **Grief and the Healthcare Provider**

*Donald H. Jenkins, MD, FACS, Professor of Surgery Uniformed Services University, Professor/Clinical, Division of Trauma and Emergency Surgery, Vice Chair for Quality, Department of Surgery, Betty and Bob Kelso Distinguished Chair in Burn and Trauma Surgery, Associate Deputy Director, Military Health Institute, UT Health San Antonio; Veronica Ibarra, MS, FT, BCC, Bereavement Counselor at Presbyterian Healthcare Services, San Antonio, TX, Fellow of Thanatology from Association for Death Education & Counseling*

Grieving healthcare workers may develop behavioral, professional, personal and/or performance issues. Substance and domestic abuse, depression, anger and losing empathy are just a few examples of the end result of the stresses facing healthcare providers in all aspects of healthcare. An experienced panel from numerous medical disciplines will discuss various aspects of this difficult topic and discuss with the workshop attendees signs of this grieving process and potential ways to improve resiliency, especially in light of ongoing work environment stresses and the recent, world-changing pandemic. The panelists will present brief personal examples of grief in healthcare workers and enter into dialogue with workshop attendees which will be the majority of time spent in this workshop.

## **Caring for Our Clergy & Clergy Wives: Sustaining our Leaders**

*Mka. Jennifer Levine, M.S. in Psychology, Clergy Wife; OPL Secretary, TiM Facilitator, Synaxis Coordinator, Clergy Wife Advisory Group, Peace of Mind Facilitator; Fr. Sean Levine, MA, MDiv, MSMFT, DMin (ABD)*

Clergy families often have their needs overlooked because parishioners are busy trying to have their own needs met by the clergy family. By looking at the human needs of our clergy, let's find practical things parishioners can do to encourage the health of our clergy families in the day-to-day grind of life that often wears them down. Orthodox Church in America

## **Liturgical Medicine**

*Mena Mesiha, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon Prima Care Medical Center; Mena Mirhom, MD, Psychiatrist,*

Health and healing reveal God's glory when they are understood in their true liturgical nature. Operating rooms and exam rooms are living altars where liturgia, or "work of the people," takes place. However, much like at the liturgy celebrated on Sunday, we can miss the very real presence of God at work on Tuesday also. "The power of the Lord was present to heal them" (Luke 5:17 NKJV) - that power is present, but we may not be. How can we approach Tuesday with the same reverent expectation of Sunday? "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it" (Genesis 28:16 NKJV). How do we recognize that in illness, pain, and darkness is the presence of the broken body and poured out blood of the living Lord?

Practically speaking, none of us approach the altar on Sunday believing that we are the ones who transform the elements. Can we apply that as well that "healing comes from the most high" even if my hand holds the surgical instruments? If my fingers typed the prescription? But "the sanctification is by the Holy Spirit" (Divine Liturgy of St. Basil in the Coptic Tradition).

"The glory of God is a human being fully alive" as St. Iraneus said. For us to see this real full glory, our eyes need to be opened to this life-long liturgy. Without this realization, the practice of medicine will be the pursuit of happiness. An empty, vain pursuit that is decorated with a pseudo-moral, pseudo-pious perspective of "helping people" while we build larger kingdoms for ourselves. There are truly many vices in what appears to be virtue.

Mental health, in particular, will remain incomplete without this complete glory of the Lord. It will remain a hollow attempt at masking the stench of death in the human condition. Like expensive and sweet-smelling perfume, applied to a corpse, while the Resurrection awaits at the grave. The instruction of therapy or the neurotransmitters being manipulated by medication are only as powerful as we can begin to understand that they are to be entirely transformed. They are offered, blessed, changed, and then applied to the wounded.

In this workshop, we will explore what the practical implications of moving away from the allure of the hallow pursuits in healthcare to the holy liturgical life of healing with the True Physician.

## **Divorce in the Church - Journeying With and Through the Grief**

*Hope Evans, BSN, RN, ICU Nurse Community Medical Center; Maria Harduvel Boyle, MS Counseling Education, Ministry Leader: Divorce Rebuilders; Christina Elderkin, Outdoor Leadership & Wilderness EMT*

Divorce is often painful, fearful, and isolating. It can leave faith communities, families, and clergy feeling confused, helpless, or fearful. Saint Clement of Alexandria said, "Marriage is more than human. It is a "microbasileia," a miniature kingdom, which is the little house of the Lord." So, how do we grapple with the division of this kingdom, which is increasingly commonplace yet unintended by God? How do we journey with individuals who are going through the spiritual, emotional and many other facets of pain created by divorce? This workshop will shine light into these dark areas; to empower communities to lean into the tension and pain, and to encourage areas where clergy and laity can journey with individuals who are experiencing divorce.

## **A Liturgy of Peace: The Power of Sacred Rhythms**

*Cynthia Damaskos, Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach; Molly Sabourin, BA of Education, Author and Podcaster, Ancient Faith*

The purpose and spiritual benefits of order within liturgical services as carried forth into our every day existence. How do we implement liturgically inspired sacred rhythms into our daily schedule? What can we learn from the liturgy about the power of order to foster transcendent peace in our lives?

# Workshop Descriptions

## **Living Liturgy in Practice: Missional Identity at the Intersection of Faith and Work (Two Part Workshop)**

*Geoff Whiteman, MA, MFT, ThM, LMFT; Kriss Whiteman, MA, PhD (ABD), OCMC Mission Specialist in Training*

The intersection of our faith and our vocation is fertile ground for exploring our mission, or rather how we are uniquely invited to join God's mission in the world. This partnership with God is not limited to our actions, but also encompasses our identity—who we are now and who we are becoming. There is a strong connection between mission and theosis. This workshop is designed as two parts to allow for robust group engagement and ample reflection on personal application.

**Part One:** The Divine Liturgy, which is at the heart of our faith as Orthodox Christians, is a profoundly missional act—all of creation is lifted up on the holy altar and filled with the sanctifying Spirit, and the faithful are sent out to imbue the world with the gift they themselves have received.

This movement of grace can happen concretely within the context of our vocation. Regardless of our occupation, we can do all our work with God and for God's glory—this is the heart of the ministry of the Faithful.

We will explore themes from the prayers of Baptism and Chrismation, Confession and Communion, and the Funeral Service as we unpack what God has given us to help us to become Faithful Orthodox Christians in life and ministry.

**Part Two:** We know that we are invited into God's mission in the world and that we have been equipped and empowered with an abundance of spiritual gifts and graces. This brings to mind the crux of the issue—how, in the midst of the distracting cares and concerns of life, can we remember this reality? Seeking practical means to live into this remembrance, we will harvest the collective wisdom of the participants, finding some of the postures and practices that support our identity at the intersection of faith and vocation—our mission.

The workshop concludes with a vision of how fully equipped and engaged Orthodox Faithful might impact their communities in substantial and sustainable ways with the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **An Awakening to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit “Experiencing Wellness and Self-Care through The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

*Paula Dranger, MSW, LCSW, CEO & Clinical Therapist and Adjunct Professor, Choices! Counseling Services and Valparaiso University Graduate School: College of Nursing and Health Administration*

We will focus by taking an in depth look at the teachings of the Holy Spirit, learning more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and personalizing these truths to transform your wellness and thus your self-care and to inspire you. Through interactive activities and small and large discussion groups, you will reaffirm and keep in mind the importance in our faith of the Holy Spirit, be on guard to see the work of the Holy Spirit in action and appreciate its effect on you and others in helping those clients we work for and work with.

## **Dispassion, Divine Love and The Healing Professional: Practical Insights from the Orthodox Ascetic Tradition & Social Neurobiology**

*Joel C. Klepac, MA, LMFT, Centre College and Asbury Theological Seminary*

This short presentation will focus on "apatheia" in Evagrius of Pontus and others, and how this concept is finding resonance in the current social neurobiology of compassion. Combining the insights from the church fathers and nuances of the social neurobiology of compassion, practical applications will be made for healing professionals offering insights for resilience and spiritual growth. Participants will be invited to connect with others in discussing how the material might apply to their work and spiritual life.

## **Cultivating Compassionate Love for Mental Health and Healing**

*Dn. Mark Nickolas, PhD Pastoral Psychology, LMHC, Inner Resources Counseling, PC*

The courage and capacity to be sensitive to and work with pain and suffering -- others' and one's own -- is strengthened by the cultivation of a compassionate heart-mind. This workshop will explore spiritual and science-based resources and practices for developing such a heart-mind and accessing compassionate love for mental, emotional and spiritual health and healing.

## **Three Steps to Prevent Burnout**

*Dr. Ioana Popa, MD, MTS, Team For The Soul™ Co-founder, Hellenic College Holy Cross*

There is a widespread belief that burnout happens only for some people and in extreme situations, but as helping professionals, especially Orthodox Christians wanting to follow Christ, we are actually at high risk for it when we are feeling great. It is then that we tend to overextend ourselves and take on multiple responsibilities at once, only to feel overwhelmed and running on empty after a few months or years. In this workshop I will present 3 foundational steps to take today to prevent burnout, using science, psychology, spiritual care and Orthodox Christian faith principles.

## **The Life of Saint Luke (the Surgeon) of Simferopol & Crimea as a Model for Living Liturgy in Medical Practice**

*Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos, PhD, Professor Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology; Catherine Creticos Poulos, MD, Howard Brown Health Center and Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center*

Medical care providers today navigate a difficult landscape as they care for their patients. In a highly pluralistic society marked by rapidly changing moral values, rising social and political pressures, and increasing discomfort with and distancing from religion, Orthodox Christian health care providers strive to honor Christ's command to care for the neighbor while staying true to fundamental teachings of the faith. In the era of militant atheism under Soviet Russia, St. Luke of Simferopol and Crimea, surgeon and Bishop, lived his Christian faith as a medical care provider under the most hostile conditions. This workshop will look to St Luke as a model for living the Liturgy- the full expression of Christ's self-emptying love- in medical care today. We will then use specific case studies to open discussion among participants and share how we can live our purpose of loving service to others while also remaining faithful Orthodox.

## **Sex in the Forbidden Zone**

*Fr. Jan Michael Veselak, MA Theology and MA Clinical Psychology, Licensed Addiction Counselor and Relapse Prevention Coach, Private Practice in Wayne West Virginia*

The title of this workshop is Sex in the Forbidden Zone. It is based upon the work is based on the work of Dr. Peter Rudder's book of the same title. In this workshop I wish to discuss the process by which a good counselor or priest ends up having an affair either sexual or emotional with a parishioner. This is a PowerPoint presentation going through the steps that lead to this calamity. Depression, loneliness, and pathogenic beliefs that lead to these behaviors will be emphasized.

## **Orthodox Bridging: The Orthodox Church and Mental Health First Aid**

*Philip Mamalakis, PhD, LMFT, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; Sangeetha Thomas, MS, LPC, AoB Mental Health Ministries Program Coordinator*

The Assembly of Bishops recent initiative, Peace of Mind, seeks to offer the program, Mental Health First Aid to all Hierarchs, clergy, lay leaders and faithful. Toward that end, the members of the Mental Health Task Force developed a "bridging" component that seeks to orient the faithful to Mental Health First Aid, essentially building a bridge from our orthodox Christian worldview to the Mental Health First Aid program. In this workshop, we will present the Orthodox Bridging program, discuss the goals and challenges of a Bridging component, and discuss how our Orthodox Christian faith serves as the context for appropriating, both, the Mental Health First Aid program as well as useful and relevant aspects of mental health theory and practice.

# Paper Abstracts

## **Being a Healing Presence Through Listening and Communication**

*Joey Jalaf, DPT - Doctor of Physical Therapy, B.S. Kinesiology, Physical Therapist, HonorHealth Outpatient Physical Therapy and Move Free Physical Therapy, PLLC*

Healing and medicine as a Christian ministry, for centuries, has been focused on serving others. However, many patients today are having bad experiences with their healthcare providers, citing lack of empathy, not feeling valued as a person, and not feeling included by their provider in the decision making process as primary complaints. Studies have also shown that patients are often being quickly interrupted when explaining their problem, and their concerns are rarely being elicited by their provider. These findings raise questions about whether healthcare providers are speaking too much and not listening to their patients, and whether they are truly seeking to understand the patient as a person, instead of their biomedical problem. In the Physical Therapy profession, practicing the art and science of listening and skilled patient questioning are utilized to understand the patient as a person and build a therapeutic relationship. This is considered to be the most important aspect of patient care and is utilized heavily during the patient interview. When considering Orthodox Christian teaching and tradition, the practice of silence, exercising the virtue of humility, and following the commandment to love one another as God love us, appears to be missing from the patient and healthcare provider interaction. If these are implemented in the healthcare setting, healthcare providers will be able to enhance their listening and communication skills to provide exceptional patient interactions, experiences, and care, and truly be a healing presence.

## **The Ongoing Trinitarian Coffee Hours after Orthodox Trinitarian Liturgy**

*Sebastien Falardeau, MA Systemic Theology, MA Spiritual Care, PHD Candidate in Theology, University of Montreal, Advanced Grief Recovery Specialist, Co-Founder Team for the Soul, Chaplain, Director of Pastoral Care at Southern New Hampshire Health Hospital*

The LGBTQ+ is a popular movement in the youth Generation Z (1996-2009), and Generation Alpha (2010-2024). This movement is raising several serious theological issues concerning the life of children and adolescents who. They are very often excluded and rejected by their families, their Christian religions and their society. In order to explain the importance of gender fluidity, the LGBTQ+ movement seems to be using an all inclusive theory, and their ultimate philosophical argument is a non-binary theory, claiming that they bring a new framework which for them seems to transcend the boundaries of binary logic.

In this paper, by applying the Orthodox Christian trinitarian anthropology concept and expanding it to logic and science I will disprove that the non-binary theory of the LGBTQ+ movement is transcending the boundaries and limitations as they claim, and argue that they are still using binary logic, and is therefore it is not Trinitarian in nature. We will show that orthodox ternary anthropology, grounded in logic and science of the 21st century, could trace a revolutionary path for gender theory.

This paper, by addressing this central argument of the LGBTQ+ movement - then opens the doors for other practitioners to bring the Liturgy and a Trinitarian way of living into the world.

## **Orthodoxy and Attachment Theory**

*Polixenia Stan, Bachelor Degree in Psychology, Faculty of Sociology-Psychology, Ana Aslan National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics Principal research psychologist; Cătălin Andrei Nicolae, Bachelor Degree in Psychology-Sociology, Mental Coach, Self-Employed; Maricica Pandele, Master Degree in Communication Studies, Coaching Specialist, Moderates SFR TV YouTube channel programs and Orthodox Psychotherapy programs*

Because He cares of His Creation, God established natural laws of living and has helped people to apply these rules. When people disobey them, negative effects come in place. Since the beginning of time there have been people who have perceived these adverse effects as punishments coming from God. In the environment in which these persons grew up, disobeying rules was punished as usually happens in the legal system, punishment being an addition to other negative effects. As people were not aware of the unfavorable consequences of disobeying the established laws, these laws were seen as restrictions.

What influenced applying the rules and what influenced the understanding of theoretical Orthodox concepts? Although there are many possible answers to this question, we propose an approach based on the attachment style developed in childhood. More specifically, we refer to the way we form intimate and emotional connections and how we are influenced by them.

John Bowlby defines the concept of attachment as being a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings". This attachment can be secure and insecure: avoidant, anxious, or anxious-avoidant (ambivalent). There is a possibility for this type of attachment developed in relationship with meaningful people from childhood to influence the way we perceive God's care towards us. If we have an insecure attachment, this can change by developing a secure attachment to God, thus also improving the relationship with important people in our lives.

A secure attachment relative to God correlates with superior resistance to distress and better answers when facing emotional challenges. Practicing prayer facilitates a corrective experience in the relationship with God, leading to improvement of mental health. Regardless of the individual's intrinsic religiosity, the social support or the interpersonal attachment style, a good liaison with God leads to the protection of mental health.

## **Monophonic Healing: Administration of Music Therapy in Orthodox Tradition**

*Fr. John D Schieffler, PhD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Sacred Heart University*

The use of music therapy in the treatment of several mental and physical ailments is well documented. This work explores the relationship between liturgical music traditions and the therapeutic impact it can have on those who attend. Can the proper execution of traditional liturgic sound comfort the burden of mental health current in society? Does it matter to the mental health of a parish if the choir is well practiced? Can the church choir heal?

## **Pilgrimage: A Trinitarian Therapy**

*Eirene Archolekas, MA, expressive arts facilitator, NYC Dept of Education and Private Practice*

Pilgrimage, esp walking pilgrimage, offers well-tread paths for healing mind, heart, and body and is more needed for modern-man post-pandemic than ever before. Because of the nature of pilgrimage to engage the whole person, following the dogmatic breakdown of the human soul by St Gregory Palamas composed of nous(heart), logos (mind) and body, like the trinitarian mode of being, it can act to integrate the human person. By analyzing pilgrimage from a therapeutic/counseling lens as well as an ascetic practice with theological undergirds, I intend to make the case that it is essential for spiritual, emotional, and physical health. Pilgrimage provides the possibility for transformation and meaning-making, a physical hero's journey ripe with psychic power. Buttressed with insights from the classic and beloved Russian Orthodox text, The Way of the Pilgrim and The Philokalia, I will demonstrate that pilgrimage should be pursued as an ascetic feat just like fasting and alms giving. Pilgrimage becomes a walking meditation that synchronizes nous, logos and body and when combined with the Jesus Prayer becomes an offering of a trinitarian nature accessible for all. A focus on pilgrimage to Orthodox sites broken down by numbers will be given. A call for more organized walking pilgrimage will be discussed for the Orthodox Church taking the example of the extremely popular Camino de Campostela, a 1000 year-old institution that has skyrocketed in participation even while church attendance has decreased.

# Paper Abstracts

## **"In a Fallen World" Stories of Unexpected Hope and Healing in a home for Chronic, Severe Mental Illness**

*Stephanie J. Moore, Program Director at Enriched Living Center, Rescue Mission of Utica, NY*

Reflections on my time spent as Program Director in a 52-bed, state-licensed residential program for those with severe, chronic mental illness (which is also a faith-based, not-for-profit). After 10 years, I've concluded that I could do very little to "help" the residents or improve the quality of their lives, or make needed changes in "the system" or in the services available to them. The only thing I could offer was unconditional acceptance, love and support to those who have had impossibly difficult lives. The traumas that I have personally been witness to here have broken and wounded my heart. My heart has been broken by seeing the way the bodies, minds and souls of the "least of these" are malformed by abuse, trauma, neglect, addiction, and evil. It is through this brokenness and wounding that God has softened my heart and opened me to greater love. I believe that it is through this wounded heart that God calls us out into the community around us to practice loving service in the most difficult of circumstances.

## **An Orthodox Chaplain's Perspective on Physician Aid in Dying**

*Sarah Byrne-Martelli, DMin, MDiv, Chaplain, Massachusetts General Hospital*

In the past decade, the practice of Physician Aid in Dying has become increasingly widespread in the United States and around the world. As Orthodox Christians who profess that God is the ultimate author of life and death, we must develop a nuanced response to the growing popularity of assisted death. This response must not be a mere condemnation of the practice based on the sanctity of life, but a vision which illuminates our views of life, death, and suffering within the context of the sacramental life of the Church.

## **The Difficult Path: Navigating a Professional Career as an Orthodox Psychologist for the past 28 years**

*Ary Christofidis, Ph.D., Orthodox Christian Counseling Institute*

This paper will cover the major obstacles, events, and goals I have worked through and experienced as an Orthodox psychologist. Sharing my many experiences, growing pains, and client challenges will be shared for the benefit of younger clinicians in our faith who wish to give their talents and help our Orthodox Christians in their own communities. In addition, I will share Orthodox resources that I have found fruitful for myself, professionally and for my clients who have sought a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **The Psychodynamics of Gratitude: An Opportunity for Theological-Psychological Convergence**

*Fr. Isaac Skidmore, PhD, MDiv, Priest: Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church, Ashland, OR, Therapist in Private Practice, Professor Southern Oregon University*

The author discusses psychological dynamics entailed in the experience of gratitude, arguing that they constitute a region of significant overlap—and an opportunity for meaningful dialogue—between those who nurture individuals towards spiritual growth (priests and other spiritual guides), and those who work with clients in secular therapeutic settings. The importance of gratitude in Orthodox spiritual life is attested to in Patristic and ascetical writings, and is evidenced by the regularity of the Church's celebration of the Eucharist. From the perspective of the Church's understanding of theosis as the telos of human development, pastoral ministry encourages gratitude, as a means of healing and the expression of its fulfillment. Priests and other spiritual guides, however, do not always recognize the intrapsychic difficulties many people encounter in attempting to be grateful. Gratitude entails a person's understanding and acknowledgment of the fact that they are not self-sufficient. One can safely acknowledge this only if they can trust in the fundamental goodness of the environment in which they exist. Orthodox theology offers assurance of this goodness on a cosmic scale. Individuals may still struggle, though, to realize this goodness on a personal level, due to the particular traumas and deficits entailed in their own developmental histories. As such, gratitude, as both a spiritual and therapeutic goal, represents a crossroads at which pastoral guidance and secular therapy intersect. Therapists, operating in a secular context, can understand their work as leading a client towards a disposition that possesses spiritual value. Conversely, priests and spiritual guides might come to appreciate the positive contribution of psychology, in helping us understand how individuals can be helped through impediments that restrict their ability to experience gratitude.

## **The Transformative Power of Worship**

*Fr. George Dokos, ThD, Priest Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church, Westchester, IL*

The Liturgy and worship of the Orthodox Church serves many functions for the Christian, one of which is to repeatedly form and fashion the worshiper's ethos into the ethos of Christ.

## **Post-Abortion Healing**

*Nancy Brown, MA, MFT, Retired*

It is estimated that 1 in 4 women in the United States have had an abortion. With the constant media attention around the overturning of Roe versus Wade, these women may, at varying levels of consciousness, feel quite triggered. Some may, for the first time, be consciously considering the possibility that the decision they made, based on thinking it was neutral, right, or didn't matter was actually wrong and did matter. Women within the church are not immune to having abortions though they may have questioned the decision more both at the time and later. However, due to shame and guilt, these church women may be likely to keep the abortion a secret. For both groups, rather than being the hospital it is intended to be, the church may feel like the last place to look for healing. Though arguably different in terms of moral culpability, both the church and unchurched post-abortive women may find themselves in a situation similar to that of soldiers coming home from a "just war" who have participated in killing. Both the soldier and the post-abortive woman, and man for that matter, may be dealing with what has been called "moral injury." Through the relating of my own experience with post abortion recovery work against a background of having both undergone much psychotherapy but also being a therapist, I shall relate how I came to be doing this work within the Orthodox community and key components of the work, I shall speak to the reality and manifestations of post abortion syndrome and how it can involve but also differ from PTSD. Referencing the model of healing developed for moral injury, I shall speak to critical components of post abortion recovery: grief work, confession, forgiveness work, the role of ritual, and the restoration of communion. Finally, I shall speak about the current landscape and setting of post abortion work and the need for the Orthodox Church to more robustly and openly provide but also uniquely contribute to the healing of those carrying the tragedy of abortion.

## **Reclaiming Community: Youth Ministry in Post-Pandemic America**

*Gregory Abdalah, DMin, Pastoral Assistant/Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church Phoenix, AZ/SVS Crestwood, NY*

An oversimplified summary of growth into what we now know as modern-day America follows. Our society went from small, tight-knit communities to sprawling metropolises with suburbs stretching for miles upon miles. As these artificial communities developed, walls – literal and figurative – boxed people in, keeping them away from each other. Society went from a society living in community to a society living in isolation. Then, in March of 2020, real isolation happened: The Covid-19 Pandemic. During the pandemic, an already fractured society relying on false community became siloed and isolation, leading to a meteoric rise in narcissism. This is evident most clearly in our youth. This paper will offer a response to the false communities that surround us vis-a-vis the true community that the Church offers within her liturgical life.

# Prayer for the Blessing of Hands

*Almighty Lord, the true Physician, bless and sanctify this oil which you have ordained for the anointing your servants and for the healing of soul and body, so that, when they are restored in health, they may give thanks to you, the living and true God.*

*Grant, we pray, that those who are anointed with this oil may be delivered from all suffering, all infirmity, and all wiles of the enemy.*

*May each one, created in your image and likeness and redeemed through the divine economy of Your Son, be filled with Your compassion and walk daily in the light of Your commandments; through the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary's, the Healing Unmercenary Saints Kosmas and Damian, and of all the Saints, for you are blessed unto the ages of ages.*

*Amen.*



# Holy Wonderworkers & Unmercenaries Cosmas & Damian



### **Troparion**

*Holy unmercenaries and wonderworkers, Kosmas and Damian, visit our infirmities. Freely you have received; freely give to us.*

### **Kontakion**

*Having received the grace of healing, you grant healing to those in need. Glorious wonder workers and physicians, Kosmas and Damian, visit us and put down the insolence of our enemies, and bring healing to the world through your miracles.*



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