

**DEPARTMENT OF CHAPLAIN AND PASTORAL COUNSELING**  
**REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY JULY 2017**  
*Self-Ruled* **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA**

**1) Mission of the Department.**

The overall mission and ethos of the Department is to continue the healing ministry here on earth of Christ our heavenly Physician. In all that the Department ministry and mission is in conformity with a description of those who were healers in the early Church: They were outstanding physicians often "first in their medical school class," medical science was regarded as a serious academic discipline and totally committed to Christ and living His teachings. The Department is strongly committed to psychological training, treatment procedures and competence that conforms to the highest level of scientific (evidenced) based knowledge and practice integrated with Orthodox spirituality.

**2) Nature of the work**

The work of the Department is carried out using a ministry of being a resource for the integration of scientific (evidence based) behavioral (psychological science) and the Holy Mysteries of the Church in conformity with Orthodox Tradition. Educational articles and books, workshops, radio broadcasts, PowerPoint presentations are major vehicles for the delivery of this instruction and guidance. In addition individual consultation with clergy and laity on a variety of specific issues is regularly carried out

**3-5) 2016 Achievements**

Educational, training and workshop materials topics include anxiety, depression, Post Trauma Stress Disorder, Suicide, personality, neurological basis of emotional activation, cognitive-behavior therapy, grief & bereavement etc., Orthodox Christian Spirituality and Cognitive Psychotherapy, sexuality, parenting, and marriage. Materials appear on the Veterans Hospital La Jolla, CA newsletter: *The Beachcomber*; the Antiochian Archdiocese website, on <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles6/MorelliHealing.php>, and on the Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Fr.George.Morelli>. Sponsorship and funding for the publication of 2 books *Good Marriage* and *Smart Parenting* was not forthcoming and this goal was not met. A Chaplain directory was also not met, interaction with the Archdiocese Chancery is needed for this goal to be met.

**6-7) Plans and action steps for 2017 2018**

Continued cooperation with and possible expansion of material for the Antiochian Department of Internet Ministry. Establishing Chaplain endorsement guidelines and procedures. Setting up a directory of Antiochian Chaplains and licensed Mental Health

Counselors (Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Marriage and Family Counselors, Clinical Social Workers, Professional Counselors and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners). Such referrals are the most frequent request received by the Department. Sources for publication funding will continue to be sought. The Department is also working with the John Templeton Foundation project, "Enhancing Practice-Based Evidence for Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapies: An Interdisciplinary Big Data Project," serving in a scientific advisory capacity.

### **8) Staff**

The Department has three staff members:

V. Rev. Fr. George Morelli, PhD; Chairman  
Rev. Fr. Hans Jacobse; IT Consultant  
Anne Petach; Editorial Consultant

### **9) Budget**

Budget submitted to Finance Department. Department of Chaplain & Pastoral Counseling is allotted \$0. If funding were authorized for the next fiscal periods, it would be used for book publication funds (from a non-Antiochian source) and workshop development. No funds would be allocated for staff salary.

### **10) Issues for Metropolitan Joseph**

As per last year's report:

*When Departments were re-structured to have an Episcopal Overseer a inquiry was made to His Grace Bishop John Abdalah, that if he was blessed to serve in this position, that he would be willing to serve. His answer was affirmative. He was asked because of his training and background in mental health. A request was sent to the Archdiocese, but as yet, no reply has been received. Contact with Bishop John on 16 April, 2016 confirmed his continued willingness to be appointed Episcopal Overseer. A blessing is requested for an Overseer assignment.*

In as much as such proposed projects as Chaplain Guidelines and Procedures and Mental Health Counselor Directory would involve Archdiocese Administration interaction, it would be advantageous to have this as a department goal.