



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Center for Family Care

Report to the 45th Biennial Clergy Laity Congress

OVERVIEW AND MISSION

The Center for Family Care nurtures and empowers stewards who, at the forefront of ministry within the home and parish family, navigate the joys and challenges of life. Grounded in prayer, and through multifaceted resources, trainings, and collaboration with the ministries of the Archdiocese and metropolises, we foster the building up of the Body of Christ.

Website: www.family.goarch.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/centerforfamilycare

STAFFING

- REV. DR. ALEXANDER GOUSSETIS – DIRECTOR (FULL-TIME)
- REV. CONSTANTINE L. SITARAS - ADMINISTRATOR, LILLY ENDOWMENT CLERGY FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM (VOLUNTEER)
- PRESV. KERRY PAPPAS - COORDINATOR FOR SEMINARIAN AND CLERGY COUPLE CARE (PART-TIME)
- PRESV, MELANIE TSIKOURIS DiSTEFANO – RESOURCE DEVELOPER (PART-TIME)
- MARIA McMULLEN - MEDIA COORDINATOR (PART-TIME)

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

(SINCE OCTOBER 2019 ARCHDIOCESE COUNCIL MEETING)

FAMILY MINISTRY WEBINARS

(www.goarch.org/en/departments/family/webinars)

Webinar topics and speakers include:

- *Family Fellowship: Superglue to the Church* with Sandra Anderson and Tia Muchulas
- *Parenting in the Pandemic* with Fr Harry Pappas and Dr Evelyn Lolis
- *Marriage in the Pandemic* with Fr Tom and Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis
- *Explaining Racism to Our Children* with Fr Paul Abernathy

Average of 3000 viewers for each webinar, either live or archived on our website

FAMILY MATTERS PODCAST (www.ancientfaith.com/podcast/familymatters)

Hosted by Fr Alexander Goussetis. Episodes and speakers include:

- *Adoptions: Blessings and Challenges* with Stellanie Butcher
- *Protecting our Children* with Fr Earl Cantos
- *Youth Sports and Family Life* with Brian Krenzela

- *Maternal Body* with Dr Carrie Frederick Frost
- *Youth Chanting Project* with Dr George Stavros
- *Deciding on Marital Divorce* with Dr Sarah Crabtree
- *Bullying and How Families Can Respond* with Christy Buck
- *Lenten Fasting Ideas for Families*
- *Ministering to Special Needs Families* with Presvytera Melanie DiStefano
- *Refuge in Times of Crisis*
- *Organ Donation: Family Decisions* with Christine Chambers-Monkowski
- *A Story of Crime & Redemption* with Eddie Bocanegra
- *The Good Samaritan: A Children's Catechism* with Fr Michael Shanbour
- *Consensus Parenting*
- *Saintly Parenting* with Fr Theodore Petrides
- *St Sophrony's Three Stages of Spiritual Life and the Implications on Marriage & Family* with Fr David Alexander

More than 14,000 total downloads since November 2019

SOAK UP THE SON (www.goarch.org/soak-up-the-son)

These family resources are five-minute weekly videos with related activities. Theme for Summer of 2020 – *The Wonder of Creation*. Total views more than 11,000.

WEBSITES, PRINTED MEDIA, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Praxis – Winter 2020 & Spring 2020 Editions

- *Individualism, Loneliness, and Orthodox Home Education* - Dianthe Livanos
- *Finding Meaning in Community as Newhlyweds* - Lara Galis
- *Children Becoming Vessels of God's Grace Beyond Nationality* - Kakia Saridou-Los
- *My Life as an Orthodox Christian* - Zoe Tsikouris
- *Bullying* - Christy Buck

Archdiocese Blog (www.blogs.goarch.org) with the following entries posted since November:

- *Theophany Reflections for the Special Needs Parent*
- *The Gift of Life*
- *Why Life?*
- *What Social Distancing Taught Us About Our Non-verbal Son's Faith*
- *Consensus Parenting*
- *I Surrender!...to Motherhood*
- *What Three Days Without Running Water Taught Me About Being Thankful*

Average of more than 1000 views for each blog entry

Comfort Food for Families

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWopa4I5g3xDaoHaowcLhD1i1fbcXrfHf

This new series initiated during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These 5-minute videos for families have received a total of 56,000 views in just a few months! Titles include:

Refuge	Presence of God
Noah's Ark	Prayer Corners
Stress	Tower of God

Panagia	Eagles
Saying Yes to God	God's Promise
Abraham's Journey	Our Bodies in Prayer
Time	Bible Study
Lazarakia	Spiritual Community
Palm Sunday	Tabitha: A Model for Christian Living
Holy Week Hymns	Vocations vs. Holiness
Remembering the Departed	Incense
Love Letters	Journal Writing
Angels Everywhere	Trusting in God
Music: Means of Emotional Expression	

Table Talk

Weekly family conversation starters based on the Sunday Gospel:
 22 created from February 28 – Present
 Posted on our Facebook page

RETREATS, WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, AND PRESENTATIONS

- December 2019 (Albuquerque, NM) Marriage Enrichment Workshop
 - January 2020 (Roseland, NJ) Creating a Vibrant Future
- Though parish visitations are a central aspect of our ministry, we could not travel after mid-February due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Facilitated

- East Clergy Peer Learning Groups (two groups)
 - October 2019 (Reading, Pennsylvania)
 - October 2019 (Flemington, New Jersey)
 - February 2020 (Blandon, PA)
 - February 2020 (Reading, PA)
 - May 2020 (online)
 - May 2020 (online)
- West Clergy Peer Learning Group (one group)
 - November 2019 (Steubenville, Ohio)
 - February 2020 (New Castle, PA)
 - June 2020 (online)

A new information page was created highlighting retreat and workshop topics, encouraging parishes to invite our department speakers: <https://www.goarch.org/-/center-for-family-care-retreats-workshops>

CONFERENCES

We experienced a very successful conference in January:

Pastoral Challenges in Marriage Conference
Seasons of Marriage:: Kairos and Chronos
 January 22-25, 2020 Houston, TX

Due to the continued Covid-19 virus threat, we decided to postpone the first ever national clergy retreat until 2022 (Below is original info):

National Clergy Couple Retreat
Healthy Marriage = Healthy Ministry
November 3-6, 2020 Mundelein, IL

THE JOURNEY OF MARRIAGE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

An updated version of this pre-marital resource is in process. Preliminary work thus far includes:

- Developing a premarital preparation resource website
- Surveyed Clergy and couples for input on current programs
- Holding focus groups with JOM facilitators
- Compiling feedback and organized it into categories - edits for JOM and things for the premarital prep resource website

CRITICAL-CARE RESPONSE & REFERRAL

Continues daily with lay people seeking guidance and support relating to marriage and family issues.

FAMILY GOSPEL LESSONS

Continues weekly through the *Bulletin Builder* program of the Archdiocese and our Facebook page.

CLERGY COUPLE CARE OVERVIEW

The mission of Clergy Couple Care is *to minister to the ongoing needs of seminarian and clergy wives and couples for healthy, holy self-care and the building of strong, vital, vibrant marriages that thrive in the midst of the challenges of parish life.*

The following list highlights the activities of Clergy Couple Care since October 2019:

Clergy Peer Learning Group Training - A Leadership 100 grant proposal to expand this program nationally was approved in February 2019.

- The initial training conference took place on September 10-12, 2019 in Somerset, NJ with 16 clergy in attendance from around the Archdiocese.

- A second training, this time online for Presbyteres, took place on February 6, 2020 with eight Presbyteres attending.
- A major Archdiocese training for clergy has been proposed for the *Day After* Archdiocese Task Force in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Clergy Financial Literacy Program - A Lilly Endowment grant of \$1,000,000 is being implemented through the Center for Family Care to promote financial literacy for our clergy. As of 5/31/20, 60 clergy have applied to the program and 43 have completed the program and received awards totaling \$428,889. A second grant from the Lilly Foundation was received in 2020 for \$1,000,000, with the focus remaining education and financial grants to clergy.

Clergy Couple Care Website – Continues to be monitored and populated with relevant articles for clergy and clergy families.

Support and Referrals – Continues daily, with clergy and presbyteres seeking guidance and support, primarily from Fr Alexander and Presvytera Kerry.

The Pastoral Institute in Columbus, Georgia – Couples are referred and sent when needed.

Presbyteres' Virtual Reading Group – A second group was formed in Fall 2019, with Presvytera Kerry and Presvytera Melanie leading the groups

Presbyteres' Facebook Discussion Group – Continues weekly

Lenten Psalter Reading group for Orthodox clergy wives (45 participants)

Seminarian Wives' and Couples' Ministry at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology - A program for the Fall is being discussed with the Dean of Students, which includes monthly gatherings with designated speakers and periodic visits by our staff.

Presvytera Kerry is an active and contributing member on the following committees and organizations:

- OCAMPR Resource Group (Pan-Orthodox)
- The *Day After* Covid-19 Task Force (GOA)
- Covid-19 Relief Fund Application Committee (GOA)
- Thriving in Ministry Board (OCA/Pan-Orthodox)

In Conclusion

With hope, we look to the future of the Center for Family Care's overall ministry, and we ask for your prayers and feedback as we continue to expand and develop. We thank His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros for his continued vision and guidance. In addition, we are grateful to Leadership 100 for its generous support.