



## Orthodox Christian Campus Ministries (OCCM)

OFFICIAL CAMPUS MINISTRY ORGANIZATION OF  
THE COPTIC ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHERN U.S.

[susoccm.org](http://susoccm.org)

August/September

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



September 21, 2020

***Ties to the Motherland: The Future of Orthodoxy in America***

*His Grace Bishop Youssef*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Ties to the Motherland***

- 1. Future of Orthodoxy in America** (Father Alexander Schmemman, Dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary): <https://missions.hchc.edu/missions/sermons/sermons/the-future-of-orthodoxy-in-america>
  - Q1: Why are we Orthodox? Are we convicted in the faith that we can talk to other people about it?
  - Q2: What are your thoughts on how inclusive the Church is on campus and in the community? What is our role in this?
- 2. Orthodoxy in America Has a Convert Problem** (Father Photius Avant, St. Sava Orthodox Church of America): <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/orthodoxyandheterodoxy/2017/09/21/orthodoxy-america-convert-problem/>
  - Q1: Are we converts to Orthodoxy? What does conversion mean?
  - Q2: What does being "Orthodox" mean? Is it limited by the things we do or the way we live?

#### ***Staying Connected to Family***

- 1. Honor your Father and Mother** (Father Cyril Gorgy, St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx2jp0l\\_7Aw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx2jp0l_7Aw)
  - Q1: What all have your parents gone through to provide for you? Can we find grace to see beyond the mistakes they may make?
  - Q2: How does "forgive us as we forgive others" apply to the grudges and emotions we hold against our parents?
- 2. Honoring Parents** (Wisdom of Sirach 3:1-16): <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Sirach+3&version=NRSV>
  - Q1: If we expect the youth to be cared for, we as youth should care for those before us. As we grow older, how can we start providing for our parents?
  - Q2: How can we care for the elders in the church as the youth?



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September/October

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



October 20, 2020

***Environmental Stewardship: Our Impact on Creation***

*Father Manchilot Guadie*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Environmental Stewardship***

- 1. Destroying the Environment** (His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople, Greek Orthodox):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhZJJ47byt0&list=PLB12E9542A32C568A&index=9>
  - Q1: What are your thoughts on the dominion of creation given to Adam by God?
  - Q2: What are some ways the Church negatively impacts Creation?
- 2. A Divine Ecology: An Orthodox Christian Vision for the Environment** (Father Andrew Stephen Damick, St. Paul's Antiochian Orthodox Church):  
[https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/aftoday/orthodoxy\\_and\\_the\\_environment](https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/aftoday/orthodoxy_and_the_environment)
  - Q1: Discuss your thoughts on Father Michael's description of humans embodying all parts of Creation and the effect of our salvation on the rest of Creation.
  - Q2: What are some environmentally conscious practices we could introduce into the life of the Church?

#### ***Almsgiving***

- 1. Principles of Almsgiving** (Father James Gendi, St. Mary and Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church): <http://www.saintmaryhouston.org/content/audio/principles-almgiving>
  - Q1: Do we care that people see our sacrifices and how much we give?
  - Q2: Why do you give?
- 2. Prayer, Almsgiving, and Fasting-Threefold Cord of our Salvation: Almsgiving** (Father John Boddecker, St. Theodore Russian Orthodox Church): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ASEj972fig>
  - Q1: Do we truly believe our blessings are for others as well? What are some things we hesitate to give away?
  - Q2: What are simple ways that we have overlooked as a chapter in giving to each other and those on campus?



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October/November

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



November 17, 2020

#### ***Abortion: The Sanctity of Life***

*Father Asmerom Hagos*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Abortion***

1. **Abortion** (Very Reverend Father Joseph F. Purpura, Antiochian Orthodox Youth Ministry):  
<http://ww1.antiochian.org/abortion>
  - Q1: Do babies in the womb recognize God? When did we first recognize God?
  - Q2: Why does the Church not believe that abortion is a women's rights issue?
2. **Abortion in the Teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church** (Translated by Tsegaye Girma and Kassa Nigus, Source from Deacon Zena Birhanu, Ethiopian Orthodox Church):  
<https://eotcmk.org/e/abortion-in-the-teachings-of-the-ethiopian-orthodox-tewahido-church-2/>
  - Q1: As youth, do we have a responsibility for those younger than us?
  - Q2: What are other ways in which the Church values the sanctity of life?

#### ***Finding your purpose***

1. **Union with God** (His Grace Bishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQnsYzr2uUg>
  - Q1: In what ways do we take God for granted?
  - Q2: How does suffering bring us closer to God?
2. **How do I know God's will?** (His Grace Bishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQEik0KjKGI>
  - Q1: What is our own will for our lives? What do we really want for ourselves?
  - Q2: Is this aligned with what God wants for us?



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November/December

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



December 15, 2020

***Sexuality and Society: Defining Love in Modern Times***

*Father Samuel Varghese*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Sexuality and Society***

- 1. Understanding Homosexuality: An Orthodox Christian Perspective** (Father George Morelli, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church): [http://religiousinstitute.org/denom\\_statements/understanding-homosexuality-an-orthodox-christian-perspective/](http://religiousinstitute.org/denom_statements/understanding-homosexuality-an-orthodox-christian-perspective/)
  - Q1: Is homosexuality different from other sexual sins?
  - Q2: Where should our pride come from?
- 2. Can a Homosexual become an Orthodox Christian?** (Father Ted Stylianopoulos, Professor of at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology): <https://stpaulsirvine.org/can-a-homosexual-become-orthodox/>
  - Q1: Do we view homosexuality differently than other struggles?
  - Q2: How can we protect ourselves from sexual temptation in college?

#### ***Abstinence***

- 1. Fasting-Abstinence from food but what about abstinence from sin?** (Hieromonk Kosmas, Priestmonk of Orthodox Monastery of Archangel Michael): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcqjFwj4SDQ>
  - Q1: How do we practice asceticism throughout the year?
  - Q2: Discuss how the outcome could have been different if Adam and Eve obeyed God.
- 2. On Chastity and Abstinence** (Father Lawrence Farley, St. Herman Orthodox Church of America): <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/nooterfoundation/chastity-abstinence/>
  - Q1: Where is the "line" we draw in practicing chastity and abstinence?
  - Q2: Is chastity and abstinence only a physical practice? Or does it start with a choice in lifestyle?



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January/February

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



January 19, 2021

***Mental Wellness: The Connection Between Mind and Spirit***

*Father Zach Varghese*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Mental Wellness***

- 1. What do the Fathers say about mental illness?** (Father Athanasios Haros, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sCE3dAzNL8>
  - Q1: In what ways do we keep a person in darkness within our group?
  - Q2: How do we promote a culture of confession and openness of struggle within our group?
- 2. Mental Health and Orthodoxy-Worry, Fear, and Anxiety** (Bishop John, Chairman of Mental Health Taskforce for Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in US; Father David Alexander, Father Isaiah Gillette, Antiochian Chaplains for US Military):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKKckO1lfs&list=PL9K25Y6XfAHOSul477XN89848X7t28HGO&index=4>
  - Q1: How do we define “the fear of God”?
  - Q2: What are some ways that we try to escape psychological pains that may lead us further from God instead of closer to Him in our times of need?

#### ***Prayer***

- 1. Lord, Teach Us to Pray** (Father Pishoy Salama, St. Maurice and St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church): <http://orthodoxsermons.org/sermons/lord-teach-us-pray-part-4>
  - Q1: Why do we pray?
  - Q2: Do we pray to be seen as faithful or do we truly believe in the life-changing power of prayer?
- 2. The Missing Step of Prayer** (Father Vijay Thomas, St. Basilios and St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church): <http://orthodoxsermons.org/sermons/missing-step-prayer>
  - Q1: What are some things as a college student that distracts us from being present in prayer?
  - Q2: What is the focus of our prayers? What do we expect from God through our prayers?



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February/March

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



February 16, 2021

***Feminism: Power vs. Piety***

*Tasoni Missy Abouelkheir*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Feminism***

- 1. Feminism and the Role of Women** (His Grace Bishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London): <http://becomeorthodox.org/feminism-and-the-role-of-women/>
  - Q1: Define how the roles in marriage are equal but different.
  - Q2: Do we define women's roles based on what culture deems important or based on His word?
- 2. Apostles to the Apostles-Feminism as it should be Understood** (Father Vasile Tudora, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church): <https://myocn.net/apostles-apostles-feminism-understood/>
  - Q1: Do we aspire to earthly equality or heavenly equality?
  - Q2: What conditions have to be met for each member of the Church to pursue salvation? Does it require someone else's perfection?

#### ***Stewardship***

- 1. What is Orthodox Stewardship?** (Father Anthony S. Tandilyan, St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn5XAYNz3tY>
  - Q1: As a steward, what have you been given responsibility over?
  - Q2: In what ways are we the "bad steward"?
- 2. Volunteerism or Stewardship** (Father Christopher Howley, Chairman of Antiochian Orthodox Department of Sacred Music): <http://ww1.antiochian.org/node/22679>
  - Q1: Are you a steward of your Church or community? What keeps you from saying yes to the call?
  - Q2: What is the difference between being a volunteer and being a steward?



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March/April

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



March 16, 2021

***Church vs. State: Godly Vote for a Secular Master***

*Father Alexander Kurian*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Church vs. State***

- 1. Orthodox Christianity and Politics** (George E. Demacopolous, Greek Orthodox Professor of Theology): [https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/aftoday/orthodox\\_christianity\\_and\\_politics](https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/aftoday/orthodox_christianity_and_politics)
  - Q1: How can we give to Cesar without taking from God?
  - Q2: Which party does the Church belong to?
- 2. Church and State are not Separate-They are at War** (Very Reverend Father Stephen Freeman, St. Anne Orthodox Church of America):  
<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2017/02/02/church-state-not-separate-war/>
  - Q1: How is our current political atmosphere affecting the Church?
  - Q2: Do we vote with our souls in mind?

#### ***Staying Strong in the Faith: St. Daniel and St. Shamouni***

- 1. A Mother and Her Sons are Martyred** (2 Maccabees 7):  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Maccabees+7&version=GNT>
  - Q1: Do we encourage each other to “die” for God?
  - Q2: Are we proper role models to those around us?
- 2. A Plot against Daniel** (Daniel 6):  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel+6&version=NKJV>
  - Q1: What are less obvious forms of persecution in college?
  - Q2: What are some ways that we are asked to give up our faith or our way of life on campus?



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April/May

### MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES



April 20, 2021

***Political Correctness: Truth in Action***

*Father Yeprem Kelegian*

### CHAPTER CURRICULUM FOR MEETINGS

#### ***Political Correctness***

1. **God Within Us** (Very Reverend Father Stephen Freeman, St. Anne Orthodox Church of America):  
<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/2020/07/13/god-within-us/>
  - Q1: What separates those that pursue a life with God and those who do not? Circumstances? Suffering? Actions?
  - Q2: Do we expect God to reward us for “good behavior”? How do we view our relationship with God?
2. **The Life with God** (His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch of Alexandria, Coptic Orthodox):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2bSRt7qtOo&t=169s>
  - Q1: What are some ways that we quiet the voice of the Holy Spirit?
  - Q2: What kind of peace do we try to spread in the world?

#### ***Living a Sacramental Life***

1. **Sacramental Life** (Father Daniel Habib, St. John Coptic Orthodox Church):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Luqu3v4J6aU>
  - Q1: What are some reasons you believe or have heard in the decreased participation in the sacraments by the lay people?
  - Q2: Why do we participate in the Sacraments? How much of our life in the Church is “going through the motions”?
2. **Orthodox Understanding of Sacraments (Eucharist)** (Father Michael Sorial, St. Anianus Coptic Orthodox Church): <https://youtu.be/V2X0L3IHnt4>
  - Q1: Why can only Orthodox baptized believers participate in the Holy Eucharist? Does this make our Church exclusive?
  - Q2: What are some ways our chapter can help each other prepare for communion in a more reverent manner?





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### ABOUT OUR WEBINAR SPEAKERS

#### **His Grace Bishop Youssef** (*Ties to the Motherland: The Future of Orthodoxy in America*)

His Grace Bishop Youssef is the Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern U.S. For the last 25 years, His Grace has been a catalyst of change in Coptic Orthodox Church in America, advocating for standardization of English services, standardized campus ministries, and giving the youth a voice in their Church.

#### **Father Manchilo Guadie** (*Environmental Stewardship: Our Impact on Creation*)

Father Manchilo Guadie currently serves as the priest for Kedist Selassie and Debre Tsion Mariam Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Lilburn, Georgia. After graduating from law school in Ethiopia in 2004, Father Manchilo went on to complete his M.Sc. in land Management from the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden in 2007. In 2012, after a series of internships at the EPA, Father Manchilo earned his LLM in Environmental Law from The George Washington University Law School and now works in his own law firm.

#### **Father Asmerom Hagos** (*Abortion: The Sanctity of Life*)

Father Asmerom Hagos currently serves as the priest the Medhanealem Eritrean Orthodox Church in Lithonia, Georgia. In 2004, Father Asmerom completed his Ph.D. in Chemistry, with a focus in medicinal chemistry and pharmaceuticals. He obtained a Pharm.D. in 2010 from Mercer University and currently works as a clinical pharmacist at St. Joseph Hospital at Emory University.

#### **Father Samuel Varghese** (*Sexuality and Society: Defining Love in Modern Times*)

Father Samuel Varghese currently serves as the assistant vicar of St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles, California. Father Samuel earned his Master of Divinity from the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam, India. From 2011-2018, Father Samuel served as the youth minister for the Western region, before being ordained to the priesthood in 2018. He still serves as a youth minister for St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church in San Francisco.

#### **Father Zach Varghese** (*Mental Wellness: The Connection Between Mind and Spirit*)

Father Zach Varghese currently serves as the priest for St. Thomas Syrian Orthodox Church-Austin, Texas. Father Zach completed his MD from The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, where he specialized in Psychiatry. Father Zach also completed his MPH from UT-Health in Houston, and now works as the Chief Medical Officer at MAVA Partners, where he works in health informatics.

#### **Tasoni Missy Abouelkheir** (*Feminism: Power vs. Piety*)

Tasoni Missy Abouelkheir currently serves in Holy Cross Coptic Orthodox Church-Austin, Texas. Raised in the Catholic church, Tasoni Missy journeyed through the understanding of the faith through the eyes of the



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Church and converted to Orthodoxy. She serves the high school and college age youth through weekly Sunday School lessons and campus ministry bible studies.

### **Father Alexander Kurien** (*Church vs. State: Godly Citizen under a Secular Master*)

Father Alexander Kurien currently serves as a priest in Washington, DC . After completing his MBA, Father Alexander worked in real estate valuation and consultancy. Father Alexander then became the Director of the Office of Strategic Planning for the U.S. State Department, where he led long-range planning for the U.S. Government's international real estate portfolio. Father Alexander currently works as a Senior Executive for GSA, where he optimizes the management of government programs.

### **Father Yeprem Kelegian** (*Political Correctness: Truth in Action*)

Father Yeprem Kelegian is clergy emeritus of St. Mesrob Armenian Orthodox Church in Racine, Wisconsin and serves as the visiting priest for the Armenian community in Austin, Texas. Father Yeprem is known for his active work with the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) and is an outspoken activist for social change through action in the Church. He currently is working on providing aid and donation to Ayo-a fundraising arm of the Fund for Armenian Relief to help Armenia during the COVID-19 crisis.