

Diocesan Report
Department of College Ministry
Witnessing Orthodox Christianity in College

November 1, 2016
Report Date: October 27, 2016

Your Eminence, Archbishop +MICHAEL, Very Reverend & Reverend Clergy, Brothers and Sisters in Christ: *Glory to Jesus Christ!*

Personnel

The department currently consists of Fr. John Diamantis, chairman, Levan Kiknadze, (Student Webmaster; volunteer), and Spyridoula Fotinis (Student Ambassador; Volunteer). The department is grateful for the tireless efforts of Janine Alpaugh who served in this position for the last three years.

Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors help to plan, organize, and promote events for other Orthodox Christian students throughout the states of New York and New Jersey. Student Ambassadors are instrumental in, and passionate about, the work of college campus ministry.

Spyridoula Fotinis also serves as the National OCF's northeastern student representative.

The department is hoping to recruit several *Student Ambassadors*, each to help with these activities in smaller portions within the diocese. If you have someone in mind for this role who fits the description above, please contact Fr. John.

Updates Diocesan/National

Clergy have been sent updates and notices of various sorts on many occasions. Among them were notices about events happening at the national level including College Conference, Real Break, First 40 Days program, and Orthodox College Student Sunday.

The department website (www.occm.nynjoca.org) is fully functional and contains a variety of resources for college ministry, from student-related financial information to starting an OCF chapter. The department has an active Facebook page, the purpose of which is to incorporate and advertise events for all of the OCF chapters throughout the diocese. Many thanks are extended to Fr. Ken Stavrevsky for his diligent efforts in updating the diocesan website and offering clear and timely communication to reflect this department's goals and activities throughout the diocese the past year.

Chapters

The Department has been busy compiling information for chapters that exist and sorting through the information to determine the health of each chapter. In our diocese are 269 college campuses

with at least 1,000 students. The following sixteen OCF chapters are believed to meet with some regularity and/or with a consistent clergy presence. This is a decrease from last year.

The sticky issue of having non-Chalcedonian “OCF” chapters and traditional OCF chapters with non-Chalcedonian students and student leaders still exists. These are prominent throughout New York and New Jersey.

Below are summaries of the chapters in the diocese listed with the National OCF office known or believed to be presently active in some capacity. A “chartered” chapter is one which has a spiritual advisor, defined student officers, a constitution, is registered with the National OCF office and actively meets with some regularity.

OCF Chapter Information

New Jersey

County College of Morris

This chapter is active and chartered. The spiritual advisors are Fr. David Fox (OCA), Fr. John Theodosion (GOA), and Fr. William (ACROD). Student efforts are being led by Spyridoula Fotinis.

Montclair State University

The spiritual advisor is Fr. Matthew Brown (OCA). This chapter is chartered.

Princeton University

Fr. Daniel Skvir (OCA) is the spiritual advisor. The Princeton University OCF meets weekly. This chapter is chartered.

New York (City)

Barnard College

This chapter has traditionally been combined with the chapter at Columbia University. Fr. Yakov Riklin (OCA) is the spiritual advisor. The group meets weekly and is chartered with OCF.

City College of New York

This chapter began in November 2015. Fr. John Vlahos (GOA) is the spiritual advisor.

Columbia University

This chapter has traditionally been combined with the chapter at Barnard College. Fr. Yakov Riklin is the spiritual advisor. The group meets weekly and is chartered with the National OCF.

Fordham University

Fr. Elias Villis (GOA) is the assigned chaplain. The group meets weekly and is chartered with the National OCF.

St. John's University

There is an active Coptic-led group already established on this campus led by a Coptic priest. Fr. Nathan Preston (Albanian Archdiocese) has offered his assistance to this chapter.

New York (Long Island)

Hofstra

This is an emerging chapter as of 2015. Fr. Luke Melackrinis (GOA) is the spiritual advisor.

New York Institute of Technology (NYIT)

There is a large and very active Coptic/Indian group of approximately 40 students. There is not believed to be regular involvement from clergy. A second group of canonical Orthodox students may also exist, but has not yet been verified. The Coptic/Indian chapter has active student leadership.

Stonybrook University

This is comprised of Coptic students. This chapter meets bi-weekly and has no formal spiritual advisor.

New York (Upstate)

Cornell University

This chapter meets weekly. The spiritual advisors are Fr. Thomas Parthenakis (GOA) and Fr. James Worthington (OCA). They have student leadership. The chapter is active and chartered with the National OCF.

Ithaca

Fr. James Worthington is the spiritual advisor.

SUNY (Albany)/St. Rose/Skidmore

Fr. Matthew Markewich is the spiritual advisor. This chapter has been meeting since 2013. They are chartered, meeting once a week on Wednesdays at 6pm. The student president is Artem Timofeev.

Syracuse University

This chapter has 10—15 students and meets monthly for pizza and discussion. The spiritual advisor is Fr. David Smith (GOA).

University of Rochester

This chapter meets regularly with about 15 students. The chaplain is Fr. Patrick Cowles (GOA).

Student Retreats/Conferences

ONE Conference

Though not a product of this department, the ONE Conference continues to gather between 800 and 1,200 high school, college aged, and young adults each year. These events have been held in various locations in New Jersey for the past five years. Our youth (including college students)

are always invited to these events. This conference is a collaborative effort by many non-Chalcedonian groups, led primarily by the Coptic and Indian. They actively seek participation in developing the program from the various jurisdictions represented in the Assembly of Bishops, including this department.

District/Regional Retreats

Other smaller retreats have taken place in the diocese during the past year, including:

Living In God's Creation, hosted by the OCF at County College of Morris, April 1—3, 2016

New Jersey District Retreat, April 16th

Conclusion

Much good work is being done, for which the students should receive the bulk of credit. I remain grateful for them and the support of those clergy who have stepped up to be engaged in this work as well as the ongoing encouragement and backing of His Eminence Archbishop MICHAEL.

There remains an *enormous* potential for growth in this ministry. This potential can only begin to be realized when our clergy who are not already involved do so in a responsible way by taking the time to help with a local college campus on a regular basis and promoting OCF activities within their parishes. To that end, it is my hope that drastically increased participation in this department's trainings and other various events be emphasized as a priority in the future.

On behalf of the students we serve and the parents who entrust their beloved youth to our care, this department expresses its deepest gratitude to all who have answered the call to serve in the mission field of college ministry!

Respectfully Submitted,
Priest John Diamantis, Chairman
Department of College Ministry