



## Compassion in Action – A Distinctive Program

### Compassion in Action

focuses on heart-to-heart engagement with a hurting person.

#### Compassion in Action is:

- Relational
- Transformative
  - For the care receiver
  - For the care giver
  - For the parish
- A Person-to-Person Ministry
- A Matching of Care Giver to Care Receiver
- Care Giver Support and Nurturing Through Group Supervision

**Transformation and Healing Occur  
Between Specific Persons in Relationship.**

**Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training** is a program designed to prepare, equip and guide a parish to engage in a sustainable, on-going, actively engaged Compassion in Action ministry.

For parishes already engaged in an active ministry of compassion, here is a way to strengthen your ministry, further equip and encourage the laity's involvement and skill level, support the priest, and ensure long-term viability and sustainability.

*For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:5)*

Your parish is invited to offer **Compassion in Action**: A personal presence of compassion and understanding provided by organized and trained faithful to a person who is suffering (mentally, emotionally, physically and/or spiritually).



For information about **Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training** or to obtain a Development Kit and start exploring your opportunities, please contact the Dept. of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid or the Dept. of Institutional Chaplaincies.

Large or small, every action taken in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring human dignity and blessings both to the one being served and to the servant.

**Orthodox Church in America**  
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#### Dept. of Christian Service & Humanitarian Aid

The Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid promotes the involvement of clergy and laity in caring for the needs of others according to the Gospel teachings and Tradition of the Church. Email: [csha@oca.org](mailto:csha@oca.org)

#### Dept. of Institutional Chaplaincies

The Department of Institutional Chaplaincies supports the ministry of full and part-time hospital, hospice, long-term care, prison, fire, police chaplains, and in other settings. Email: [svoytovi@ehs.org](mailto:svoytovi@ehs.org)

## COMPASSION IN ACTION:

### Parish Ministry Training



## HELP FOR THE HURTING

A Program to  
Equip, Train & Mentor  
Your Parish  
In a Ministry of Caring,  
Compassion,  
& Relational Transformation

Christian Service & Humanitarian Aid  
Institutional Chaplaincies

Orthodox Church in America



*Critical life junctures include times that are "supposed to be" all joy but can be a trial of stress and uncertainty.*

### Does My Parish Need This Program? >>>

As Orthodox parishes, we are called to proactively help our wounded brothers and sisters by offering our presence, caring and listening ear.

### Why Organize A Ministry? >>>

Shouldn't a parish and its members spontaneously engage in acts of compassion? Why organize?

In many cases, individuals with exceptional gifts of compassion, mercy and caring do engage in significant ministry to the hurting, inside and outside of the parish. But they often minister individually, without on-going training and support. Further, parishes may respond, at least for a time, when a member's need is obvious. But inconsistency can cause confusion and hurt for those overlooked.

Our heritage includes establishing the first hospices, hospitals and orphanages in the world. These activities required planning, organizing and training to ensure longevity.

### Is Training Really Needed? >>>

Training provides an adequate skill-level for care givers, which instills confidence and helps reduce the possibility of causing damage.

The need for the development of *Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training*, with accompanying guidance, has been recognized and expressed by clergy, faithful, deaneries and even dioceses over several years. Our Metropolitan recognizes and encourages this type of ministry in our parishes.

## Looking For a Way to Help the Hurting?

*If you or your parish is looking for a way to offer a ministry of caring to the hurting, the lonely, or anyone in a significant life situation, consider the ministry training available to OCA parishes.*

### Laity >>>

*Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training* offers the faithful of Orthodox parishes a way to actively serve in a ministry of compassion.

The training guides a parish through exploring and preparing, identifying key leaders, engaging the parish and the council, ministry implementation and maintenance, and planning for long-term viability beyond the original volunteers.

Importantly, *Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training* includes on-site critical skills instruction by experienced trainers.

Training and on-going support entail a partnership of clergy and faithful in a ministry at the critical life junctures of people. A parish's *Compassion in Action* ministry is the fruit of the "marriage" between the priest and the flock.

### Priests >>>

*Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training* provides the parish priest with tools, resources and on-going guidance to oversee, support and lead on-going peer supervision for the laity team engaged in a ministry of compassion.



Time is spent examining the most pressing needs both within and outside of the parish.

Parishes are guided along the journey to listen to ideas and concerns, select and implement a ministry focus, acquire feedback, adjust, and maintain a ministry to the hurting.

### Parishes >>>

Parishes are led through a process of exploration to discover the variety of ministries of compassion that are possible.

***An Orthodox, personal presence of empathy, caring and listening: this transforms lives.***



### Help for every step of the way >>>

The beginning of a *Compassion in Action* ministry is to request a Development Kit from the Dept. of Christian Service & Humanitarian Aid and/or the Dept. of Institutional Chaplaincies. A mentor will be assigned to you to guide you through this initial step. Upon completion of the *Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training's Development Kit*, your parish will notify your mentor and discuss the parish's readiness to engage in actual development, training, formation and practice of a *Compassion in Action* Ministry. If the parish is ready, the *Compassion in Action: Parish Ministry Training* will commence. The parish will receive on-site training, and will be guided, mentored, prayed for and led through the entire process by the departments involved and a specially assigned mentor.