

Dear Candidate for Ecclesiastical Endorsement in Institutional Ministry:

In his farewell address to the Church in North America, St. Tikhon offered the following exhortation: "...Orthodox people must care for the dissemination of the Orthodox faith among the heterodox. Christ the Savior said that those lighting a lamp do not put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house (Matt. 5:15). ... It is our obligation to share our spiritual treasures, our truth, our light and our joy with those who do not have these gifts. And this duty lies not only on pastors and missionaries, but also on lay people, for the Church of Christ, in the wise comparison of St. Paul, is a body, and in the life of the body every member takes part."

One of the ways Orthodox Christians have increasingly witnessed to their faith in the greater community is through "institutional ministry." Ordained clergy and parish faithful have responded to the call of ministering to the sick and suffering in hospitals and hospices, caring for the needs of the elderly in extended care facilities, and others in specialized settings such as psychiatric care, prisons, and police and fire companies, and receiving special training for this ministry through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

The institutional setting remains in many ways, a missionary field. This does not mean an arena for proselytizing – preying upon those who are weak and vulnerable to convert them – rather, reaching out as persons of faith being a listening presence, praying, and sharing of faith with those in crisis. Through this, both patient and caregiver are transformed by God's presence.

Like military chaplaincy, institutional chaplains need endorsement as pastoral caregivers providing the recognition that the pastoral caregiver is in good standing within their Faith Tradition. The Orthodox Church in America, as a member of the Commission on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS), is meeting the growing needs of clergy and qualified laypersons seeking: positions in institutional settings, certification in credentialing bodies, and training toward credentialing to conduct CPE.

To apply for institutional ministry endorsement from His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, who endorses military and institutional chaplaincies, use the attached form and include the information requested on the application, and:

- Report or recommendation from the candidate's CPE supervisor,
- Pastor's recommendation of candidate's functioning in the parish setting, and/or Bishop's recommendation. A priest or deacon needs to be in good standing in their ordained ministry, and has received a blessing from his diocesan hierarch to engage in institutional chaplaincy, and
- Background information on the candidate including education, CPE training, other ministry service and experience.



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Tel: 516.922.0550
Fax: 516.922.0954
Website: www.oca.org

The completed application with the additional items should be sent to my attention, at 170 Bunker Hill Road, Guilford, CT 06437. Upon review of the materials, I will contact you for discussion, and with all being in order make a recommendation to His Beatitude for endorsement. With approval by the Metropolitan, a letter of endorsement would be issued for applicants employed as chaplains.

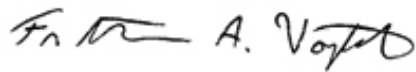
For those individuals interviewing for positions, a letter of intent can be sent, acknowledging the request for endorsement, and recognizing the candidate as being in good standing within the Church, indicating that endorsement is specifically made to the place of employment.

A brief service for the installation of those engaged in pastoral ministry is being developed and will be made available in the near future. Once official endorsement as an institutional chaplain within The Orthodox Church in America has been granted, regular follow-up and contact will be maintained with the Department of Institutional Chaplains and others throughout the Church serving in institutional settings.

As more Orthodox Christians become involved in this vital area of ministry, those in the professional ministry community and credentialing bodies will witness our commitment to pastoral care-giving. A witness to the sharing of our spiritual treasures, truth, light, and joy, for those in need throughout our communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions or concerns you may have.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Voytovich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and the last name "Voytovich" clearly legible.

Rev. Steven Voytovich, D.Min., *Director*
Department of Institutional Chaplains

(Please see the attached application form)