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SERBIAN ORTHODOX METROPOLITANATE OF  
NEW GRACANICA MIDWESTERN AMERICA SOC  
YOUTH MINISTRY

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October 17, 2024

## **Mental Health Ministry: Supporting the Spiritual and Emotional Well-Being of Our Youth**

In today's fast-paced society, many young people in our parish communities may face mental or emotional struggles as they navigate questions about their identity, purpose, and role in life. These challenges are often intensified by the pressures of modern living. In these moments, the Church must step forward responsibly, offering its faithful children support and guidance in fostering mental health awareness and emotional resilience. Teens often hesitate to seek help when they are struggling with emotions or challenges in their spiritual lives.

The **Mental Health Ministry** at the diocesan level aims to create a compassionate understanding of the difficulties that young people face and to provide spiritual support during times of crisis. Addressing these complex issues requires fostering a healthy environment where youth, alongside their parents, feel empowered to speak openly and courageously about the obstacles they face in daily life.

### **Establishing the Diocesan Mental Health Committee**

With the blessing of His Eminence Longin, it is proposed that a **Diocesan Mental Health Committee** be established within the God-protected New Gracanica Midwestern America Metropolitanate. This committee would be composed of professionals with expertise in education and mental health, all while grounded in Orthodox Christian theology. Their role would be to create resources and support systems that promote mental well-being and spiritual guidance for our youth.

### **The Role of Parish Priests and Community Support**

Parish priests play a crucial role in this ministry, as they are often the first to recognize when a young person is struggling. They can also serve as valuable resources by recommending trusted counselors within their

parishes, ensuring that our youth have access to both spiritual and professional support when needed.

Our youth need a safe and nurturing community where they can seek spiritual guidance from Church leaders and trusted mentors who care deeply about their holistic well-being.

### **Promoting Awareness and Ongoing Support**

The Youth Department is committed to supporting and raising awareness about mental health ministry throughout all the parishes of the New Gracanica Midwestern America Metropolitanate. This important initiative will focus on equipping both clergy and lay members with the knowledge and resources to address mental health challenges and provide care that is both spiritually enriching and emotionally supportive.

In Christ's Service,

Pdn. Jovan Anicic, *Director*

Youth Ministry

Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate

The New Gracanica Midwestern America