



April 9, 2021

Dear Clergy,

Glory be to Jesus Christ during this period of Holy and Great Lent!

The Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Bishops are aware of the many pastoral issues we face regarding mental health among the faithful. These issues are complex and challenging and, during the pandemic, have increased significantly. It is well known among mental health professionals that many people of Faith approach their parish priest, before their physician or a therapist, with mental health struggles. The Mental Health Task Force of the Assembly of Bishops has completed a [Directory of Orthodox Mental Health Professionals](#) as a first resource to immediately meet an urgent need. We hope that you have been sharing it, listing it on your websites, and encouraging Orthodox Christian providers in your region to [apply to be listed](#).

In an effort to further understand and respond to the specific mental health needs of our clergy and faithful, we are now conducting a comprehensive anonymous survey:

- The Needs Assessment Survey can be accessed at: <https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/ministries/mental-health-task-force/mental-health-needs-assessment-survey>
- The survey is completely anonymous and takes about 15 minutes to complete
- Both clergy and the faithful age 18 and older are asked to complete the survey by June 15, 2021
- All faithful are invited to complete the survey, regardless of their experience with mental health or their level of engagement with the Church.
- Parishes are encouraged to print copies of the survey for parishioners who are not comfortable using a computer. Guidelines are provided on the aforementioned survey page.
- Data collected from the survey will be analyzed by the Task Force to create mental health related resources that reflect our Orthodox praxis and theological perspective.

In order for the work of the Task Force to successfully serve you and the faithful, I ask you to assist by the following:

1. Please participate in the anonymous survey and ask your parishioners to participate in the survey. **Please help us meet our goal of at least 50 parishioners from each parish.**

2. Please promote the survey across all communication platforms you use with your parish. For your convenience, promotional icons for social media and bulletin inserts are available at [assemblyofbishops.org/mental-health](https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/mental-health).
3. Please continue to promote in your community the Directory of Orthodox Mental Health Professionals and encourage Orthodox providers you know to join the directory: <https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/directories/mental-health/>

Thank you for distributing the survey to all of your parishioners, continuing to promote the Directory, and for your ongoing assistance as we attend to our faithful in need.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mark". The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Mark" is written in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

+MARK

Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania