



ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM

1. BACKGROUND

The formation of a Synodal Commission responsible for the internal investigation into allegations concerning His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada (hereafter referred as the “Synodal Commission”) was blessed to be formed by the Holy Synod of Bishops during a special Synodal session on October 13, 2010. This mandate was approved for release by the Holy Synod on November 30, 2010.

The Synodal Commission is part of the response of the Orthodox Church in America (hereafter referred as “the Church”) to official allegations of sexual misconduct involving a ruling hierarch in accordance with the *Policies, Standards, and Procedure of the Orthodox Church of America on Sexual Misconduct*, adopted by The Holy Synod of Bishop, April 2, 2003.

[Rule 4.01.] Purpose and Objectives reads:

These Policies, Standards, and Procedures are intended to prevent, to the extent possible, sexual misconduct by clergy and laypersons; to provide an effective means to thoroughly and fairly review and evaluate allegations of sexual misconduct if they occur; to result in appropriate discipline where allegations are substantiated; to protect, to the extent necessary, children and adults from those persons known to have committed acts of sexual misconduct; to provide pastoral care and healing to victims of sexual misconduct and to parishes; and to ensure that the Church takes necessary steps to discharge its responsibilities.

The institution of a Synodal Commission also reflects the ethos of the Church and Her general policy regarding sexual misconduct: *The Church laments the sin of sexual misconduct, and will not tolerate it by its clergy or any layperson. The Church should educate clergy, laypersons, and the Church community about prevention of sexual misconduct. It will utilize advance screening and review procedures to reduce the risk of sexual misconduct, and to maintain a safe environment for minors. It will implement procedures to fairly deal with and resolve allegations of sexual misconduct (3.01)*

2. MEMBERS OF THE SYNODAL COMMISSION

The Holy Synod of Bishop entrusted the Synodal Commission to the guiding authority of His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania and His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek, Bishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania.

The selection and appointment of the members of the Synodal Commission was done with the help and support of His Grace, Bishop Irénée, Bishop of Quebec City, administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada and the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, Igumen Alexander Pihach.

The Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations, the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee, the Metropolitan Council Legal Committee, OCA General Counsel and OCA Crisis Management Team have been assisting the Holy Synod and the Archdiocese of Canada during this crisis, providing professional expertise and pastoral support.

The Synodal Commission comprises: Protopresbyter Mirone Klysh, Archpriest Richard Hawrish Dr. Lila Amirali, MD, Dr. Thomas Kolivakis MD and Mr. David Grier. If necessary for the fulfillment of its mandate, the Synodal Commission may request the addition of consultants in a particular field of expertise as full or limited members, as circumstances dictates.

Biographical Information:

Protopresbyter Mirone R. Klysh:

- Originally from Johnson City, New York, Fr. Klysh was ordained to the diaconate in 1959 and to the priesthood in 1960 in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America.
- Veteran of the Korean War.
- Master Degree in History and Slavic Studies.
- Established the first English-speaking parish in Canada in rural Manitoba.
- Pastor, St. George Orthodox Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Romanian Episcopate (OCA) since 1970.
- Instructor and Registrar, Saint Arseny Orthodox Christian Theological Institute, Winnipeg, Manitoba since 2003.

Archpriest Richard A. Hawrish:

- Originally from Windsor, Ontario, Fr. Hawrish was ordained to the priesthood in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America in 1983.
- Member of the Law Society of Upper Canada since 1969 and is on retired status since 2009.
- Member of The Ontario Bar Association and certified mediator.

- Lectured in business law at the University of Windsor for 14 years and lectures at St. Clair College and the University of Windsor on various legal topics.
- Pastor, St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Windsor, Ontario, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America.

Dr. Lila Amirali, MD. Psychiatrist:

- Originally from Heraklion, Crete, Greece, Dr Amirali graduated from medical school at the University of Athens in 1986 and successfully completed a residency in Psychiatry at McGill University in 2001.
- Member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada since 2001.
- Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal, Canada since 2008.
- Director of the Paediatric Psychiatry Care Program at the Montreal Children's Hospital of the McGill University Health Centre since 2008.
- Dr. Amiral is an active member of her parish of The Sign of the Theotokos, Montreal, Quebec.

Dr. Thomas Kolivakis, MD. Psychiatrist:

- Originally from Heraklion, Crete, Greece, Dr. Kolivakis graduated from medical school at the University of Athens in 1957 and was a medical officer in the Greek Army until 1960.
- Residency in Psychiatry at the University of Chicago, Illinois and McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.
- Member of the Quebec College of Medical Specialists.
- Clinical Psychopharmacology, Allen Memorial Institute, Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, since 1985.
- Senior staff psychiatrist, Royal Victoria Hospital since 1990.
- Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal, Canada since 2003.
- Dr. Kolivakis is an active member of his parish of The Sign of the Theotokos, Montreal, Quebec.

Mr. David Grier:

- Originally from Ogema, Saskatchewan, a farming community in Southern Saskatchewan.
- Graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1973 with a degree in Agricultural Engineering.
- Has held various engineering and managerial positions at Saskatchewan Power Corporation, University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Research Council.
- He is currently a Senior Strategist for a new governmental agency called Innovation Saskatchewan.

- Has been a member of the Holy Resurrection parish in Saskatoon since 1982, where he is serving as treasurer.
- Has served on the Archdiocesan Council of Canada as the Lay Representative from the Manitoba-Saskatchewan deanery since 1993.
- Lay representative of the Archdiocese of Canada on the Metropolitan Council of the OCA, Nov 2008- Nov 2011 term.

3. GOALS

The Church condemns the tragedy of abuse in all its various forms and at all levels of Her organizational structure. We recognize the need to constantly and humbly assess whether our words and actions correspond with the truth, to discern the living reality in the events that are presented to us and to ensure that the processes, which we have established for the good governance and protection of all involved, are respected. As a living body, the Church is fully cognizant of the necessity to examine, with mercy, compassion and love, any suggestion of dysfunctionality, abuse or misconduct. In order to promote a prompt return to wholeness, this self-examination should lead to the implementation of remedial procedures, in conformity with our ethos and policies.

The goals of this particular Synodal Commission is to seek the truth in regards to the allegations against Archbishop Seraphim, to evaluate whether the Church is proceeding in accordance with Her policies, standards and procedures in matters of sexual misconduct and based on the findings and the expertise of the members of the Synodal Commission, to produce a report aimed at addressing any discordant issue that may have been identified.

4. MANDATE

To the extent not prohibited by applicable law, and without interfering with any civil or criminal investigation, the Synodal Commission will use all reasonable efforts to:

1. Review all allegations of sexual misconduct involving His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim, Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada, currently suspended, from the time of the alleged events to the present.
2. Cooperate with law-enforcement and any relevant civil agencies in order to establish communications opportunities.
3. Interview people connected to these allegations, as deemed necessary by the Synodal Commission, the respective law enforcement and relevant civil agencies.
4. Establish an understanding of the facts surrounding these allegations.
5. Address the issue of prevention of further occurrence, if this situation warrants.

6. Review whether the Church has responded in accordance to Her policies, standards and procedures.
7. Assess the efficiency of the response process of the Church to these allegations.
8. Formulate recommendations regarding the policies, standards and procedures of the Church in addressing allegations of sexual misconduct and the response processes to such allegations.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

Anyone wishing to contact the Synodal Commission can do so using the following information:

Email: investigation@oca.org

Phone: To be determined by the Special Commission

Address: To be determined by the Special Commission

6. NOTICE ON CONFIDENTIALITY

The Synodal Commission is not a public commission and will proceed with the deepest respect for all involved. However, considering the nature of the allegations, the Synodal Commission may from time to time be required by law to share certain information with the relevant authorities.

7. REPORT

At the conclusion of its investigation and review the Synodal Commission will report its findings and recommendations to the Holy Synod of Bishops and through them the Archdiocese of Canada and to the Church at large.