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Organizations convene to address Orthodox women’s concerns



From April 23-26, Orthodox faithful gathered at New Skete Monastery in Cambridge, New York for an in-person and virtual workshop on women in Orthodoxy.

The workshop presented attendees an opportunity to share concerns regarding women’s position and experiences in the Orthodox Church, in preparation for a future summit to develop concrete steps toward meaningful transformation of these realities.

Over the four days, participants discussed concerns of women in the Orthodox Church across six tracks: theological foundations; women in ministry; women and liturgical praxis; leadership and Church polity; theological education, spiritual life, and pastoral care; and contemporary concerns.

Conversation encompassed a wide range of topics, including but not limited to: altar access, chaplaincy and endorsement; demographic changes; head coverings; “online Orthodoxy;” ordained ministry; pastoral care for women, with particular

regard to adoption, domestic violence, infertility, interreligious and interracial marriages, miscarriage, and sexual abuse; theological anthropology and theology of the body; and women Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Speakers also provided summaries of the research, consultations, and advocacy conducted over the past few decades, highlighting how concerns have remained consistent across generations. Current work was also covered, including recent publications focused on women in Orthodoxy–such as Carrie Frederick Frost's Church of Our Granddaughters and Ashley Purpura's Women in the Orthodox Tradition: Feminism, Theology, and Equality.

Attending individuals included clergy, scholars, theologians, chaplains, and other lay leadership and members belonging to the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Philoptochos, Axia Women, Prosopon Healing, the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess, Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies Center, the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion (OCAMPR), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), and Orthodox Volunteer Corps (OVC).

While the majority of participants belonged to Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions, the gathering also included Oriental Orthodox observers from the Armenian, Coptic, and Ethiopian traditions.

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