



Development Plan

for

The Fellowship

of the

Inexhaustible Cup

Presented by:

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Translation of the Image Not-Made-by-Hands of our Lord Jesus Christ
Second-year anniversary of my ordination to the Diaconate

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Part I

Executive Summary

The Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup was conceived by Matushka Syncretiki (Cynthia) and myself after many years of prayer, study, and working specifically towards this end. We wanted to develop a program that would have the backing of the Holy Orthodox Church, to help people and families who are suffering from addictions and their after-effects. This program would help to heal the whole person, and not just the body.

The primary purpose of the Fellowship is for its members to acquire and maintain sobriety and purity as a way of life. The Fellowship's foundation is based on prayer to the Holy Icon of Our Lady of the Inexhaustible Cup. Our group is patterned after a similar society which arose shortly after the Icon's initial miracle-working abilities were discovered in 1878, in Russia. Members will maintain a prayer network for each other and those in need of help. A focus will also be on healing the generational bonds which form the root of addiction – prayer can heal these chains of inherited addictive personalities.

Although other groups are identified who will be targeted for membership in the Fellowship, the program will initially reach out to married couples, and will develop training programs and retreats to teach them to become active members in recruiting others (an insurance evaluation will be made for any potential liability to the Fellowship or to the Orthodox jurisdiction with which it is affiliated, of encouraging these members to reach out to and help other people with addictions). Methods are defined in the "Short-term goals" section as to how promotion of the Fellowship will be made in order to identify potential members.

Among other short-term goals are to establish financial accountability; develop promotional materials and a website; inaugurate a help hotline; and produce audio/visual materials designed to help the Orthodox person who is suffering with an addiction. While mid-term goals are provided, longer term goals will have to more formally evolve over the next year with the input of the Board and Your Eminence.

The founding Board of Directors consists of three Orthodox priests, a deacon, two priest's wives, and one layman. Talents of the members are appropriate to its mission, ranging from pastoral counseling and psychotherapy, to missionary work, foundation establishment, secretarial skills, and music/video recording skills.

The Fellowship is designed as a mission, which will be formed as a non-profit corporation with 501(c)(3) standing. It seeks to transcend jurisdictional boundaries, and

eventually, to reach out to the heterodox community. As such, the case is made that the Fellowship cannot reach its full potential if limited to one Diocese. A petition is made within this report that the Fellowship be established as a ministry directly under the omophorion of a canonical Orthodox bishop.

Furthermore, it is pointed out that in order to conduct retreats, a more permanent retreat center is needed.

Funding methods are identified, which cover a broad spectrum of individual and corporate philanthropy, activities and events, mailings, tithing, and sponsorships. A major annual event will be planned, which will be an educational forum featuring a well-known Orthodox speaker.

As the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup will be conducted under the auspices of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, it is important that its director is a qualified representative in this unique mission, as it will reflect back on that jurisdiction. A discussion is made regarding the expectations for its director, as regard spiritual, professional, and educational requirements.

The report closes with a summary of my personal motivations for working to found this Fellowship, and those of my Matushka. My commitment is not just to a career, but I am committed to a cause, which happens to be my career. The fullness of my training has occurred, and I am wishing to give this back to God, to help others in the Orthodox Christian Faith and beyond.

Part II

History of the Fellowship

Initially, this Fellowship was conceived out of a lifetime of prayerful desire on the part of Matushka Synkletiki (Cynthia) and myself. We wanted to be able to use our marital experience, and my training in psychotherapy and pastoral counseling, to help others in a context of the Holy Orthodox Faith.

At the heart of the Fellowship's work is the strong belief that the Russian Orthodox Church has been given a most precious of gift by Almighty God and Our Most-Holy Lady, through the Holy Icon of the Inexhaustible Cup which first appeared at the women's monastery in Serpukhov in the year 1878.

Twenty years after the Icon's miraculous power was revealed, a society of sobriety was inaugurated, which quickly grew into the All-Russian Brotherhood of Sobriety, which encompassed the entire Russian land and was supervised by Archbishop Arseny of Novgorod. The Brotherhood had a printshop which published four magazines, and produced hundreds of books, brochures, and leaflets directed at religious and moral instruction. They supported libraries and schools; held public readings, discussions, and lectures; conducted missionary courses; and supported housing projects for the impoverished. In some areas, they even had their own churches and chapels, and regularly held large public Krestny-Hods. The goal of the Society was to fight drunkenness in the Russian land. In Saint Petersburg alone, six departments of the Brotherhood existed, headed by Orthodox priests, with 70,000 participating members. When it was doing the most good, in 1918, the Brotherhood was closed, and its finances confiscated by the Soviet Government.

Significantly, it was at this time, the end of the 19th century, that our Holy Father John of Kronstadt lived, who with his saintly wife, Matushka Elizabeth, was committed to fighting alcoholism and addictions. Saint John's Orthodoxy was founded on the Holy Gospel, on the authentic life in the Holy Spirit, especially as manifested through daily participation in the Divine Services, and reception of Holy Confession and frequent Holy Communion. He emphasized that healing of the person could only be accomplished through restoration, renewal, and transfiguration of the soul, through participation in the Holy Eucharist.

Now, in 21st-Century America, the work among the Orthodox Christian people that was begun by the All-Russian Brotherhood of Sobriety in the 1800s, is revived in the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup. And the work that was manifest in the Arch-Pastor of that era, Saint John of Kronstadt, is sought to be emulated by the new

Fellowship. Thus, the Fellowship is being built upon the foundation initiated by this group which developed shortly after the Holy Icon's original appearance.

Furthermore, Saint John was wholeheartedly committed to praying for others, believing this to be beneficial to the person praying, as it purifies their heart and strengthens their faith, while evoking love for God and neighbor. His life and his prayers were so God-pleasing, that he was granted special gifts of prayerful intercession for them with all types of needs.

The needs of those with addictions can be overwhelming to the average parish priest. Often, when persons with addictions approach a clergyman (regardless of faith), the mind of the addict does not perceive that an appropriate response which projects the love of Christ is being given them. This is because many representatives of the clergy have not received the necessary training to deal with the complex personality of the addicted individual. Not understanding the full scope of needs, the clergy often discount the effectiveness of 12-step programs, not realizing that *all* recovery is a means to an end.

However, it is in addition to any secular healing program that in all stages of recovery, the acquisition of grace must be a component. From an Orthodox standpoint, the diseased person must come to the knowledge of the one and only true God. Only Jesus Christ and the experience of the grace present in the gift of the Holy Mysteries of the Orthodox Church can offer healing of the whole person, and not healing of just one part of the person. Matushka and I wanted to synthesize secular *and* Orthodox healing into a real entity that could have the backing of the Orthodox Church, in order to truly reach out and touch peoples' lives.

Archpriest John (Moses) was instrumental in this regard, and he encouraged the development of this Fellowship. He also suggested that I meet with His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, first Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, to discuss formation of the Fellowship.

Part III

Mission Statement

The caring members of the ministry of the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup have the primary purpose of honoring Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos, as the Fellowship's Champion Leader, by acquiring and maintaining quality sobriety and purity as a way of life. Members are committed to praying all or a part of the Akathist of the Inexhaustible Cup on a daily basis, as well as making a monthly financial commitment to help sustain the work of the Fellowship. Members are devoted to praying for and reaching out to those suffering from all manner of addictions, helping the afflicted at their point of need, and bringing them the message of hope and healing, as offered by Our Lady herself, through her miraculous and Holy Icon of the Inexhaustible Cup.

Part IV
Founding Board Members

1. **CEO/Executive Director/President:** Father Deacon Christophe Lepoutre, M.S. Pastoral Counseling; assigned to Protection of the Mother of God and Saint Nektarios of Aegina Russian Orthodox Mission Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee (ROCOR)
2. **Vice President:** Archpriest Gordon Walker, D.Min., Pastoral Counseling; pastor emeritus of Saint Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee (Antiochian); founder of *Grace Ministries*
3. **Secretary/Treasurer/Registered Agent:** Matushka Syncletiki Lepoutre, A.S. Secretarial Studies, (ROCOR)
4. **Member:** Mitred Archpriest Stavros Rousos, assigned to Protection of the Mother of God and Saint Nektarios of Aegina Russian Orthodox Mission Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee (ROCOR)
5. **Member:** Archimandrite Daniel Byantoro, graduated Holy Cross Theological Seminary and Asian Center for Theological Studies and Missions in South Korea; oversees *Friends of Indonesia*, which conducts the greatest amount of missionary work in the world's largest Moslem nation (ROCOR)
6. **Member:** Addison Gore, original founding member of *Grace Ministries* with Father Gordon Walker; author of children's books, and President of Skedaddle Music Publishing in Nashville, Tennessee
7. **Member:** Khouria Mary Sue Walker, wife of Father Gordon Walker for more than 60 years (Antiochian)

Part V Nationwide Ministry

An association such as the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup is vitally needed, within the holy Orthodox Church and in the secular world at large. The demonic power and destruction of multiple addictions (and addictions are not just alcohol and drugs, but sex, gambling, pornography, cruelty, anger, and so forth), has never been more present in all segments of society than in our present age. The use of internet pornography and the trafficking of teenage girls and boys is a worldwide epidemic. According to some statistics, within 48 hours of a young girl or boy running away from their home in the United States, they enter into illegitimate sexual conduct, often forced upon them through abduction and forced slavery. As is the shocking case in Ukraine, where this scenario has reached epidemic proportions, this abduction can result in the teen being sold to physicians in other countries who harvest their kidneys, livers, eyes, and other organs, for their patients who are willing to pay top dollar for the organs of children¹.

The goal of this Fellowship and its outreach ministry is to rescue the Orthodox flock from this devastation. It is open to men, women, and children. Members will first rescue the person in need at their point of need, and then later, by our love, they will know we are Christians, and we will witness to our Faith. We envision the Fellowship moving beyond the boundaries of jurisdictions to be available to all who may be in need of prayer and healing, including those within the heterodox community. Conducted under the auspices of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, this will serve as an evangelization tool, and will offer this person hope and healing in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We believe that the only way to combat the evil forces of darkness associated with addictions and their effects, is with an army of willing participants joining the battle for the cure of these diseases, with the power of unified intercessory prayer. In this regard, the Fellowship is truly a nationwide mission, and as such, *we petition that this Fellowship be directly under the omophorion of a canonical Orthodox bishop*. And because the Fellowship is a outreach ministry, we also ask that it not be governed by, or be made a part of, any one diocese or other ministry within that jurisdiction, in order that it will be able to focus and concentrate on its primary purpose and works, as described within its nonprofit organization articles and by-laws. We are asking that this mission be blessed as a completely separate ministry.

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3513439.stm>; <http://www.heal-online.org/childtrafficking.pdf>;
<http://svyatorus.com/obschestvo/142-rossiya-ukraina-moldaviya-na-potoke-prodayut-svoih-detey-na-organy-dlya-transplantologii.html>

Having said this, the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and all of the professional and volunteer staff members, will make the commitment to strive with humility to be obedient, submissive, and loving children of the bishop and jurisdiction with which it is affiliated and blessed. We will work to be worthy representatives of the Orthodox Church, struggling to rescue the downtrodden and despairing, and to bring credit to our Church.

Rejoice, O Sovereign Lady, Thou Inexhaustible Cup that quenches our spiritual thirst!

FROM THE AKATHIST TO OUR LADY OF THE INEXHAUSTIBLE CUP

Part VI

Groups targeted

As one-by-one, the number of active Fellowship members increases, more people will be available to be trained to make outreach. Until that time, concentrated efforts will be focused on main target segments of beneficiaries of the Fellowship's services, as listed below.

1. The main focus will be towards married people and their families. These individuals will be sought primarily via the Orthodox parish communities. The average lay family which belongs to a parish, and which suffers with addictions and/or their effects, will be identified and outreach will be made to them.
2. Orthodox persons who are members of 12-step programs will be reached out to, as well, in an effort to expand their recovery experience into the spiritual realm, thus providing them with more of an opportunity for total healing.
3. Networking and promoting the capabilities of the Fellowship to the healthcare community at large will be a primary target, especially to psychotherapists and to those persons working in treatment centers.
4. Networking will take place with the legal sector that deals with persons with addictions, such as attorneys, police officers, and judges involved with DUI's and alcohol or drug related crimes.
5. The Fellowship may be beneficial to Orthodox clergy who are neither qualified nor able to devote the time to assisting people with addictions. Members of 12-step recovery programs are in need of drawing from the experience of Orthodoxy, and can benefit greatly from a priest who is familiar with their complex needs and personal issues. *One of the weaknesses of the 12-step recovery program is that the concept of God is challenged through the program's teaching that they are to follow "the God of their own understanding".* This creates problems with acceptance of spiritual authority. This problem is compounded when they are invited to an Orthodox Church service, and are met by a priest who does not have the personal experience on how to work with individuals with addictions. We will be available to catch these people that might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Part VII
Short-term goals (12 months)

The primary responsibilities of the Executive Director and Secretary/Treasurer will be undertaken immediately upon this plan's approval. This will include the following:

- a. Coordinate, promote understanding of, and further **develop the Fellowship as a unified body of prayerful individuals**.
- b. Write **articles of incorporation and by-laws** to govern the new non-profit organization.
- c. Establish an independent identity for the Fellowship with **IRS 501(c)(3)** nonprofit status, and with the State of Tennessee, after being sponsored by Grace Ministries (Father Gordon) for an initial period of time. All donations will be tax deductible as permitted by IRS regulations.
- d. Initiate effective and transparent fiscal controls (i.e. QuickBooks); develop regular reporting schedule; and **establish financial accountability**.
- e. **Form a subcommittee** of interested individuals who have the skills and resources to assist in implementing the short-term goals.
- f. Conceive and design a **logo, letterhead**, business cards, masthead, brochure, and other necessary marketing materials for the Fellowship.
- g. **Develop a website** for the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup; and as part of this, to utilize technology that engages the members and prospective members to interact with one another. To develop an on-line chapel, with interactive tools, which may include intercessory prayer, prayer lists, personal testimonies, blog spots, etc.
- h. Launch an **advertising campaign** to Orthodox parishes and eventually to all other jurisdictions (including brochure, widely publicized and easily accessible contact information, and public service announcements sent to all Orthodox publications).
- i. Development of an Orthodox Christian **Hotline/Counseling/Intervention** program, available by telephone, computer, or Skype.

- j. Develop and write guidelines for a **training program** that will be provided to the staff of volunteers for this service.
- k. Discuss with insurers the liability of volunteer staff members, and develop a volunteer application that will provide **appropriate screening of volunteers**.
- l. Set up and **provide pastoral counseling hours** and availability for helping members or inquirers.
- m. Participate in **networking** venues with clergy and healthcare professionals.
- n. Conceive, develop and produce a series of **podcasts** similar in concept to the Проект "Общее дело" (Common Matter) clips that have been broadcast in Russia since the movement's conception in 2009. Initial topics would include:
 - 1. Three-part spiritual growth miniseries on how to develop, nurture, and improve one's relationship with a) the God the Father; b) only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and c) the Holy Spirit, thus removing obstacles which keep us from experiencing true intimacy with the All-Holy Trinity.
 - 2. How alcohol affects every part of the body.
 - 3. Seek permission to voice-over and air telediscussions with the abbot, of blessed repose, of Sretensky Monastery, Schema-archimandrite Tikhon, regarding alcoholism.
 - 4. The value and importance of tithing, biblical principles, and freedom from economic insecurity.
- o. Organize and develop **educational venues** to teach the teachers, who in this case are the Fellowship members. Emphasis will be placed on married-couple teams, and providing **married couple retreats**.
- p. Provide a **monthly newsletter** and begin posting personal testimonies.
- q. Develop and maintain a **resource database** of counselors, treatment centers, crisis intervention centers, Orthodox physicians and counselors, foster homes, suicide hotlines, AA locations and hours, and other types of assistance for them in need.
- r. Begin a **network prayer list** of individuals in need, to be accessible daily by the Fellowship members' "prayer chain".

- s. **Write to all Orthodox parishes** in the United States, with the goal of seeking individuals, in at least regional areas, who will aid in the promotion of the Fellowship in their geographical area. This may include such things as calling other local Orthodox Christians, asking for a blurb in church newsletters, posting information on bulletin boards, asking the priest to make announcements of Fellowship events, etc.

- t. Draft a letter and **provide a packet of materials, packaged and with postage affixed, for the presiding bishop to send to the primary bishops of all other canonical Orthodox jurisdictions**, to provide them with the necessary information on the work of the Fellowship, in order to promote membership and generate cross-jurisdictional dialogue. We would also like to humbly request that, if at all possible, this be mentioned at a meeting of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops.

Part VIII

Mid-term goals (1-3 years)

A significant goal of the Fellowship is to establish a network of individuals – married couples, parishes, clergy, laity, and monastics – all praying for people-in-need on their personal prayer list, especially praying for persons experiencing an acute personal or family crisis. Thus, *the main goal of this Fellowship is the encouragement of prayer*, for as the Holy Apostle Paul tells us, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

Other mid-term goals of the Fellowship include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. **Locate suitable venues for marital workshops:** workshops will be developed that will provide marriage enrichment experiences and spiritual growth for Fellowship members and their families. By developing an Orthodox *phronima* and Orthodox world-view within the married unit, families will be strengthened, and there will be hope for effective child-rearing in these difficult times.
- b. **Locate a more permanent retreat center.** This is to strengthen the Fellowship program as an enduring entity, as well as *to permit the presiding bishop to reciprocally benefit, from a public-relations standpoint, for being a progressive hierarch who understands and cares for the unique needs of all individuals, from various segments of society.* Some of these individuals might otherwise “fall through the cracks” and be neglected in their physical/psychological/spiritual care because of their addictive illnesses, possibly losing their lives and their souls.
 1. If at all possible, it might be beneficial to the jurisdiction if this were a place where Matushka and I could relocate, to become caretakers of the property while developing it into a pastoral care retreat center. My \$3-million clergy liability/malpractice insurance will permit me to host children’s camps, counseling retreats, etc.
- c. **To plan, organize, and implement a southern U.S. jurisdictional conference on Orthodox Psychotherapy/the Science of Spiritual Medicine.** Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos from the Birth of the Theotokos Monastery in Levadia, Greece, will be invited as keynote speaker. A large conference of this kind took place back in the year 1997, sponsored by the Monastery of the Glorious Ascension in Resaca, Georgia, which received a magnificent turnout and beneficial results.

The whole therapeutic method of the Orthodox Church is not aimed simply at making human beings morally and socially balanced, but at re-establishing their relationship with God and one another. This comes about through the healing of the soul's wounds and the cure of the passions through the Sacraments and the Church's ascetic practice.

QUOTE FROM METROPOLITAN HIEROTHEOS

- d. **Production of professional audio/visual materials**, such as CD and MP-3 formats, which will include brief teaching/testimony on the value of Akathist prayers for the healing and treatment of addictions. This CD will also provide the prayers being chanted by Father Deacon Christophe and Matushka Syncletiki, accompanied by appropriate monastic music. There has been a CD of this kind produced in other languages, but one has not yet been provided in the English language.
- e. Explore the possibility of **developing a seminary class that will train Orthodox pastors to deal with parishioners with addictions**. This could possibly be done by internet, or in individual parishes in large communities, such as the diaconate training program that is conducted by Saint Tikhon's Monastery in Miami's OCA cathedral.
- f. **Organize a group pilgrimage** to venerate the Inexhaustible Cup icon at the monastery in Serpukhov, Russia.

Part IX

Healing the family tree with prayer for the departed

The Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup will address the full scope of needs within the afflicted person. This involves healing not just for those in the present, but for healing of the bond that exists between the afflicted person and those who have departed this life.

Clinical pastoral counseling case studies provide evidence, also found in the experience of the 12-step program, which points to the fact that addictions, and the destructive and negative effects of this disease upon marriages and families, are passed down from one generation to another. The roots of addiction, such as resentment and bitterness, are repeated by the children of addicts due to a lack of forgiveness, and can even be passed down to the children of these children.

According to the *Big Book of ACA* (Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families), children of addicted parents become "para-alcoholics". They learn and adopt self-destructive tendencies from an addicted parent, without necessarily becoming alcoholics themselves. These patterns, therefore, often remain unbroken.

The Orthodox Christian response to breaking these chains of addictive personalities is prayer. It targets the source of addictions within one's family tree, and it has the capacity given to us, by the grace of God, to reverse and heal these addictions. Prayer permits the members to receive the healing balm of forgiveness.

The use of intercessory prayer is at the heart of the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup. The commitment made to daily prayer by members of the Fellowship represents the single greatest method of healing given to us by God. This prayer is not bound by time or space. The Fellowship will widely distribute the *Akathist to our Lord Jesus Christ for the Repose of the Soul of a Departed Loved One*, believing that the members who pray this Akathist will find healing in their generational bond of addiction with those who have departed this life before them.

Clinical pastoral counseling also provides evidence in its case studies for the consistent need to pray for parents, grandparents and all relatives in our family tree, because the ongoing need for healing for departed souls has a direct relationship on our present-day family members. Praying for the reposed can permit the individual to experience the power of healing for both past and present relationships. The Fellowship will provide encouragement, and will provide materials on this subject for members to better understand the importance of this tradition within the Holy Orthodox Church.

Part X

Funding

The Fellowship's financial well-being is founded on the Biblical precept of faithful tithing. Thus, in addition to the Fellowship soliciting funds for its own existence, a portion of contributions received by the Fellowship will be consistently given to help support causes that are actively involved in helping people to secure and maintain sobriety, and to gain meaning and purpose to their lives in so doing. Specific first causes to be aided include Orthodox monasteries, churches with outreach programs, and missions.

All Fellowship members will be taught and encouraged to embrace the necessary principles of tithing as part of their spiritual growth. Additional funding sources include but are not limited to the following:

Active members

Active membership requires a willingness to pray the Akathist to the Mother of God Inexhaustible Cup, as well as a monthly financial contribution according to one's means.

Friends of the Fellowship

These are donors and benefactors at all levels of giving, who may be involved as semi-active members, or who may have no attachment at all but are simply philanthropists.

In-kind donations

Donations of goods and services, especially professional services such as lawyers and doctors to assist the Fellowship and its clients, will be sought. Among other services we will try to receive pro bono are website design, photography, catering for special events, and printing.

Grants

Sources for relevant grants will be sought from various public and private sectors. These grants may cover costs of printing and promoting educational materials, producing podcasts and videos, organizing conferences, and so forth.

Conferences and workshops

The Fellowship will conceive, organize, and implement conferences and workshops to aid its primary purpose of gaining quality sobriety and purity. Workshops will focus on topics that are beneficial to its members and to the general public. Events will require nominal fees for participation, and sponsors will be sought to underwrite costs (financial advisory firms, physician groups, pharmaceutical companies). This

commitment to educate is based upon the Fellowship's predecessor, the original Fellowship of Sobriety, which was born after the appearance of the icon in Russia in the late 1800s. They sponsored educational classes in public libraries, to help the public acquire a better knowledge of the destructive aspects of the disease of alcoholism.

Major annual event

An annual educational forum will feature a keynote speaker such as Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos; OCMC Missionary Floyd Franz; Victor Mihaeloff (author of *Breaking the Chains of Addiction*); or some other well-known representative of Orthodoxy who will draw a crowd. A benefit dinner with the keynote speaker, with a reasonable fee such as \$50 per plate, will take place. Some additional activity will enhance fund raising at this event, such as a silent auction, book signing, etc.

Retreats

Marital retreats will be conducted on a regular basis, for which a fee will be charged. However, underwriters will be sought who can assist couples who are truly unable to participate for lack of financial means, but who would benefit from participation.

Sponsorships

Sponsors (and underwriters) will be sought to adopt portions of the Fellowship's program of activities.

Direct mail

A direct mail list will be developed, and newsletters mailed with response envelopes. Newsletters will attempt to educate, as well as inform about the Fellowship's activities.

Internet mailings: Paypal

An email list will be developed to which the same newsletter as above will be sent, soliciting individuals to make a donation on the Fellowship's website by Paypal.

Parish-sponsored events

The local coordinators will be encouraged to host one small, annual event in their Parish, such as a bake sale, book sale, knit-scarves sale, or whatever might be of interest locally.

Part XI

Credentials for program director

As the Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup will be conducted under the auspices of a canonical Orthodox jurisdiction, the candidate to direct the Fellowship must be a thoroughly qualified individual, both in terms of spirituality, as well as a professional possessing the appropriate education and experience in the field of psychology. Furthermore, the person should carry substantial clergy liability insurance (thus relieving the jurisdiction and its presiding bishop of this burden); be certified in pastoral counseling; and have an Orthodox *phronima*.

Significantly, it would be beneficial if the director is an Orthodox priest. There are instances when we have been approached by Orthodox priests and matushki who felt awkward discussing their addictions with someone to whom the conversation could not be bound by the seal of Confession. In the case of one Matushka, it would have benefited her to be able to receive the Holy Mystery of Repentance at the moment that she was in a state of mournfulness over her situation, as she admitted she was unable to discuss her addiction with her husband, and she was suffering because she had no other priest to whom she could confide. The grace of the priesthood would be very helpful in this position, as the forces of darkness associated with addictions are fierce and destructive.

Additionally, the holy priesthood would place this organization of the Fellowship on a more level footing with other pastoral counseling and treatment centers.

Part XII

Personal overview

My wife of 31 years, Matushka Syncletiki, and I, kept ourselves pure before marriage. Our marriage is strong and we have it firmly planted on a foundation of prayer. Since 2005, when we first came across the Akathist of Our Lady of the Inexhaustible Cup, we have been praying it together, in entirety, on a daily basis.

The inspiration for this rule of prayer with the Akathist came at a time when we were suffering because one of our family members was abusing alcohol. Little by little, we saw that not only were our prayers being answered, but any personal sacrifice that we were making within our schedule to accommodate this prayer was diminishing.

In only three months, the blessing of Our Lady's intercession and the reversal of the destructive influence on the individual family member for whom we had been praying was very obvious. What began as a personal need for help was transformed into the concept of Fellowship of the Inexhaustible Cup, which was as if it were born out of the Holy Mystery of our Marriage. As a result, we feel blessed to share our blessings with others.

Our marriage has gone through an enormous amount of personal and collective inner healing since we began. Over the decades, we have experienced many trials, resultant from the both of us having been born into addicted/dysfunctional households. Some of our friends who know us well consider our marriage to be nothing short of miraculous, given the personal challenges that we each had to overcome, and the self-sacrifice we each had to make in order to preserve our bond. We are grateful to God for the preservation of our marriage. **We have both experienced Our Lady's promises** which are found in the Akathist of the Inexhaustible Cup:

The grace -- of the One born of me, and of mine own -- will always be with this Icon.

KONTAKION 8

and

No one departs empty handed from the 'Inexhaustible Cup' of divine gifts, O all-good One.

KONTAKION 12

Our journey is combined with three decades of 12-step participation and the integration of Orthodox psychotherapy within our family life, as taught by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, whom I met in 1997 in Resaca, Georgia. During these years of marriage, I have also been blessed to gain significant pastoral counseling training and

experience. My commitment is not just to a career, but I am committed to a cause, which happens to be my career. Through training, I have been able to develop the fullness of a ministry to the addicted, and to suffering people who are in families where addictions and their destructive effects have been present.

Educationally, I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a Specialty in Developmental Psychology from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. My Master's in Science in Pastoral Counseling is from Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. I also conducted graduate work in Bioenergetics at the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut. My three-year thesis was entitled "Dreams – the Healing Language of the Night", which was a scriptural, psychological, and clinical case study perspective of dreams.

In addition, I have earned a Post-Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Counseling and Direction, a two-year program of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut. I have also passed the Late Vocation Program in Theology that was offered by +Bishop Dmitri of the Orthodox Church in America.

Professionally, my tenure includes serving as Director of Intake Interviews and Referrals at the Center for Christian Counseling & Healing in West Haven, Connecticut. In Pastoral Counseling, I have served as a staff member of the Pastoral Theological Institute in Madison, Connecticut; the Christian Institute For Psychotherapeutic Studies in Hicksville, Long Island; and the Center for Christian Counseling & Healing, working with individuals, couples, and groups. I have 5,500 hours of supervised client case study work in conjunction with psychotherapists of the C.G. Jung Institute for Training and Therapy Center in Manhattan; and the Temenos Institute in Westport, Connecticut. At present, I am engaged in private practice work through my own firm, The Center for Healing Relationships, offering individual, marriage, and family pastoral counseling.

In civic involvement, I founded The Greenwich Hotline, a crisis intervention hotline and site to help people experiencing acute crises in Greenwich, Connecticut. I am a founding member of the Vassar College Drop-In Center, an on-campus intervention program. At the same university, I co-chaired the Vassar Christian Fellowship. Prior to my conversion to Orthodoxy, I was Roman Catholic, and headed the Healing Ministry of Saint Catherine of Siena Church in Riverside, Connecticut. I have also participated in workshops of the Healing Ministry Dynamics at Mount Augustine, New York.

I am deeply grateful to Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos for his works which include: *The Science of Spiritual Medicine* (Orthodox Psychotherapy in Action) and *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain* to name just a few. Since meeting him personally back in the year 1997, I have tried to integrate the teachings of the Fathers

translated by him in all aspects of my marriage and family life. This commitment has been made under the careful and prayerful spiritual direction of our spiritual father, Archpriest Fr. Gordon Walker, founder of St. Ignatius Antiochian Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee. My wife and I continue to thank God for him and for his ongoing love and spiritual care over the last seventeen years.

