



St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
Sarasota, FL  
**2020-2021**  
GOYA Handbook

**Mission (Ministry vs Club)**

The parish priest (Father John Bociu) is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the entire parish. St. Barbara's is a Christ-centered place where parents and their children are welcomed and our young people can develop their self-identity as Orthodox Christians. GOYA is a way for our Church youth to come together in Christian Fellowship. GOYA is a part of Father John's overall Orthodox Christian ministry.

The mission and goal of GOYA ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith. ***It is not an organization or club but rather a ministry of the Church.*** By developing a personal relationship with Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living Church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation. These young people will undoubtedly one day become parish counsel members, Sunday School teachers, and stewards of the church. Simply put, we gather together in Christ's name. ***Friends Forever, Orthodox for Life!***

GOYA activities are meant to be focused events in which teens will have the opportunity to learn about the Orthodox Church, interact with other GOYAnS, and help prepare them for success as active Orthodox Christians in adulthood. ***This is critical for resilience in their physical and spiritual growth.***

The Greek Orthodox National Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Archdiocese) recommends that GOYA Ministry be based on 4 characteristics: ***Worship, Fellowship, Service/Charity (Diakonia), and Witness.***

All GOYA participants must register by filling out a registration form at the beginning of each year. A medical and waiver form along with GOYA Rules of Conduct must be filled out completely and signed by a parent or legal guardian.

**Eligibility**

GOYA ministers to teenagers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (6th to 12th grades).

**GOYA Leaders (Officers)**

GOYAnS interested in holding office are encouraged to apply for positions of leadership as defined by the GOYA Advisors. In general, the application process should explore why



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they want to serve, what talents they have to offer, and how their Orthodox Faith impacts their life (inside and outside the church). The GOYA Advisors, in consultation with Father John, shall decide the manner of selection and may also make special appointments as necessary in order to further the ministry's goal.

### Theme/Orthodox Instruction

This year's theme is: *"Connecting with Orthodoxy."* College is an important time to ask big questions. It can also be a time of many challenges. The goal is to equip the GOYANs with Orthodox wisdom in order to continue in the search for truth and in Christ's service while away at college. In the context of the Apostle Peter's epistle (1 Peter 3:15), this means being able to correctly explain our Greek Orthodox faith and culture to others. Let's stay connected to Christ and His Holy Church while in College. Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is the official collegiate campus ministry program under the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

The English word, "apologetics," is taken from the Greek word apología (apó, of, from + logía, logic, reflection on something, an eloquent argument, a reply, an answer). Apologetics does *not* mean saying "I'm sorry." We will expand on the Eastern Orthodox understanding of our Christian faith with special emphasis on the Holy Sacraments, the Nicene and Chalcedon Creeds, as well as the writings from the Church Fathers, in particular Sts. Athanasios and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria (Egypt - a country in Northern Africa linking the Middle East). There will also be discussions and other presentations with Father John as a witness to traditional Byzantine religious outlook.

**\*\*A recent study indicates that 6 out of 10 college students leave the Orthodox faith and over 50% see no value in attending church regularly. See also: <http://myocn.net/orthodox-campus-ministry-is-it-time-for-change/>**

### GOYA Advisors

Under the direction of the parish priest, the GOYA advisors are responsible for planning and carrying out all activities. The lead advisor oversees the delegation of responsibilities and coordinated efforts amongst the GOYA Leadership Team.

### Guest Speakers - Career Awareness

The format of GOYA monthly meetings may incorporate a different guest speaker from a variety of professions who, in most cases, are also Orthodox Christians. Our goal is to



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promote GOYA awareness on which areas of study offer the most job opportunities for students looking for a fiscally sound, post-college life.

**Good Standing**

***Participation in GOYA is voluntary. GOYAns are required to attend at least 2/3 of the GOYA meetings/events in order to have “good standing” status*** (with the exception of special circumstances submitted in writing and approved by Father John). Unless noted otherwise (such as online via Zoom), regular GOYA meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month (7pm-9pm) between the months of September and June. **Good standing status also requires that GOYAns volunteer at least four (4) hours during the annual church *GLENDI* festival (2 hours if also part of the Hellenic Folk Dancers) as directed by the lead GOYA advisor.** This is part of GOYA service. If these requirements are not met, any board member may be removed and an alternate appointed by the GOYA advisors. Good standing status during the year immediately prior to the GOYA election is also required in order to apply for a leadership position.

GOYAns must be in “good standing” in order to receive full GOYA-sponsorship to help defray the financial costs for participation in GOYA events such as the Diakonia Summer Camp or Tampa-area GOYA retreats. Full sponsorship does not guarantee that there will be no costs to you. It is your responsibility to comply with the requirements of GOYA for any possible reimbursement (full, partial, or otherwise specified). Your obligation to pay for any registration costs/fees is not contingent upon receiving any reimbursement from GOYA. In the event of a cancellation for an event that GOYA has already provided you a subsidy for, you agree to reimburse GOYA for the full amount of such. Any related cancellation fees are also your sole responsibility.

**Good-Standing: GOYA Christmas/Easter Greeting Cards:** Full sponsorship requires that GOYA families purchase *both* seasonal fundraiser cards (Christmas & Easter). Non-participating GOYA families will only have their GOYAN’s name appear in the card. In addition, the card amount will be subtracted from any qualifying sponsorship such as the Diakonia Summer Camp or Tampa-area GOYA retreats.

**Good-Standing: Sunday School Substitution:** GOYAns may substitute two (2) Sunday School attendances for a missed GOYA meeting DURING THE SAME MONTH. This is limited to **once** per school year.

**Good-Standing: One-Time Exception (OTE) for summer camp:** GOYAns who have at least 50% meeting attendance (but less than 2/3) at the end of the year, may request a one-



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time exception to the 2/3 “good standing” attendance requirement **IF** their absences were for urgent, substantiated, non-convenience reasons. Offended (or hurt) feelings are not acceptable reasons. This request shall be submitted in writing, state the reason(s) for the OTE, and must be signed by the parent and GOYAn. The OTE may be invoked only ***once during a GOYAN’s entire GOYA career and is non-transferable***. OTE approvals will be made by the lead GOYA advisor and Father John Bociu on a case-by-case basis. The OTE request will not be approved if there is evidence of dishonesty. ***Father John has the final say for all OTE decisions.***

**Stewardship & Membership:**

GOYA families are strongly encouraged to complete a Stewardship Pledge Card. Whatever gifts God has given to His people are to be used for the glory of God and in a spirit of love. Stewardship is a form of our Orthodox Christian Identity. Together we witness the beauty of the Divine Liturgy and receive Holy Communion. Our beautiful church has created countless lifelong friendships which are strengthened through various fellowship activities. Sunday School also provides our youth the unique opportunity to learn about our faith and culture. **Leadership Is Stewardship.** 1 Peter 4:10 says, “*As each has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” In order to meet financial obligations and to allow for proper planning and budgeting, our parish relies on our annual Stewardship Pledge Program.

**Oratorical Festival**

All GOYAnS are strongly encouraged to participate at least once as a member of GOYA. The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. Public speaking skills are ranked number one (#1) among the skill sets of professionals. Other guiding factors for developing public speaking skills include: Discovering an important component of leadership development; Increasing self-esteem, self confidence, and ability to accept feedback; and Expanding skills for planning, preparation and performance.

**Epiphany Celebration (Cross Dive) - St Nicholas Cathedral (Tarpon Springs, FL)**

All GOYAnS are strongly encouraged to participate at least once as a member of GOYA (subject to cross dive eligibility requirements).

**Media**



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Photos and videos from GOYA events may be posted by GOYA on our Facebook page as well as church materials such as the weekly bulletin and Pyrgos.

### Letters of Good Standing

Demonstrated leadership and initiative in extra-curricular activities are highly desirable strengths when applying for college. This includes work, community service, youth organizations, and religious groups. **Active involvement** is more meaningful to an admissions office; casual memberships are not.

GOYAnS may request a letter of good standing from the Lead GOYA Advisor, which includes their year of participation and current status. To request a letter of good standing, please send an email with the reason to: [SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com). Please allow 5-10 days for the request to be processed. If you need the letter addressed to a particular person/organization, please specify such.

Note: A GOYA letter of good standing shall not in any way be considered a letter of good standing for purposes of serving as Orthodox sponsors of baptisms and weddings or for a parishioner's right to vote at General Assembly Meetings. Such a letter is available directly from the Church office.

### Parental Expectations

Please take into consideration that GOYA advisors are volunteers and put their *free time and lots of energy* into the ministry in order to assure that our children are able to participate in events. ***It is a tremendous undertaking!***

**\*\*Parents are the “holy grail” in terms of influencing their child’s participation in the life of the Church. GOYA starts with you. “If your heart overflows with love for God, you will find a thousand ways to communicate and pass on these feelings to your children.”** These are the words of St. Irenaeus, one of the most important theologians of the second century. He was from Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). He studied in Rome and became Bishop of Lyon in present day France, and he understood that what counts is not so much what we do with our children and our grandchildren as who we are in Christ. ***“Faith,” as the saying goes, “is caught rather than taught.”***

As Orthodox Christian parents, we’re not talking of “pushing” anything to our children. We have a divine responsibility as Christian parents not to “push,” but instead to share our faith with our children, to share with them in love what God says is right and what



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God says is wrong. It's when we don't share our Christian values with our children that we get into trouble. Secondly, we are not sharing "my idea of right and wrong" but God's idea, God's standard. St. John Chrysostom, for example, calls on parents "to train their children in virtue." As they train in piano and sports, "train them in virtue." Above all, St. John Chrysostom said, they should read the Bible together, to provide good examples which can counteract the bad examples that they encounter in the world. "Too many of today's children have straight teeth and crooked morals," said one high school principal.

Our kids need to see us pray, and they need to see us make Church a priority. And what if they tell you they don't want to go? Go anyway. **You're the parent!** Kids need structure, and *they need to see you as an example of someone who strives to put God first, before everything else.* Saint Paul wrote, "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). In other words, Saint Paul tells Timothy (and us too!) not to worry that he is young. Instead, this young man can show people what it means to be a Christian. He can still be loving, faithful, and pure.

Our youth are learning by our example and we should ALWAYS try to act accordingly. "*Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.*" (Psalm 133:1). Let us be mindful of the Apostle Paul's words: *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone* (Colossians 4:6).

**Gossip and idle talk are distractions.** Anger, bitterness, and resentments lead to a host of problems such as unhappiness. This includes criticizing the bishops, clergy, fellow parishioners or other GOYAnS in front of the youth or with one another. If a situation needs discussion, please contact the lead GOYA advisor or Father John first. Conversation requires mutual respect. *Let's work together toward finding a reasonable solution (when appropriate).*

Parents should ensure that their teen is: ***aware of all events, properly dressed, dropped off on time, picked up on time, fees paid for all events on time, attend monthly meetings and mandatory events.***

### **Feedback**

GOYA welcomes feedback from GOYAnS (and their parents), both positive and negative, and may use the information in order to improve GOYA in furtherance of our stated mission. ***Feedback should be civil in tone and reflect the charity and respect that marks Christian discourse.*** Slanderous or libelous statements are detrimental to GOYA



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and Christian fellowship.

### Suggestions/Ideas

Every parish is unique in its own challenges and there's no shortage of good ideas. ***It's important to keep in mind that ideas are much easier to talk about than putting together.*** In order for the GOYA leadership to fully consider a new idea, the following is requested (*at a minimum*): A) How the idea furthers the stated mission of GOYA; B) The anticipated expenses (including travel, fees, etc), estimated labor/volunteers/participants, and cash flow analysis (if applicable); C) Where else the idea has been used (e.g., parish name/location, contact information for reference); D) How the idea can be applied for us here in the Greek Orthodox Community of Sarasota and Manatee counties; AND E) What SPECIFIC tasks YOU are willing to do in order to make sure that the idea is implemented and maintained (if successful).

### Volunteers/Chaperones

Please consider volunteering. Volunteers are the backbone of any ministry. ***Great volunteers are reliable and dedicated.*** This includes volunteering during inconvenient times. We don't impact people by our words; we impact them by our presence. Unreliability affects everyone. While intentions may be good, unreliable volunteers negatively impact the effectiveness of GOYA. Parents or other adult stewards of St Barbara's who are interested in volunteering to assist with GOYA events, must contact the lead GOYA advisor for direction. All chaperones must be at least 25 years of age, pass a criminal background check, have a valid driver's license with car insurance, and be drug-free. All Volunteers and Youth Workers must pass a background check per the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth as established by the Department of Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

### Overnight Trip Guidelines

The typical hotel room has two (2) beds. In part to save costs, there will be up to 4 GOYAn in each hotel room. Each GOYAn will share a bed. Unless specified otherwise for a particular event by the Metropolis of Atlanta or the Archdiocese, no GOYA adult chaperone is to be lodged in the same room as the youths unless the chaperone's own child is one of the occupants in that same room. Chaperones also need to be of the same sex as all of the youths in the same room and cannot share a bed with any child other than their own. Per the Archdiocese Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth, parental consent of each Child or Youth in the room is required, and at least two Children or Youth must be in the room. Parents who do not want an adult chaperone to share a room with



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their child can make alternative arrangements (at their own added expense) to include reserving a room where their child will sleep on their own and unsupervised.

### Parent Communications/Schedule

\*\*In order to ensure that you receive all GOYA-event communications, parents must provide their *primary email address and cell phone* contact information to: [SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com). GOYA uses the church's text message broadcast service as its primary means of communication. If a parent chooses *not* to participate in the text message service, it is solely their responsibility to seek timely updates from their child. To block church messages, Text: STOP ALL to 80123. To block church calls, use your smartphone's settings. All parents are also strongly encouraged to "friend" our Facebook page for another way to view photos/videos and keep up to date on exciting things that are happening with GOYA. The address is: [facebook.com/SarasotaGOYA](https://facebook.com/SarasotaGOYA).

Parents and GOYAns can also link their smartphones to the GOYA Google calendar. For additional information, send an e-mail to: [SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com).

### Truth Will Always Offend Some People

St. Barbara's is a private, Christian religious entity, and has a First Amendment right to communicate the truth about Jesus Christ and salvation. We receive the grace of Christ's sacrificial offering by coming to Him in faith and by receiving Holy Communion (John 6:53, 54). Faith transforms the whole person, heart, soul, mind, and body (Rom. 10:9). It is not our desire to offend anyone, but truth, even if it is presented in love, will offend some people. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the U.S.A. has stated (June 01, 2020) that we stand in unequivocal solidarity and peaceful protest with all those who condemn racism and inequality, which betray the spirit of democracy in our nation, i.e. "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." At the same time, we denounce all expressions of violence and revenge, including those despoiling and detracting from peaceful demonstrations. "Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all ... so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all" (Romans 12:17-18).

### GOYA Shirts

GOYA shirts are provided at no charge to GOYAns that actively participate in GOYA events such as the Tampa-area GOYA volleyball tournament. GOYA shirts must be returned. The replacement fee is \$20.



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**Complaints/Investigation**

Any GOYAn or GOYA advisor who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment, bullying, or intimidation and/or knowingly commits blasphemy that is GOYA-related will be ***subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.***

Any GOYAn, parent, or GOYA advisor that knowingly makes a false accusation regarding harassment, bullying, or intimidation and/or knowingly commits blasphemy will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from GOYA participation.

Bullying is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. Therefore, anything that happens once is ***not*** an act of bullying. For an incident to be considered bullying, the aggressor must want to hurt someone and the victim must perceive the incident as a deliberate act of abuse. “You insulted me when you said this” is NOT bullying but an expression of thoughts and feelings.

GOYAns who engage in cyberbullying may be subject to discipline if such conduct occurs on Church property or at a GOYA event, including if the electronic information such as a photo was created or received on Church property or at a GOYA event. ***GOYAns who engage in cyberbullying may be subject to discipline if the conduct has the effect of disrupting the mission of GOYA.***

**Misconduct**

Generally, misconduct is any activity (*including online and social media*), on or off Church property, during or outside of GOYA events that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects GOYA, its advisors, other GOYAns, or the Church. Misconduct may result in disciplinary action.

***Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior, pranks, or items inappropriate for an Orthodox Christian event will not be permitted.*** If any GOYAn exhibits inappropriate behavior or any inappropriate items are found, they will be confiscated and parents will be called immediately to pick up their child.

In severe cases, it may be necessary to involve social service or law enforcement agencies.



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### Due Process for Suspension and Expulsion

Disciplinary actions shall be matched to the seriousness of the infraction (with suspension being the last alternative reserved for serious misconduct). In the unfortunate event that disciplinary actions reach the level of suspension or expulsion of a GOYAn, the following due process process procedures shall be followed: The GOYAn and their parent/legal guardian will be advised of the charges/accusations; Be provided an opportunity to respond to the charges and present their side of the story in detail; Be provided the names of their accusers and given an opportunity to examine them (when appropriate at the sole discretion of Fr. John); Be provided an opportunity to submit a list of names of other individuals who might have witnessed the incident; Be advised why they are being suspended or recommended for expulsion.

### Discipline

Above all, remember that a GOYAn is a member of the Church, and we must make sure that we not unintentionally drive them or their family away from the Church. Therefore, discipline should be approached with great consideration, love and respect. Remember that no matter what they did, God still loves them. Likewise, no matter how hard it is, you must love them as well. That is not to underscore that what they did was wrong—but **God can still love without liking a person's behavior**. This does not excuse a GOYAn from the consequences of any misconduct though. Forgiveness does not throw wisdom and common sense out the window. Sins have consequences, and forgiveness does not make those consequences go away.

For assistance in dealing with this issue, please read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Repentance and realizing his hopeless condition are key factors. The parable shows us where healing begins. The Prodigal's return to wholeness occurred when he "came to himself" (Luke 15:17) and became aware of his self-centeredness: his estrangement from others, his degradation, and the wasting of his inheritance. The hymn sung on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son in Orthodox practice is a prayer of the person mired in sin: *When I disobeyed in ignorance Thy Fatherly glory, I wasted in iniquities the riches that Thou gavest me. Wherefore, I cry to Thee with the voice of the prodigal son, saying, I have sinned before Thee, O compassionate Father, receive me repentant, and make me as one of Thy hired servants. Father John has the final say in terms of disciplinary action.*



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Use of Cell Phones (smartphones, tablets, electronic devices) during GOYA meetings

GOYA recognizes that technology can play an important and positive role in teenagers' lives, both educationally and socially. GOYA is committed to helping all GOYAnS understand both the benefits and the risks, in order to equip the youth with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

We understand that many parents want their teens to have cell phones. ***All electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, and iPads, may not be visible, turned on, or used during GOYA meetings/events. Any recording must have the consent of all parties. No covert recording is allowed.*** We discourage teens from bringing cell phones in order to prevent any opportunity for losing them and causing distractions during GOYA meetings.

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Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior, pranks, or items inappropriate for an Orthodox Christian event will not be permitted. If any child exhibits inappropriate behavior or any inappropriate items are found (such as tobacco, illegal drugs, e-cigarette, weapons, etc), they will be confiscated and parents will be called immediately to pick up their teen.

Social Media - Background

Being a teenager can be very confusing and difficult. Social media websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, etc., allow us to communicate in real-time with "friends" or the public. These communities of users can share messages, content, photos, videos, and other material electronically. ***Understanding the risks involved in using social media may prevent potential adverse personal and professional consequences.***

***Online speech can be cruder and crueler than our real-life interactions***, in large part due to the literal distance from the people that we're talking to (and ***not seeing their reactions in-person***). According to a CNN study, "almost all parents -- 94% -- underestimated the amount of fighting happening over social media." This document is not meant to be all-inclusive and parents are encouraged to research other risks of online teen use such as sexual predators, identity theft, gambling, drug use, violent material and other topics.



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### Impact on Teen's Moral Consciousness

The use of social media occurs simultaneously with their developing identity, emerging sexuality, physical development, and moral consciousness. ***Social media can become a highly influential teacher for youth. Their moral, ethical and intellectual values can be formed by what they read and experience online.*** They may desire to become what the social media community espouses and portrays. Social media also increases our children's ability to be exposed to negative influences such as drugs and alcohol.

In a world where our youth are torn between reality and virtual reality, we need to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge of the truth as revealed by Christ. ***Communications on such sites are not necessarily monitored by GOYA, but GOYAn conduct may be brought to the attention of GOYA advisors when they are seen as possible violations of the GOYA Code of Conduct.***

### Golden Rule

As a general matter, the social media world is no different than the in-person world. The same laws, rules, policies, guidelines, and best practices that govern our in-person relationships with fellow GOYAns, friends, parents, and the community all apply online. ***GOYAns and GOYA advisors are responsible for their online posts*** just as they are for their personal, verbal, or written interactions.

Note: Any reference to "bullying" in this handbook includes cyberbullying (via computer, tablet, smart phone or any other electronic device), whether or not specifically stated.

### Youngsters 'addicted to mobile phones'

A study from the Pew Research Center indicates that 92% of teens report going online daily – including 24% who say they go online “almost constantly.” ***More than half (56%) of teens – ages 13 to 17 – go online several times a day.*** <http://pewrsr.ch/1NaUOUU>  
A Leading Australian chiropractor has warned about dangers of 'text neck' (*hunch back*) and an 'alarming increase' in teenage patients caused by bending over smartphones for several hours a day. The condition can lead to cognitive problems and depression. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3274835/Shocking-X-rays-teenagers-text-neck.html>



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### Positive use of technology

- **Technology for GOYA and GOYA-related events can be used in a positive manner.**
- GOYA seeks to promote safe and responsible use of social media.
- GOYA seeks to explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem, and to develop friendships.

### Social Media Risks

Information in electronic form is easily distributed, archived and downloaded. The person posting the information may have very little control over who sees it and its use. ***The words, ideas, pictures, and things that you put online can later be used against you.*** This is true even if your “privacy settings” are restricted.

### Permanent Records

***Postings to social media sites are generally permanent records that cannot be easily deleted.*** You must assume that everything you post is public, will be available to the public forever, and can be forwarded well beyond where you think your comments might land. Copies of deleted information may still exist on search engines or in friends’ (or others’) electronic files.

***“What you chose to post is unfortunately something that cannot be undone.... There’s no delete button on the internet. Those things float forever on the internet.”*** “Even Deleted Material on Social Networking Sites Can Be Used Against You.” If you wouldn’t say what you’re saying to a reporter or in a public space, then you probably shouldn’t say it online.

### Reputation Damage (College Admissions)

Postings may come back to haunt you. ***Many employers (and college admissions) check social networking profiles looking for misconduct or inappropriate behavior.*** A report conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling indicates that “[a] significant proportion of schools are beginning to research students via search engines (26 percent) and social networks (21 percent).” More @ <http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/Research%20Member%20Only/SocialMediaDiscussionPaper.pdf>

***Before communicating on a social media site, always consider what is said, who***



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*might read it and the impact it may have, if viewed by parents, relatives, employer, school, or other group (like GOYA) that is important to you.*

It's "free speech," *not* "free from consequences speech" (and remember, it's only government suppression of speech that is illegal). In the court of public opinion, your words can be used against you.

### Personal Social Media Accounts/First Amendment

This policy is not intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression (or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views) that are protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

*This policy does not prevent GOYANs or GOYA advisors from having their own personal social media profiles; it simply notifies GOYANs what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct with regard to their status as a member of GOYA.*

In short – use your head. Social media was never meant to be a journal for your every thought or action. When in doubt, remember, *“whenever I’m about to do something, I think, ‘Would an idiot do that?’* And if they would, I do not do that thing.”

### REMEMBER

- Everything we do, whether in word, deed or “text”, we are accountable for. “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:36-37.
- We should assume that anything posted on facebook, text to friends or emailed is not going to remain private. Digital cameras and video cameras are on everyone’s cell phones these days. Something that seems innocent when hanging out with friends can come back to haunt us later on.
- Once something is out there on the World Wide Web (Internet), there’s no taking it back. It’s there for good! Think about how easy it would be for something to copy and paste, for instance, an AIM conversation and post it anywhere!
- As with other things, resist peer pressure and pressure from the opposite sex. 47% of teens say “pressure from guys” is a reason girls send sexually suggestive messages and images.
- Viewing sexually explicit images takes away from our ability to focus on God. When viewing graphic sexual images our mind is on anything but Christ. These images cause us to direct our focus on ourselves and our own pleasure, instead of



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on Christ.

- Remember that we are made in the image and likeness of God and our bodies are our temples. Is sending sexually explicit photos of yourself the right way to honor yourself and God?
- 15% of teens say they have sent sexually suggestive images or texts to someone they know only online. In other words, someone they've never met in "real life". That person could be a sexual predator! Let them know that they should not be talking to strangers online at all.

Source: Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

**Code of Conduct**

*As a participant of GOYA Ministry and the Greek Orthodox Church, I realize that I represent my parish and church in all activities. This includes in-person, online, telephone, and social media. As a participant of GOYA Ministry, I agree to comply with all of the rules and meet all of the expectations stated below:*

<sup>a</sup> I will come to GOYA activities with an open heart and mind, ready to have fun, learn, and grow in my faith.

<sup>a</sup> I will fully participate in the GOYA activities that I attend.

<sup>a</sup> I will treat the clergy, my advisors, my fellow GOYAnS, and visitors with love and respect.

<sup>a</sup> I will not bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, weapons, fireworks, or pornographic material to any GOYA event, and I will not use them at any GOYA event. I understand that my parents will be notified, and that I may be sent home at my parent's/guardian's expense if I do so.

<sup>a</sup> I will wear appropriate clothing while at GOYA activities. None of my clothing will exhibit vulgar, suggestive, gang related, or irreligious language or images. None of my clothing will advertise or promote the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons, or violence. I will wear clothing that covers my stomach and underwear. I will dress in a modest fashion and I understand that the dress code will be enforced at the discretion of the GOYA advisors.

<sup>a</sup> I will use appropriate language and will not curse, use obscene hand gestures, or participate in vulgar conversations (including on social media, phone, online, etc.). I will not harass my advisors, fellow participants, or visitors in any way including through the use of social media.



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<sup>a</sup> I will treat the property of others and the church with respect. I understand that I will be held responsible to pay for any property that I willfully or recklessly damage, destroy, or steal.

<sup>a</sup> I understand that I am responsible for my social media conduct and that it may be brought to the attention of GOYA advisors when there are possible violations of the Code of Conduct.

<sup>a</sup> I understand that for my safety and the safety of others, GOYA advisors may search my baggage and belongings on GOYA excursions. I will be present if my items are searched and I will know why they have decided to search my belongings.

