



## Assembly of Bishops Encyclical for OCF College Student Sunday

The Lord's Day After the Exaltation of the Cross, September 15<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup>, 2013

*“Behold now, what is so good or so pleasant as for brothers to dwell together in unity?” Psalm 132:1*



Beloved Clergy, Godly Monastics, and Blessed Faithful,

On behalf of the members of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, we greet you in the Joy of our Lord Jesus Christ as we commence the 2013-14 Academic School Year. The wonderful verse recounted above comes to us from the Psalmist David. Its brilliance and simplicity should inspire us all as Orthodox Christians to strive for active engagement, participation, connection and interaction with one another through all stages of life and development in the life of the Orthodox Christian. It should also embolden us to seek out and actively engage other human beings made in the image of God, from all walks of life, and to witness the Faith of Jesus Christ to the world around us, knowing that only by the Grace of our Lord can the true depth of its scriptural meaning and consummation become truly manifest. As our nearly 40,000 Orthodox Christian College students in North America return to their necessary academic pursuits, we celebrate with them that return with **College Student Sunday** and encourage them to embrace these tenants as described by the Psalmist. However, while we are truly grateful for the academic opportunities that our students have in North America and the exciting possibilities that become available through higher education, we cannot deny the spiritual difficulties that most often await them while on their educational journeys. For many of our students, they will be facing a challenging spiritual environment, which far too often emphasizes materialistic gain over service to those in need, the pursuit of that which compels rather than the pursuit of that which inspires and builds up, and the over-emphasis of logic and reason without the necessary balance of love and compassion.

For well over half a century, Orthodox Christian Fellowship has served on the front lines of Orthodox Christian college campus ministry, and has sought to embolden our students not only in their pursuit of



academic excellence, but also in support of their pursuit of Divine Truth through the Holy Orthodox Church and the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ! OCF is again excited to announce the continuation of their highly successful initiative, “The First 40 Days” program, which involves extensive effort from our Orthodox Chaplains and Spiritual Advisors alongside our student leaders in order to contact every incoming freshman within their first 40 days on campus. We wholeheartedly pray for and strongly encourage your support of these noble efforts by ensuring that the contact information for your parish’s incoming college students be sent each and every year to the OCF North American Office for dissemination to our dedicated local chapters across North America!

Additionally, with the greatest sincerity and earnestness, we encourage your committed financial support of this fundamental ministry, which functions **completely on the contributions of caring Orthodox faithful like yourselves**. We are asking that a special collection be taken on this day in support of the good work of OCF, and encourage the entire faithful – clergy, parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles and friends of our treasured college students – to be generous in your offering of support to this ministry on their behalf.

May our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, who calls that all men and women seek to dwell in the fullness of unity of which only He can truly provide and fulfill, guide and strengthen all of our cherished and blessed Orthodox college students all across North America.

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**Source:** [Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese](#)