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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (January 21, 2005):**Theological Roots of Holistic Healing Examined**

BROOKLINE, MASS. From April 8-9, 2005, the Healing Initiative will present the second conference in its three-year series on *Holistic Healing in Byzantium*, which will focus on theological perspectives of healing, to be held at the Maliotis Cultural Center of Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Sponsored by a Lilly Endowment Grant at Hellenic College, the Metanexus Institute, and the Kambouras Scholarship, the event explores the relationship between the psychosomatic tradition of personhood in Orthodox Christian theology and modern holistic healing. According to Dr. John T. Chirban, director of the Institute of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion (I.M.P.R.), clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School, and chairman of the Human Development Program at Hellenic College, "This year's program on Orthodox Christian understandings of the psychosomatic nature of personhood will shift the attention from individual healing methods to learning how our relationship with God is pivotal for healing—for the body as well as for the mind and soul."

The concept of holistic healing—emphasizing the unity of the body, mind, and spirit—provides the foundation of the Healing Initiative. Last year's conference examined historical influences of Byzantine healing practices in the Orthodox Christian healing tradition and modern healing across cultures. The proceedings from this conference are currently in preparation for publication.

This second conference aims to provide its audience with an in-depth understanding of the epistemology of healing from an Orthodox theological perspective and emphasizes healing holistically, with the aim of explaining the relationship of spiritual healing to contemporary health sciences such as medicine and psychology. The April conference will address Orthodox Christian theology and experiences of spirituality, explaining mystical theology through prayer, iconography, miracles, and

sacraments as mediums for healing. Participants are invited to engage in the dialogue debating whether faith and science could or should be divided into discrete disciplines of healing.

“The modern interest regarding integrative and holistic interventions for healing invites a unitive epistemology of personhood,” said Chirban. “While Orthodox Christian theology emphasizes an integrative approach founded squarely on the Hebraic holistic view of the person, most modern Orthodox Christian professionals in the healing arts have been educated in disciplines that limit the focus of healing to either the body, mind, or soul. The epistemologies and methodologies of these separated disciplines are thus fragmented and not consistent with our Orthodox Christian understanding of the unity of the whole person.” “Conferences such as this should help us repossess our Tradition—a perspective which we now find paradoxically at the cutting edge of healing and the modern sciences,” he added.

The conference will feature leading scholars and theologians addressing different aspects of the epistemologies and methodologies of healing and will foster discussion of the theological insight of holistic healing and the influence of helping professions.

Events are free of charge and open to the public. Participants are invited to support the Healing Initiative through the Institute of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion. Please visit inmpr.org for more information concerning conference registration. On Saturday, roundtable discussions will engage exchange about how those in various healing professions incorporate spiritual and religious aspects of healing in their practice. Specific topics include “Theology and Healing,” “Prayer and Healing the Whole Person,” and “Personal Transformation through Prayer.”

His Eminence Maximos Aghiorgoussis, Metropolitan of Pittsburgh and Rev. Demetrios Constantelos, Ph.D., professor emeritus of history and religious studies at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will present the keynote address. Other presenters include Rev. Nicholas Triantafilou, president, Hellenic College & Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; John T. Chirban, Ph.D., Th.D.; Rev. George D. Dragas, Ph.D.; professor of patristic and dogmatic theology, Holy Cross School of Theology; Timothy Patitsas, Th.D. in-residence scholar, Holy Cross School of Theology; Lily Macrakis, Ph.D., dean of Hellenic College; Rossitza Roussanova, Ph.D., senior fellow, Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and Emily Markides, Ph.D., founder of the International Eco-Peace Village.

To receive more information regarding the conference please see Inmpr.org or write to:

The Healing Initiative: Byzantine Healing & Holistic Health

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