



Orthodox Christian Laity

February 2, 2021

Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

His Eminence, Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS
The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10075-0192

Your Eminence:

The Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) thanks you for your recent messages and we pray for your good health in these pandemic times.

We also appreciate the opportunity to share some of our ideas with you regarding the proposed new Charter for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Having heard from many of our leaders, supporters and others on this issue, a common thread ties them together: **the role of the laity in our Church has diminished, and this should be corrected so that Church governance regains a more balanced co-ministry between clergy and laity.**

Comparing the role of the laity in the original Charter of 1922 with the succeeding Charters of 1927, 1931, 1977 and 2003, we see a steady and disturbing erosion of the laity's role in Church governance.

The laity are co-responsible in Christ's Church, along with the clergy (bishops, priests, deacons), no more, no less. Their role has diminished drastically over time from substantive, to advisory, to pro forma. This should not be the case in the Orthodox Church.

The new Charter for the Archdiocese should restore the historic role of the laity in the governance of the Church. The Charter and following Regulations should explicitly state the role of the laity in all administrative and financial matters, including independent and transparent auditing, while respecting the spiritual, hierarchical and conciliar nature of the Church.

The interdependency of clergy and laity should be at the core of the new Charter. The laity's roles and responsibilities in administrative/ financial matters and in clergy nominations/elections should be clearly defined. Likewise, the spiritual and hierarchical roles and responsibilities of the clergy should be clearly set forth. Both should be scrupulously adhered to. The collaboration of clergy and laity should permeate the entire Charter.

We thank you for your attention and ask that you pray for OCL supporters, Orthodox Christians and all those suffering the ravages of the ongoing worldwide pandemic.

In Christ,

Argo Georgandis Pyle, President

George D. Karcazes, Secretary