



Orthodox Christian Laity

2021 YEAR-END APPEAL

OCL SURVEYS THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND CORRESPONDS WITH ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS

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Our Appeal to You

Every non-profit organization requires the work of dedicated volunteers and the financial support of donors, businesses and other organizations to accomplish its goals. We heartily thank our Board Members and Advisors for their offering of time, talent and treasure throughout the year. We thank our outgoing President, Argo Georgandis Pyle, for her three terms of service. **If OCL's vision resonates with you and your circumstances allow, we appreciate any donation you are able to make at this time. Make your tax-deductible contribution at: ocl.org/donate.**

Results of a Survey about the Orthodox Church of America

In late February 2021, OCL distributed a survey of eight questions with the following introduction: "We are interested in understanding how active and dedicated Orthodox Christians feel about Orthodox Christian administrative unity in America and the importance of layperson involvement in church governance." The survey and informative results are presented later in this letter (pages 2-4) as well as online (bit.ly/OrthodoxySurvey).

Engagement with Archbishop Elpidophoros on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Charter

Seven letters from OCL and two responses by Archbishop Elpidophoros (online at bit.ly/GOACharter) impacted the charter process. The succession of letters opened up the process to input from parish leaders throughout the U.S. resulting in: 1) the formation of the Archdiocesan Advisory Committee on the Charter to which two OCL Board members received appointment, and 2) the setting up of an email account for feedback (charter@goarch.org).

Significance of the New Charter

Being that the GOAA is the largest Orthodox jurisdiction in America and the Archbishop is the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops of the USA, the form that the new charter takes is critically important. OCL is calling for restoring the autonomy of in the Archdiocese and the laity's role in church governance.

Other Activities

During the past year, Orthodox Christian Laity has: 1) continued to promote George Matsoukas' book, **Under One Roof: Uniting the Orthodox Church of America** which was published in May 2021; 2) interviewed Prof. Alexander Kitroeff online about his book, **The Greek Orthodox Church in America: A Modern History**; 3) published the collection of correspondence with the Archbishop into an Occasional Paper, mailed it to OCL's mailing list of approximately 3,000 addresses, emailed it to approximately 6,000 addresses, and posted it on ocl.org (bit.ly/underoneroofbook) and social media; 4) received appointment of two OCL Board members to the Archdiocesan Advisory Committee on the Charter; 5) created a monthly e-newsletter and distributed it to the email list; 6) held monthly hour-long "mastermind" meetings via ZOOM; 7) received a major bequest from the Frank Kamberos Trust (\$100,000); 8) witnessed Patriarch Bartholomew's blessing of the St. Nicholas Shrine through the participation of a board member and the promotion of the livestream of the event; 9) posted numerous (192) articles on ocl.org and social media.

Your contributions, whether physical, moral, spiritual or financial have made all of these activities possible.

In Memory of Past Board Members

During 2021 we commemorate the passing of three board members: Nicholas Karakas (Florida), Dr. Nicholas Pappas (Pennsylvania), and Peter N. Marudas (Maryland). Eternal be their memory.

Annual Meeting and Program

Due to continued pandemic developments, the Board scheduled the 34th Annual Program and Meeting online on December 5, 2021, on the theme: "The Role of Servant Leadership in Fostering Church Unity." Presenter: Protodeacon Peter M. Danilchick, and panelists: Alexei Krindatch, George Karcazes and Dr. Gayle Woloschak. Protodeacon Danilchick, Vice Chair of the Advisory Board of the Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative (orthodoxservantleaders.com), is the author of "Thy Will Be Done: Strategic Leadership, Planning, and Management for Christians" (christianleadership.co). He challenged participants with the fact that we are all, every one of us, called to be servant leaders, in service to God, His Church, and His people. He reviewed the work of the Assembly of Bishops in fostering church unity. He offered practical ways to become partners in recent efforts towards creating unity on the grassroots parish level. He helped participants to "dare and do great things" in bringing about the blessed unity of the Church that we all desire.

Survey Questions and Results

As of the end of November, OCL received 150 responses to its survey about Orthodox Christian administrative unity in America and the importance of layperson involvement in church governance.

1. *Do you believe that Orthodox Christians can accomplish more and have a greater impact in their own communities and throughout the world by working together?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	80.00%	120
Agree	12.67%	19
Neither agree nor disagree	5.33%	8
Disagree	0.67%	1
Strongly disagree	1.33%	2
TOTAL		150

2. *Do you believe that foreign governments should influence Orthodox Churches in America and how they are governed?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	2.68%	4
No	97.32%	145
TOTAL		149

3. *Do you believe that the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA is making progress toward administratively uniting the Orthodox Church of America?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A great deal	0.00%	0
A lot	1.36%	2
A moderate amount	13.61%	20
A little	25.85%	38
None at all	59.18%	87
TOTAL		147

4. *Do you believe that administratively uniting the numerous Orthodox Christian jurisdictions in America is essential for the stability, vitality and growth of the Church on this continent?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	65.10%	97
Agree	17.45%	26
Neither agree nor disagree	8.05%	12
Disagree	5.37%	8
Strongly disagree	4.03%	6
TOTAL		149

5. *Do you believe that the role of laypeople in the governance of the Orthodox Church in North America is sufficient?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	2.67%	4
Agree	16.67%	25
Neither agree nor disagree	26.67%	40
Disagree	38.00%	57
Strongly disagree	16.00%	24
TOTAL		150

6. Are the bishops the key to administratively uniting the Orthodox Church of America?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	43.33%	65
Agree	28.67%	43
Neither agree nor disagree	12.67%	19
Disagree	6.67%	10
Strongly disagree	8.67%	13
TOTAL		150

7. Click the box next to what you believe is the most important mission of Orthodox Christian Laity.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Orthodox Christian Administrative Unity	47.62%	70
Conciliar Governance	12.24%	18
Transparency and Accountability	24.49%	36
Education	8.16%	12
Spiritual Renewal	24.49%	36
Total Respondents: 147		

8. What is your age?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.00%	0
18-20	1.34%	2
21-29	2.68%	4
30-39	8.05%	12
40-49	10.74%	16
50-59	16.78%	25
60 or older	60.40%	90
TOTAL		149

Action Steps

In addition to the activities that OCL undertakes to fulfill its vision and mission, each of us has the opportunity individually to fulfill the five stated missions of OCL in question #7. By actively participating in our local parish communities and carrying the vision of a united, conciliar, transparent, accountable church in North America where education and spiritual renewal is prioritized, the mission of OCL is realized on the grassroots level. Participating in pan-Orthodox events and initiatives locally is the real key to bringing about administrative unity.

With prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ that you and your loved ones may receive great blessings during the Nativity/Theophany season and have a healthy New Year,



David Oancea, Executive Director