



Orthodox Christian Laity

2023 WINTER NEWSLETTER & YEAR-END APPEAL

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Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) has been an advocate of dialogue in preserving and promoting the Orthodox Faith since its inception in 1987. This newsletter highlights OCL's recent events in defending and strengthening Orthodox unity and continuity for future generations.

36th Annual Meeting and Conference

On the weekend of October 20-22, 2023, Orthodox Christian Laity held its **36th Annual Meeting and Conference** (read highlights online here: <https://bit.ly/OCL36>) at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Glenview, Illinois. The OCL Board met on Friday, October 20, in the library of Saints Peter and Paul Parish for a productive session that reviewed the year's work, discussed the direction and plans for 2024, and elected a new expanded and qualified board.



William Souvall
OCL President

On Saturday, October 21, prominent speakers and an engaging panel discussed various aspects and challenges of Orthodox Christian unity in America. Prior to the featured speakers, **Rev. Fr. Nicholas Anton, Director of Operations for the Assembly of Bishops USA**, brought greetings from the Assembly and made a brief slide presentation about the National Inter-Parish Association (IPA) Project (<https://bit.ly/AssemblyIPA>) that promotes communication, camaraderie, and cooperation across Orthodox Christian parishes of all jurisdictions in a given geographical area.



Fr. Nicholas Anton

Later in the program, the OCL Board expressed gratitude to **Mr. Peter Valessares, Executive Director of The Hellenic Foundation of Chicago**, for the Foundation's award of a grant to update OCL's archives at DePaul University and enhance online access.



Peter Valessares

The keynote speaker, **Rev. Archpriest Bohdan Hladio**, spoke on the topic: "Orthodox Unity, Evangelism, and the Problem of Universal Jurisdiction." **Professor Alexander Billinis** shared his experiences in "An Orthodox Layman's Journeys to the Mother Churches." **Rev. Fr. Nicholas Greanias** discussed "An American Orthodox Diplomat Views the Post Cold-War Orthodox World."



Archpriest Bohdan Hladio

Professor Alexander Billinis

Fr. Nicholas Greanias

Following the individual presentations, **Dr. Gayle Woloschak** (OCL Vice-President; Professor of Radiation Oncology, Radiology, and Cell and Molecular Biology in the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University; adjunct professor of religion and sciences at Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago; OCMC President; Vice-President of IOTA) moderated panel discussion with the three speakers. This interactive session offered attendees valuable insights into the concerns and opportunities facing Orthodox Christianity in America.



Panel discussion participants



Conference participants enjoying fellowship and discussion

HOLIDAY BLESSINGS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Enclosed is OCL's most recent Occasional Paper (**"The Greek Orthodox Legacy in America: A Struggle for Relevance in an Unorthodox World"**, by **S. P. Stamatis, M.A.**) as our gift to you. We appreciate your spiritual and financial support. Your contributions make OCL's projects and activities possible. We welcome your comments (email: ocladmin@ocl.org) and "thank you" for your support.

Praying that you have a blessed Christmas season and a joyous New Year!

William P. Souvall

William P. Souvall, President

Argo Georgandis-Pyle

Argo Georgandis-Pyle, Secretary