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## Orthodox Christian Laity records MSS0029

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DePaul Special Collections and Archives

John T. Richardson Library

2350 N. Kenmore Ave.

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	DePaul Special Collections and Archives
<b>Creator:</b>	Orthodox Christian Laity
<b>Title:</b>	Orthodox Christian Laity records
<b>ID:</b>	MSS0029
<b>ID [aspace_uri]:</b>	/repositories/2/resources/66
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1959-2023
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 Linear Feet 24 boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English , Greek, Modern (1453-) .

### Preferred Citation

The preferred citation is: Orthodox Christian Laity records, [Box#, Folder#], Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois.

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## Biographical / Historical

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The Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) was founded in 1987. James and Mary Koulogeorge hosted the first OCL meeting in their home in Northbrook, Illinois. OCL's mission and goals include advocating for the unity of all Orthodox Christians in the United States, accountability and transparency in Church administration and governance with participation of both clergy and laity, and the spiritual renewal of the Orthodox Church in America. To meet these objectives OCL has published a newsletter, submitted articles and press releases to Greek American newspapers and magazines, hosted annual meetings, open forums, sent delegates to the Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress, and met with members of the church's hierarchy. These various activities and programs were intended to raise awareness and find solutions to issues of concern including the mismanagement of finances, inadequate leadership and abuses of power, and departures from established procedures regarding the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) Charter.

In 1990, OCL established commissions focused on studying and discussing seven issues related to OCL's agenda of Orthodox renewal. Workshops held during the 4th Annual Meeting in 1991 reflected the scope of the commissions and addressed the following issues: 1.) Administration and Accountability, 2.) Faith, Language and Culture, 3.) Mission and Outreach, 4.) Orthodox Unity, 5.) Selection of Hierarchs, 6.) Spiritual Renewal, 7.) Women's Role in the Church. The final reports that resulted from the commissions' study of these issues were published in the 1993 book titled *Project for Orthodox Renewal: Seven Studies of Key Issues Facing Orthodox Christians in America*. Members and supporters of OCL were encouraged to draw on the recommendations and findings of these reports when they attended the GOA Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress meetings.

In 1994 Andrew and Alice Kopan organized a tour of Istanbul and the Holy Land for OCL leaders and members. Tour participants visited Greek Orthodox shrines which sparked an interest in supporting the stewardship of the historic sites. By 1996, the organization's growth led to the decision to name Nicholas Nicholaou, editor of OCL's newsletter *The Forum*, as OCL's first Executive Director.

In honor of OCL's 10th Anniversary, the papers presented at the 1997 Annual Meeting around the topic, "The American Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate," were published in a commemorative booklet. Also in 1997, OCL launched the Occasional Papers Series continuing the organization's commitment to education and informed discussion about matters related to the laity's role in Church governance as well as Orthodox unity.

OCL assisted with the organization of GOAL (Greek Orthodox American Leaders), a "group of concerned Greek Orthodox Christians working in Christ to preserve and strengthen the integrity of the Greek Orthodox Church, and the future of Orthodoxy in America." In 1998, the Orthodox News feature was added to OCL's website absorbing GOAL's Voithia news digest which had been compiled and maintained by Harry Coin during GOAL's existence (1997-1999). Between 2002 and 2004, OCL mobilized efforts to reject proposed changes to the Patriarchal Charter by creating an education campaign describing issues and concerns, raising funds, placing advertisements, writing letters, and outlining specific actions for Clergy-Laity Congress meetings. OCL invited Evan Alevizatos Chriss and Basil Foussianes, members of the Archdiocesan Council during the tenure of Archbishop Iakovos, to analyze and compare the proposed changes to the 1977 Charter. In 2004, a group of Orthodox Christians, including some leaders and members of OCL, filed a lawsuit in New York accusing Church leaders of imposing changes to the GOA Charter without following established procedures.

In 2012, OCL released a DVD in honor of the organization's 25th Anniversary. The 25th Annual Meeting's theme was "Our Orthodox Past, Our Orthodox Present, Our Orthodox Future" and included a visit to the Library of Congress to see rare manuscripts and prints related to Orthodox Christian history. Former OCL presidents contributed essays for the meeting's program booklet which provided "context for the resilience and commitment of this grass roots movement."

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## Scope and Contents

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The Orthodox Christian Laity records span the dates 1959 to 2023 (bulk 1987 to 2012) and include board meeting minutes, financial records, correspondence, and publications created by OCL as well as publications collected by OCL leaders and members. The records also document OCL's presence at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America's Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress as a participant in the Church's conciliar governance. The OCL records also include a few items of memorabilia. Although GOAL (Greek Orthodox American Leaders) was a separate organization, when it disbanded, OCL leaders assumed responsibility for documenting the work and efforts of this group of lay Greek Orthodox Christians.

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## Arrangement

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The Orthodox Christian Laity records are arranged into nine series: 1.) Governance, 2.) Correspondence, 3.) Annual Meetings and Events, 4.) OCL Publications, 5.) Greek American Publications, 6.) Actions and Issues, 7.) Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress, 8.) External Publications, and 9.) Memorabilia. Series are organized chronologically or alphabetically by file folder title.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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OCL Philanthropy: Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage, 2004-2007	box 4	folder 14
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Board Members Correspondence: Haikalis, P., 2002-2004	box 5	folder 9
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13th Annual Meeting, 2000	box 8	folder 16
14th Annual Meeting, 2001	box 8	folder 17
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18th Annual Meeting, 2005	box 8	folder 21
19th Annual Meeting, 2006	box 8	folder 22
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Occasional Papers Series #2 – "The Theological Foundation of the Role of the Laity in the Church" by Daniel J. Sahas, 1997	box 12	folder 8
Occasional Papers Series #3 – "The History and Future of the Female Diaconate" compiled by Timi Loomis Freshman, Valeria Karras, Demetra Jacquet, and Dr. Ellen Gvosdev, 1997	box 12	folder 9
Occasional Papers Series #4 – "The Challenge of Outreach: Report prepared for Archbishop Spyridon" by Nicholas K. Gvosdev, 1997	box 12	folder 10
Occasional Papers Series #5 – "An Orthodox Christian Church in the United States: Unified and Self-Governed" by Peter Haikalis, 2000	box 12	folder 11

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Occasional Papers Series #7 – "New Strategy Needed to Save Endangered Ecumenical Patriarchate" by Peter Marudas, 2006	box 12	folder 12
Occasional Papers Series #8 – "The American Orthodox Church is Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: It Must Now Be One", 2016	box 12	folder 13
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Occasional Papers Series #12 – "Papers in Support of a Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America", 2022	box 12	folder 17
Occasional Papers Series #13 – "Orthodox Unity, Evangelism, and the Problem of Universal Jurisdiction" by Fr. Bohdan Hladio, 2023	box 12	folder 18
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Charter Crisis: Research and Analysis of Greek Orthodox Church of America's Charters by Evan Alevizatos Chriss, 2002-2004	box 15	folder 8
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