Presidential Reflections

Lynda Robitaille, JCD

We have been through many ups and downs with the pandemic in the past year. After the excitement of being able to gather at the convention in October, late fall and early winter were particularly difficult as we returned to isolating. The Board’s plan for an in-person meeting in January became a virtual meeting, as did our April meeting. Similarly, we hoped to resume the biennial visits of the CLSA officers to the Roman Curia in May 2022, and we decided recently to postpone those visits. I hope that as things open up through the coming months, we will be able to gather and build community in-person again.

Speaking of ups and downs, please read this Newsletter carefully as there is important information about Father Paul Hartmann, our Vice President/President-Elect. After careful discernment, Fr. Hartmann has resigned from the CLSA Board to focus on his transition to a new position at the USCCB. In the name of the CLSA, I extend our best wishes to him through this transition, even as we regret that we will not be serving the Society together any longer. In keeping with our Constitution, the Board has asked the Committee on Nominations to bring forward two candidates for the office of President for election at the Business Meeting in October in Cleveland.

There are a few items to which I would like to draw your attention. Shortly, you will receive a letter from me asking that you consider donating to the CLSA scholarship fund. This is a concrete opportunity to invest in the future of our Society and the future of the Church. Studying for a degree in canon law is costly. The scholarship fund helps pay a student’s tuition for the licentiate, and for a year of a doctoral program. Your financial contribution can make an important difference to help support future canonists, and I appreciate any support you are able to provide.

If you know someone who might benefit from such a scholarship, encourage that person to apply. Applications for scholarships will be accepted until April 15. You can learn more about the scholarship applications on the website.

There are a number of different projects going on at the moment, among which are the new Commentary on the Code of Canon Law, different handbooks being written or considered, and translations of newly promulgated canons. A translation of the new Book VI is almost complete, and we are in discussion with the USCCB about its publication.

On February 9, we hosted a virtual open house for new members. A highlight of the open house was a tour of the CLSA website. If you have not taken the time to explore it yourself recently, please do so. You may discover features that you had not previously noticed. As a member, you have access to the archive of podcasts and webinars (under Media), to the Research Database based on the Canon Law Digest series up to the present day (under Research Database), and to a number of different documents, including foundational documents of the CLSA, as well as articles, some translations of Rotal jurisprudence, and a mixture of other helpful documents, including an index of Proceedings (under Periodicals).

As you are aware, the CLSA is a member-driven organization. Members set the agenda for the Society, and members do the work of the Society. You can help the Board know how you want to be involved by ensuring that your online profile is up to date on the website. Indicate your interests and how you would like to be more involved in the CLSA in your profile, whether you are interested in presenting at conventions, giving a webinar or podcast, serving on a committee, etc.

The Advocate Training Workshop focusing on penal or administrative disciplinary processes will take place this month in Lutz, Florida. The presenters will be Father Alexander Laschuk, Father John Paul Kimes, and Ms. Susan Mulheron. Workshops like this are an important service that the Society offers its members. Since we are talking about the value of a CLSA

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**2022 CLSA CONVENTION**

*Processes Today: Evolution and Reality*

*The Renaissance Cleveland Hotel ● October 10-13, 2022 ● Cleveland, OH*

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**Convention Program**

The convention program below is still in development. Brochures with registration information will be mailed this summer, and more information regarding this year's convention program and hotel accommodations will be available in upcoming CLSA newsletters and on the CLSA website.

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**Pre-Convention Workshops**

*Tribunal Practices and Procedures*

Dr. Zabrina Decker, JCD; Very Reverend Mark Payne, JCL; Ms. Rebecca Ruesch, JCL

*The Reality of Married Priests: An Evolution of Best Practices*

Reverend Jon Chalmers; Dr. Margaret Chalmers, JD, JCD; Chorbishop John Faris, JCOD; Reverend Alexander Laschuk, JCD

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**Keynote**

*Synodality*

Most Reverend Robert Barron

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**Major Addresses**

*TBD*

Reverend Monsignor Alejandro Arellano Cedillo

*Work at the Holy See and Book VI/Related Topics*

Reverend Monsignor Robert Oliver, STD, JCD

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**Seminars**

*Update on Reform of the Roman Curia*

Dr. Kurt Martens, JCD

**Vulnerable Adults: Who Is a Vulnerable Adult? What Is a Consensual Relationship?**

Mr. Michael Airdo, JD; Reverend Phillip Brown, PSS, JD, JCD; Ms. Susan Mulheron, JCL

**Adjudicated Guilt in Delicta Reservata Cases and the Canonical Care of the Principal Parties: Current Legislation**

Reverend Robert Geisinger, SJ, JCD

**Update on the Form of Baptism: Canonical and Pastoral Implications and Questions of Validity**

Reverend Paul Czarnota, JD, JCL

**Canonization Process**

Dr. Jeannine Marino, JCD

**Vetitums and Monitums: How Are They Applied? How Are They Enforced?**

Reverend John Beal, JCD

**Role of the Judicial Vicar: Changes Arising from Mitis Iudex**

Reverend Michael Johnson, JCL

**Use of Electronic Media for Participation in Councils and Chapters of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life**

Dr. Eileen Jaramillo, DMin, JCL; Dr. Michael Nobel, PhD, JCL

**Dealing with Antagonistic Respondents in Marriage Cases**

Ms. Anne Bryant, MEd, MA, JCL

**The Effect of Lack of Faith on Marriage**

Mr. Richard Verver, JCL

**Latin Pastors and Pastoral Care of Eastern Catholics**

Reverend Monsignor Michael Souckar, JCD

**Outdoor Weddings: Are Policies Changing?**

Dr. Diane Barr, JD, JCD

**How to Put on a Sacramental Recordkeeping Training Session and Recent Developments**

Mr. Jay Conzemius, JCL

**The Renaissance Cleveland Hotel**

24 Public Square, Cleveland, OH 44113

Sleeping rooms are $169/night at our group rate (cut-off date: September 16, 2022). Rates will be honored for three days prior to the beginning of the Pre-Convention Workshops and three days after the Convention end date, based on availability.
Presidential Reflections, continued

membership, be on the lookout for your membership dues invoice next month. Your membership expires June 30, 2022. Last October, at the request of the membership, we agreed to send dues notices in April rather than May. I encourage you to keep your membership active to take advantage of the many benefits CLSA offers. You can pay your renewal online beginning May 1. CLSA’s annual dues have remained the same since 2016: $250 for active and associate members and $125 for student members.

We are rolling out a new member benefit this spring called the “Find a Canon Lawyer” listing. Active members who wish to have their contact information displayed for the public on the CLSA website will be able to opt in to this service. Our administrative staff fields numerous calls from individuals in need of canonical assistance, and this listing will assist those individuals in their search. You can read more about this listing in the General Secretary’s report on page 6.

Plans for the convention in Cleveland are coming together. The theme is Processes Today: Evolution and Reality. We will begin with a keynote address on Synodality from Bishop Robert Barron and will have major addresses from Monsignor Alejandro Arellano Cedillo, the Dean of the Rota, and Father Bob Oliver on Book VI. There will be presentations on the penal law process, the canonization process, tribunal processes, religious law, and more. I look forward to greeting you there and learning together with you. A preliminary schedule can be found on page 2. Complete registration information will be ready this summer.

As we move through Lent and the approach of spring and Easter, let us pray for the health and well-being of all our members, and the continued improvement of the pandemic throughout the world.

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CLSA Scholarships

Do you know someone studying canon law who could benefit from financial assistance with tuition costs? The CLSA scholarship is open to students of canon law enrolled in a licentiate or doctoral program. Please visit the [Canon Law Society of America Scholarship page](#) for the application, and supplementary requirements. Share this page with the students you know!

**Applications are due by April 15, 2022.** The name(s) of the 2022 recipient(s) will be announced in the June eNewsletter.

If you wish to contribute to this year’s scholarship appeal, you may send a check made payable to “CLSA Scholarship Fund” to the Administrative Office:

Canon Law Society of America  
415 Michigan Avenue, NE  
Suite 101  
Washington, DC 20017-4502

Members may also [donate online](#). All donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for tax purposes.

It is through the generosity of members and donors that the Society is able to furnish these academic scholarships. Thank you for your contribution!

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Call to All Members

**Submissions for Roman Replies and CLSA Advisory Opinions Due July 15, 2022**

This annual publication continues to be a great service to the Society’s membership because of the practical insights and direction it provides. Consider being a part of this year’s edition!

If you are a CLSA member who has been researching an interesting canonical question that might benefit other canonists in interpreting and applying canon law, please consider composing an advisory opinion for this year’s edition. Or, if you have come across a canonical question to which you would like another canonist’s response, submit the question and we will try to find a member to formulate an Opinion.

Have you received a reply from Rome that could be of interest, or do you have correspondence from the Roman Curia that could benefit other canonists? Submit these replies for publication in the Roman Replies section of this year’s edition.

Opinions (or questions) and replies should be sent to the [Donna Miller](#) by July 15, 2022.
CLSA Vice President Steps Down

The CLSA Board of Directors has received the resignation of Father Paul Hartmann, CLSA Vice President/President-Elect. Last month, Fr. Hartmann was appointed Associate General Secretary of the USCCB, and he wrote the following letter to the CLSA Board of Governors. With his permission, we are sharing it with our members. We continue to be grateful for Fr. Hartmann’s service to the CLSA and wish him well in his new position.

Thank you for your recent message of congratulations on the announcement of my appointment as Associate General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The prayers and good wishes of so many members of the CLSA, and its Board of Governors, is sincerely appreciated. As you know well, having been elected to the position of Vice President/President-Elect of the CLSA was a personal and professional high point in life.

With that in mind, it is with sadness, but after much prayer, I feel it necessary to resign my position as Vice President of the CLSA effective immediately. For this decision I have sought diverse advice and counsel. Among those to whom I reached out are former CLSA presidents and former General Secretaries of the USCCB, both lay and clergy.

As way of brief explanation, I offer three key points which entered my considerations:

1. Personal time and well-being. All indications are that both the workload, and the process of acclimation for someone coming from outside the organization will make my new role daunting. It is also known that when the time comes, succession to the presidency of the CLSA itself requires a commitment of a great deal of time and effort.

2. Potential conflicts of interest. At present, and likely into the future, both the CLSA and the USCCB will have expectations that recusals would be necessary to avoid conflicts of interest in matters of interaction. While USCCB staff can serve well as CLSA Consultors, the more singular roles of a Society officer and Conference general secretary, would mean that recusals would leave either or both organizations ill-served.

3. Desired independence of the CLSA. To serve its scholarly and professional mission, the CLSA has never sought public juridic personality under the norms of cc 116-118 of the Code of Canon Law. This desire for independence can be commended, and to have one person functionally serve at the heart of both organizations in these positions seems incompatible.

I am sincerely thankful for the education, opportunities, and recognitions that the CLSA has afforded me. I am confident that the membership of the Society will understand the rationale and necessity of this decision.

The most difficult aspect of this decision is the knowledge that others will now have to take up greater responsibilities and tasks for the Society. Be assured of my continued support and prayers for your work, and that of the Canon Law Society of America.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Very Reverend Paul B. R. Hartmann

Fr. Hartmann’s Board position will remain vacant. In keeping with Article IX of the CLSA Constitution, the Board of Governors has asked the Committee on Nominations to present at least two candidates for the office of Vice President/President-Elect and at least two candidates for the office of President. Active members whose dues are current and who are in attendance at the 84th Annual Business Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, October 12 in Cleveland will be eligible to vote.
Greetings, fellow members! Here we are, well into the new year, and I have found myself contemplating apologetics in recent weeks. We in the administrative office frequently receive emails through our website and from callers who ask us for help in understanding an issue or in finding a canonist to assist them. Normally, I refer these inquirers to a canonist who is on the list that I maintain of members who are willing to be contacted by someone who is looking for a canonist. Recently, a now nearly-retired inquirer wrote directly to me to ask:

When I was in seminary, I was taught that there was a canon law that covered unintentional mistakes by the celebrant at Mass or at the administration of the sacraments. This canon law prevented the baptisms or the Mass being ‘invalid.’ Is this not true? Can the CLSA help clear up this story of invalidating of hundreds of baptisms by a priest intending to baptize individuals into the Catholic Church but using a wrong word?

Needless to say, I got that twinge of doubt that many of us canonists get when it comes to explaining ecclesia supplet—in comprehensive exams or to a non-canonist—in words and phrases that are not circular or unintelligible. My subsequent emails with the inquirer were thoughtful and revealing. It turns out that, although he was seeking to understand, he mostly was very frustrated with the negative publicity that has ramped up against the Catholic Church—his Church—in the wake of yet another instance of a cleric who “simply used the word we instead of I” when administering the sacrament of baptism. Undoubtedly, we all have read the comments on social media and online news reports that pull no punches in their attacks on “Church leaders” who dared—arbitrarily, in their opinions—to declare baptisms and sacraments invalid in the wake of these “harmless mistakes.” “What’s the big deal?” the world seems to be asking, while I am asking, “Where is the Excedrin?”

My intention is not to offer any kind of suggestions or resources to address these concerns and criticisms. Rather, sometimes I find it helpful just to express to fellow canonists and others who work for the Church my own frustration with these reactions by those around us—including friends, neighbors, and family. You get it. You have also been there. You share the frustration.

When a reporter from the Associated Press called last week and wanted talk to a canonist to answer some questions as he wrote a follow-up article on this same issue, I worried that I would not be able to address his questions adequately. Instead, I put him in contact with a trusted canonist whom I had confidence could do just that. I was not in the right frame of mind for apologetics that day.

In the end, I am reminded that we members of the CLSA should and must revisit the preamble to our Constitution from time to time. Here it is, for the sake of convenience:

We, the members of the Canon Law Society of America, ever eager to fulfill our role in the Church through the proper use of canon law, hereby proclaim our desire to promote the use of every method of serving God’s people that comes under the concept of law. Mindful that church laws ought to be pastoral in character and made only to serve the people of God, we accept our responsibility as Christians trained in canon law to continue research and study and to assist any members of Christ’s Body singularly or collectively, laity or clergy, who will welcome the deliberations, research and common opinion of this Society.

The emphasis is mine. I shall ponder these particular phrases from the preamble throughout the approaching season of Lent. When I write my next newsletter article, we will be past Lent, Easter, and the Ascension, and maybe even Pentecost. As we weather this and other storms in the coming months, may we all be mindful of the pastoral character demanded of our laws, as well as their role—and ours—in serving the people of God. Wishing you all the richest of spiritual blessings during the approaching liturgical season.
As sure as the cycles of nature, life around the office is settling into a cycle of its own. This month, we begin our annual Lenten scholarship appeal; next month, we’ll start sending dues notices; and not long after that, we’ll go into full convention-prep mode.

Lenten Scholarship Appeal

One of the most enjoyable parts of being General Secretary (and there are many!) is getting to know some of the scholarship applicants. They always express their gratitude to CLSA members for helping alleviate some of the financial burden of their studies. I hope we can count on your support this year. The reality is that a very small percentage of our members contribute to the scholarship fund, and we want to continue to grow the fund for future canonists. I know your charitable dollars are personal and limited, and if you are able to send even a modest donation, I can promise you that we will use it well. You can donate online; it’s quick and easy, and there is even a place to make a note if you are donating in honor or memory of someone. Thank you in advance for your generosity this Lent.

As a reminder, the scholarship applications are due April 15, so if you know someone who is about to begin their studies (or is in the middle of studies), there is still plenty of time to apply for a scholarship! You can find complete application information here.

Membership

Of course, talking to members is another great part of the job, and as I mentioned in San Diego, we’d like you to help us build our member base. Our virtual New Member Open House last month gave us the opportunity to engage with some of our new members and to highlight how they can get the most out of their membership. You can use everything CLSA has to offer? Can you share the value of CLSA membership with just one colleague?

If you’re new to CLSA (or if you need a refresher), your annual dues must be paid by June 30 each year for the fiscal year beginning July 1. At last year’s convention, we committed to mailing dues notices in April to give everyone enough time to make their payment. Later next month, those will arrive in your mailbox, and we will send you an email reminder as well, in case you’d rather pay online. The dues you pay this spring will keep your membership current until June 30, 2023.

Keeping your dues current ensures that you always have access to CLSA’s benefits, such as publications discounts, free copies of the current Proceedings, free access to webinars and podcasts and the especially useful research database.

Your Online Profile

Let me say this about your online profile: please keep it updated. Why is this important?

- Your online profile tells us if you have an interest in serving on a committee, being a convention presenter, helping with a translation or editing project, or recording a podcast. Please keep your email current so we can contact you. You can add an alternate email, too.
- The personal address in your profile is where we send your copy of Proceedings. If you have moved or if there is a typo in your address, your book will be returned to us. As much as I wish we could track down everyone’s information, we just can’t.
- Your online profile connects you to your fellow members. You can join a special-interest group, message other members, and start conversations in your feed (similar to social sites).

Canonist Listing

I’m excited to tell you about a new feature on our website that we’re calling Find a Canon Lawyer. We get many calls from people from all over the United States who have canonical questions or who need a canon lawyer to assist with a case. The good news is that CLSA is recognized as the “go-to” source for reliable information. The downside is that it takes a good deal of staff time. The great news is that our website offers a convenient way to serve the people of God, promote our members, and free up some staff time.

This online feature will be a listing of Active members who wish to share their email address publicly. You can now choose to opt in to this listing by going into your online profile.

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General Secretary’s report, continued

Unless you specifically agree to be listed, your information will not appear publicly. Here is what you need to do:

- Be an Active member of the CLSA and be current with your dues.
- In the “Additional Information” area in your profile, where it says “I would like to be listed in CLSA’s Find a Canon Lawyer listing,” change the “No” to a “Yes.”
- Read the Code of Professional Responsibility.

The listing will not reveal all your information. It will only show your name; your city and state; and your email address.

The listing will be visible on the public side of the CLSA website once members have started adding to it. Because it is dynamically generated, you can change your information or remove yourself at any time. There is no cost to the members or the users for this service. We have added disclaimer language that indicates that being on this list is not an endorsement of services. Please note that the Board of Governors reserves the right to remove a canonist from the list at their discretion.

If you ever have a question or an idea or need help with something, please don't hesitate to contact me or Micaela in the office. You can reach us during business hours (Eastern time) at 202-832-2350. Micaela’s direct email is admin@clsa.org and mine is generalsecretary@clsa.org.

Welcome New CLSA Members!

Please join us in welcoming the following new members who have joined the Society between December 2021 and February 2022. If you wish to join the Society, or know someone who would be interested in becoming a member, please visit the ‘Become a Member’ page on our website.

- Rev. Ernie Carpio
  Bridge City, TX
- Dcn. Dean Collins
  Brookfield, WI
- Rev. Msgr. Mark Condon
  Little Falls, NJ
- Dcn. Joseph Ferme
  Rome, Italy
- Rev. Bartosz Kunat
  Biloxi, MS
- Rev. Stuart MacDonald
  Stevensville, ON, Canada
- Dcn. John McManus
  Stone Mountain, GA
- Rev. Dr. Tong Nguyen
  Yucaipa, CA
- Rev. Alberto Vargas
  Saginaw, MI

Help Us Build the Research Database

Fr. Mark Gantley, the Judicial Vicar from the Diocese of Honolulu, has been faithfully curating content for the database for all members to access. We encourage all members to help us build out this resource by submitting documents that we can add to the database.

The documents included in the database are those public and private documents:

- issued by the Holy Father or the Holy See
- issued by bishops’ conferences and other groupings of bishops
- issued by individual bishops if canonically noteworthy
- that have relevance in interpreting and applying canon law
- from persons or institutions involved in canonical controversies

We would also like to add sources of particular law from non-English-speaking countries translated into English. (Please provide how you would like your name to appear as translator.)

If you have documents or links to documents, please send them to Fr. Gantley at database@clsa.org.

Regional Meetings 2022

More information regarding planned Regional Meetings may be found on the CLSA website.

- March 8 - 10  Western Regional Conference
  Garden Grove, CA
- March 15 - 16  Texas Catholic Conference - Department of Judicial Vicars
  San Antonio, TX
- May 3 - 5  Northwest Regional Meeting
  Ashland, OR
- May 16 - 18  Eastern Regional Conference of Canonists & Midwest Region Canon Law Convention
  Cleveland, OH
- August 16 - 18  Oklahoma City Province
  Oklahoma City, OK