Presidential Reflections
Rev. John Donovan, JCL

I was warned by so many and knew in concept that I would need to hit the ground running when I took office as CLSA President. It has turned out to be such an understatement! These last two months have been very busy.

Recapping the Convention
Cleveland, the city, and the diocese were wonderful hosts of our 84th Annual Convention, October 10-13. There was great energy in the city due to the Guardians and Browns as many of us arrived, sharing our celebratory mood as we reconnected and gathered. Thank you, Bishop Edward Malesic, Bishop Michael Woost, Father Gary Yanus and the whole Tribunal staff, (especially Lee Ann Calvert)! Be sure to read through this newsletter for much more information on the convention. We are changing how you will get your 2022 Proceedings, so I encourage you to read the reports from our Executive Coordinator and our General Secretary.

I mention Proceedings, because I know you will want a copy. The convention presentations were solid. Our keynote from Bishop Robert Barron regarding Synodality was immensely helpful and has given direction to the BOG as we have formed the Strategic Visioning Committee (ad hoc) as dictated by a resolution passed at the business meeting. Earlier this year, the BOG commissioned an audit of the CLSA operations and governance. Staff and Board members were interviewed as well as several members of the Society. Developing a strategic plan was the strongest recommendation, with suggestions of areas to review, such as terms of office, job descriptions, the role of the BOG and much more. The resolution as proposed by the BOG calls for listening sessions, as the first order of business for the committee.

The goal of the BOG was to have former BOG members of various ages, with fresh eyes as well. The 2007 Future Initiatives Project (FIP) was comprised of Past Presidents, whose wisdom we have incorporated into this ad hoc committee. Rev. Paul Counce was President when the FIP was approved by the membership, and he has agreed to chair this two-year project. With Fr. Counce as chair, the committee members are Ms. Barbara Bettwy; Ms. Mary Gen Blittschau; Rev. Anthony Dill; Dcn. Matt Glover; Rev. Bruce Miller; Rev. Kevin Niehoff, OP; Dr. Lynda Robitaille; and Ms. Rebecca Ruesch. Rev. Jamin David and I will serve as BOG liaisons.

I truly expect that with input from the membership and the leadership of this creative committee, we will have a report in 2024 that will challenge us and move us forward. I hope you will all make your voices heard when listening sessions convene, perhaps at regional meetings, or certainly at the 2023 convention.

I want to thank Msgr. Victor Finelli for his continued service as our national Convention Chair. I also would like to thank him for his graciousness as a senior BOG member, who had his opponent sitting in on the last two BOG meetings. We both knew that whoever was elected could easily be overwhelmed with details that are continually being revealed. Back to my opening, an understatement!

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Congratulations to the newly-elected members of the
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CLSA Board: Very Rev. Kenneth A. Riley, Vice President/ President Elect; Rev. Jamin David, Treasurer; and Consultors Rev. Msgr. Stephen Doktorczyk and Dr. Benedict Nguyen.

Upcoming Plans

Fr. Riley and I have been busy making certain all committee positions are filled. I encourage everyone to fill out their committee interests in their online profile to make this process easier for next year. We held an online Committee Chair Orientation last month to give an overview of the year and make sure all the chairs were ready to tackle their respective mandates. Some of them have already met and are continuing their work from last year. If you want to read the 2022 committee reports, you can find them in the 2022 Convention Workbook that is linked in the Documents and Downloads area of your online Member Center.

Along with our Executive Coordinator, Donna Miller, Fr. Ken and I are making the initial plans for the long-postponed visit to the Roman dicasteries, which has not taken place since 2017. By now, you should have received my request for questions for the dicasteries. Please submit your questions via this online form no later than January 3, 2023. We will need to compile the questions and forward them well in advance.

In February, we are holding our third Open House for New Members. If you joined the Society in the last year, or if you just want a refresher about what CLSA can do for you, I invite you attend. There is no cost, and since it’s online, you can log in from wherever it’s convenient for you. The one-hour session begins at 8 p.m. EST on Wednesday, February 8. Click here to register! If you know some who is not a member of CLSA, but who would benefit from finding out more, please share this information with them.

There is so much more, but it is Advent, and I appreciate the stillness of this season that I am sure to carve out despite the hullaballoo that is pre-Christmas. May you have a blessed season of preparation and a Holy Christmas.

Bishop Mark Bartchak Receives 2022 Role of Law Award

CLSA President Dr. Lynda Robitaille presented the Role of Law Award to Bishop Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown, Pennsylvania at the CLSA Convention banquet in October.

In presenting the award, Dr. Robitaille noted, “Our recipient has served in tribunal ministry since 1982, at first parttime, then fulltime since 1986. He was appointed judicial vicar in 1992, and Director of the Office of Conciliation and Arbitration. The title of this office exemplifies what many of us know of him: a person who is always willing to listen, to see both sides, and to offer thoughtful ways forward.”

In his remarks, Bishop Bartchak reflected on the theme of mercy and the role of law. “Jesuit Father James Keenan reminds us that, over the centuries, Catholics have defined themselves by the works of mercy of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick. He says, ‘As the willingness to enter the chaos of another, mercy best conveys the actions of God who creates by bringing order out of chaos and who redeems by lifting out of the chaos of sin.’ These actions suggest what is fundamental to our vocation as canonists who have a unique ministry in the Church.”

Bishop Bartchak went on to describe the mercy canonists receive in their work. “Keenan explains that the mercy we need and desire is invoked and received in the liturgy of the Eucharist, which is absolutely central to our prayer, and therefore, it is central to our vocation as canon lawyers…”

“Without opportunities to encounter Christ in such an intimate way, we run the danger of being simply professionals who know the art and science of the law and its application. But it does impact the people we are to serve in canonical ministry so that they can have that encounter with Christ in and through the ministry entrusted to us,” he said.
Season’s Greetings! As I write this column, I note that some of you in the northeastern regions of the United States are digging out from under a mountain of Mother Nature’s frozen precipitation. Thanksgiving is just days away, and the record-breaking weather event in New England reminds me that I am very thankful to now live far from snow-prone regions. Not that weather is not a factor here in Florida where I live and work. I want to extend sincere thanks to those who offered their concern and prayers when we braced ourselves in September for Hurricane Ian and again in early November for Hurricane Nicole. No amount of preparation can ready us for such natural phenomena, so a healthy respect and lots of prayers are two of our best defenses.

With so much to distract us in our daily lives, I often refer to our CLSA Constitution and Bylaws to make sure that I am focusing my own work on furthering our Society’s stated purposes. Article II of our Constitution lays out those purposes, including the following (with my emphasis added):

- To respond to the practical canonical needs of all the people of God in the respective capacities in which they serve and benefit from the Church.
- To facilitate the interchange of canonical ideas, practices and decisions among canon lawyers, and other members of the Society.
- To cooperate with individuals and organizations doing research in other sacred sciences for the promotion of mutual interests.

To those ends, I had the opportunity to talk with a staff person at the Catholic Bar Association (CBA) in mid-November. This young organization was founded in 2014, and they have flourished so far, attracting nearly 200 Catholic attorneys and other interested persons into membership. I joined their ranks just over a year ago, so in mid-November when my dues renewal came up, I did a quick tour through the CBA website to find that at least six of our own CLSA member canonists are members of the CBA. (There may be others, but not everyone makes their profiles public.) Compare that to our own membership where 92 CLSA members have juris doctor degrees. Notably, CLSA member Bishop Thomas John Paprocki is the CBA’s Episcopal Advisor, and our Vice President/President-Elect Rev. Ken Riley is the outgoing CBA Chaplain. So there are definitely growing connections between our two organizations. Civil lawyers in the Society may be interested to know that the CBA’s annual conference allows attendees to earn CLE credits in several states. Unfortunately, this year the CBA’s convention took place the very same week in October as our CLSA convention, so that made it difficult for individuals to attend both events. Next year their conference will be October 26-28 in Arlington, VA, and I am told they have a terrific program lined up.

I mention all of this because the need has grown exponentially over the last twenty years for Catholic civil attorneys and canonists to work together to address and resolve numerous issues that affect the Faithful and the Church in general in the United States. We all know of situations where these related fields of legal practice overlap, the most obvious being penal and criminal law issues, First Amendment religious rights issues, bankruptcy involving U.S. dioceses in the midst of the sexual abuse crisis, and employment issues in Catholic schools. The need for canonists to weigh in on issues that may have seemed in the past to be purely in the civil realm is growing; I am a firm proponent of canonists learning as much as possible about civil law, and vice versa. A closer relationship between the CLSA and the CBA could put us on a collaborative course to find ways to nurture growth in both of our membership bases. Feel free to let me know your thoughts on the potential for such cooperative efforts.

Many of our convention presenters have submitted their written talks that will eventually be published in Proceedings 2022. Our editing staff has already begin formatting and editing the talks and varia, so we will do our best to get the publication ready in the Spring of 2023. We will not automatically send you a copy when it is ready as we have done in the past. We are asking members to go online and order a free copy in the CLSA store. The article on the next page has details how to ensure that you get your free copy.

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I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to Tim Olson and Fr. Peter Mottola for their ongoing work in organizing and overseeing the revision of the Clergy Procedural Handbook, and to Sr. Victoria Vondenberger, RSM, and Fr. Dan Smilanic for courageously undertaking an update of The Tribunal Handbook. We sincerely hope that these two publications will be ready for publication in 2023 as well.

Lastly, the fourth printing of our English translation of the Code of Canon Law is still under review as we await the necessary approvals to move it toward publication, and the revised commentary on the Code of Canon Law is also a work in progress as dozens of authors complete their assignments. Please pray for all who are working so diligently and selflessly on all these current publication projects.

May I join the chorus of those giving thanks for all of you, our incomparable members. Please know of my prayers for each of you as we prepare ourselves during the season of Advent to welcome the Son of Man, the fulfillment of the Law (Romans 10:4). Maranatha!

**HOW TO GET YOUR 2022 PROCEEDINGS**

We are changing the way we distribute Proceedings to members beginning with the 2022 edition. In the past, we have mailed this to all members whose dues were current, without knowing if their address was current or even if they wanted a copy. Many copies got returned to us because people had moved or their address was incorrect or the package was refused.

In our ongoing efforts to reduce costs, we are changing the process. One free copy of Proceedings will still be sent to members with current dues, but the difference is that now members will have to request it through our online store using a promo code. In order to get the book for free, you will have to be logged in to your account, be current with dues, and use the promo code by March 31, 2023,

**HERE IS HOW TO GET THE 2022 EDITION OF PROCEEDINGS SENT TO YOU WHEN IT IS READY NEXT SPRING.**

1. Log into your Member Center. (Call us if you need help logging on.)
2. From the CLSA store, search for 2022 Proceedings or click this link to go to the 2022 Proceedings page.
3. Add one copy to your cart.
4. In the box that says “Apply Promotion Code,” type MBR22PROCEED. This will give you a 100% discount on the book and free shipping until March 31, 2023.
5. Click the red “Check out” button.
6. The recipient information will populate with the information in your account. If it is not correct, please be sure to update the information in your account. (Updating it in the shopping cart does not update your account.)
7. Click the red button that says “Proceed to Confirmation.”
8. If you have any questions logging on or ordering, please call us at 202-832-2350.

**Please note:**

- Proceedings will not be ready to ship until the spring of 2023.
- You can pre-order your free copy at any time until March 31, 2023.
- Members may order only one free copy with the promo code.
- If you do not request your free copy by March 31 with the code, you can still order a copy, but it will be at the member list price.
From the Desk of the General Secretary
Kathleen Butler

It’s always a bit incongruous as the calendar year winds down and the CLSA work year winds up. Since the convention, there has been little time to slow down. We have taken some of the lessons learned last year and put some new efficiencies into place.

One of these has been an online committee chair orientation, which took place just a couple of weeks ago. CLSA leadership kicked off the committees’ work year with new online resources and a better historical record-keeping process for their work. I mentioned this at the convention, but it bears repeating: please update your online profile. When the Board is forming committees, your interest areas help us consider possible committee members. Given our population of members, a relatively small percentage have built out that area. Scroll to the Additional Information area and look for the heading called “Committees you are interested in serving on.” Consider your expertise and interests and choose two or three that would best serve CLSA.

CLSA Convention News

Thank you to everyone who joined us in Cleveland. We had 365 registered, which I’m told is one of our larger turnouts in recent years. Our Guidebook usage was up from last year, and I appreciate everyone who used the Guidebook evaluation forms.

If you were unable to attend, the Convention Workbook is available in the Documents and Downloads area of your Member Center.

If you haven’t already seen the results of the election, you can read about them here.

Bishop Barron’s Keynote Available Online
Bishop Robert Barron’s Keynote Address was recorded, and we have made that recording available on our website. It is linked in your Member Center under the Timely Topics Podcast Series. Knowing there may be a wider audience for this keynote, it is available for anyone to listen to, even if they are not a member of CLSA. You can share the link with those who might be interested.

Members Approve Dues Increase
At this year’s convention, members voted to increase the membership dues for the 2023-2024 year. Your annual dues invoice that will be available next spring will reflect the new amounts.

  Active & Associate Members ....................... $350
  Student Members .......................................... $175

Keeping your dues current ensures you receive the convention Proceedings for free, have access to CLSA webinars and podcasts at no cost (including the archived ones), and have 24/7 access to the CLSA research database through your Member Center. Also, CLSA membership provides you significant discounts on our publications. We don’t yet know the price of the fourth printing of the Code of Canon Law, but the member price will be considerably lower than the list price.

Organizational Audit
As then-President Lynda Robitaille discussed in the last newsletter, the Board brought a resolution to the membership after studying an audit of the organization. CLSA members overwhelmingly supported creating an ad hoc Strategic Visioning Task Force to understand how the Board of Governors, committees, and staff function in their present roles and to recommend ways to meet future needs and challenges.

We hope all members will make their voices heard as we envision a stronger Society for all.

Proceedings Distribution is Changing
Beginning with the 2022 edition (available spring 2023), we are changing the way we distribute Proceedings. The book is still available to you at no cost as a benefit of your paid membership. However, we are now asking that members order a copy online (again, at no cost) in order to cut down on the misdirected mail, undeliverable mail and in some cases, unwanted mail.

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Because we have simply mailed a book to every current member in the past, we have mailed books to addresses where people no longer live or addresses that were invalid, because not everyone keeps his/her address information current. Not only are we losing money on the cost of printing books that are not being delivered, we are losing money on the postage.

We have created a promotional code that is good through March 31, 2023, so you can go online any time before then order your free copy. After that time, you can still get 2022 Proceedings at the regular member price. I recommend going online right away to pre-order your copy. Remember, the book won’t ship until spring of 2023. We are working on Proceedings now, and once all the presenters have sent in their texts, we can begin to finalize everything.

Scholarship Deadline April 15

Do you know someone who is starting a JCL or JCD program next year? CLSA’s scholarship applications can be sent in at any time, but the deadline is April 15 for the 2023-2024 academic year. Those in a licentiate program receive a scholarship prorated over the course of their studies. Those entering a doctoral program may be eligible for a one-year scholarship for the coursework year of their studies.

Complete information and application instructions are available on our website.

Scholarship awards are possible through the generosity of CLSA members. Our annual Lenten appeal is one way we raise funds for this important program, and we thank you for supporting future canonists. If you would like to make a donation, you can do so easily on our website or mail us a check. If you would like to make your donation in honor of someone, you can note that as well.

New Member Open House

Calling all new CLSA members! Have you joined CLSA in the last year? We are hosting a New Member Open House on February 8, 2023 at 8 p.m. Eastern time. CLSA President Rev. John P. Donovan, JCL, and CLSA Executive Coordinator Donna Miller, JCL, will introduce you to the many ways CLSA can assist you in your work for the Church. This will be a live, one-hour presentation, and we’ll have time for Q&A at the end. Register today by clicking this link. There’s no cost to attend, and we can (almost) guarantee you’ll learn something new when you attend.

Not a new member but want to see everything CLSA has to offer? Know someone who might want to learn more about CLSA before joining? All are welcome to join the webinar!

And Finally…

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that Mark Francisco, our new Membership Coordinator, was starting in mid-September. Mark is a tremendous addition to our staff and is rapidly mastering our membership database. If you need any help accessing your account, he is ready to assist. You can reach him at 202-832-2350 or membershipcoordinator@clsa.org.

In Memoriam

Scholarship Donation

Rev. Robert J. Kaslyn, SJ

TRIBUNAL AUDITS

One of the ways CLSA serves the Church is by helping (arch)dioceses who may want an outside review of their tribunal’s processes and procedures. CLSA can provide a team of experienced reviewers, who will come to your tribunal, review procedures, interview staff, and write a confidential report.

If your tribunal is in need of assistance, the first step is for the bishop to contact the CLSA President, Rev. John Donovan, at president@clsa.org or via mail at 415 Michigan Ave. NE, Suite 101, Washington, DC 20017. He will work with the bishop (or his representative) to create a plan and appoint reviewers.

There is no cost for this service, although the tribunal is responsible for the reviewers’ travel and lodging expenses.
WELCOME NEW CLSA MEMBERS!

Please join us in welcoming the following new members who have joined the Society between September 2022 and November 2022. If you wish to join the Society or you know someone who would be interested in becoming a member, please visit the “Member Types” page on our website.

Ms. Amy Strickland
Arlington, VA

Ms. Alexis Park
Washington, DC

Msgr. David J. Baumgartner
Crookston, MN

Mrs. Annette Hrywna
Windsor, ON

Ms. Juliette Marsh
Glendora, CA

Mr. Peter S. Brissette
Cranston, RI

Rev. Timothy Smith
Bowdle, SD

Rev. William Thompson
Winona, MN

Ms. Laura Bertone
Corte Madera, CA

Rev. Thulani Gubula
Komani, South Africa

Rev. Andrew Kinstetter
Washington, DC

Rev. Peter Chineke
Decatur, IL

Br. James Monserate
Sampaloc, Philippines

Rev. Cyril Pinchak
Shaker Heights, OH

Rev. Gabriel Okafor
Morro Bay, CA

Rev. Myviet Train
Carthage, MO

Rev. Mr. Jacob Sessions
Chelsea, AL

Mr. Pat Fitzgerald
Abilene, TX

Mr. Robert Forlenza
Johnstown, CO

Rev. Michael J. Burbeck
Raleigh, NC

Rev. Seth M. Lemaire
Abbeville, LA

Sr. Amanai Ursula A. Lutena Faleono
Sydney, Australia

Rev. Bill Stimpson, Jr.
Roseville, MI

Ms. Elizabeth Ong
Christchurch, NZ

Rev. John Maksym
Mt. Clemens, MI
Scenes from the 2022 CLSA Convention

“The obligation to adhere to the truth is an obligation of divine right. This said obligation evokes another obligation, also of divine origin, that involves the application of suitable means to travel the path towards truth and justice.”

Msgr. Alejandro Arellano, Dean of the Roman Rota