

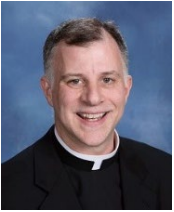
Canon Law Society of America

DECEMBER 2023

A QUARTERLY eNEWSLETTER FROM THE SOCIETY

Presidential Reflections

Very Rev. Kenneth Riley, JCL



As I've begun this year honored and privileged to serve as your President, publicly I want to shout out a huge thank-you to all our BOG members who dedicate so much time and passion to assisting all of us with the work, witness, and efforts of our Society. I also offer a big, heartfelt thank-you to our staff, General Secretary Kathleen Butler, Executive Coordinator Donna Miller, and Membership Coordinator Mark Francisco, as well as to Rev. John Donovan, our Past President, for making my transition into this awesome responsibility so supported and aided by their gracious kindnesses and assistance!

Committee Appointments

One of the first tasks of the incoming president is to ensure committees are formed in accordance with their stated mandates. In the last few years, we have gotten off course slightly, so I committed to resetting the committees to their proper mandates and composition. Our BOG was quite deliberate in broadening committee membership to include first-time members from various parts of the nation with varying years of canonical experience, among other aspects. Thank you to all who agreed to serve us in committee work.

When we were reviewing committee interests in our members' profiles, I was surprised to discover that just over 25% of members have indicated an interest in serving on committees. As we highlighted at the convention, we rely on the information in your profile, so if you have an interest, please make sure you have noted two or three committees where your skills and interests would best benefit the Society.

Strategic Visioning Survey Results

I hope you have had time to review the [results of the Strategic Visioning Task Force's survey](#).

Among information I gleaned from reading the unfiltered remarks is the very real tension facing balancing monies raised with services desired, particularly in needs of enhancing:

- CLSA database
- Publications and webinars
- Digital engagement
- Community building and networking, and
- Membership recruitment and retention

This is particularly challenging as our fiscal policies direct that "the rationale underpinning these policies asserts the premise that operating costs for the Society are to be covered by dues revenue of the membership. Funds to undertake projects on behalf of the Society are to be received from publications revenues. Convention and workshops should be self-supporting." How the BOG and others are going to navigate "*dues* fund operating; *publications* fund projects and services" will require much prayer and work in both the short and long terms.

Three initial ponderings from the survey stood out to me, and the BOG will be discussing them this year:

- 1) Publishing committee reports throughout the year on our website rather than only a wrap-up in the convention workbook and *Proceedings*;
- 2) Considering convention seminars with an A & B part to give more time for more depth to the same participants; and
- 3) Sending an email blast to the membership when law changes are announced.

It will be most interesting to learn the full recommendations and insights from the Strategic Visioning Task Force when we gather in Albuquerque next October.

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Presidential Reflections *from page 1*

Convention Evaluations

Thank you to everyone who completed evaluations this year. I have read every comment. There seems to be a disconnect or a misunderstanding of the purpose frequently grounding the convention Keynote Address. Most years, this address is to be understood as interdisciplinary and not strictly canonical in nature. Why? The CLSA Constitution offers insight. I have highlighted some examples below.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this Society shall be:

1. To promote the pastoral ministry of the Church.
2. To cooperate in the continuous revision and renewal of the universal law of the Church and with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in proposing new legislation, resolving current legal questions and implementing laws and structures which pertain to the vital life of the Church.
3. To encourage and participate in canonical research and study toward a constant renewal of canon law.
4. 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.
5. To facilitate the interchange of canonical ideas, practices and decisions among canon lawyers, and other members of the Society.
6. To cooperate with individuals and organizations doing research in other sacred sciences for the promotion of mutual interests.
7. To establish a dialogue and share ideas, proposals and insights, with other canon law societies in the world.

If you have not read our Constitution or Bylaws in a while — or ever — I encourage you to do so. You can [click this link](#) or go to the “About” dropdown menu on our website. As a membership organization, not a cafeteria consumer picking and choosing Societal services, publications, networking, and ministry, it is incumbent on each CLSA member to participate, to engage.

As always, many people offered comments on the evaluation on the rising costs of travel, hotel, and convention fees. Many pointed out that these costs prohibit attendance every year. We have received recommendations that CLSA should investigate using a retreat house or a smaller hotel to reduce costs.

For smaller meetings, those might have possibilities. However, we look at many factors when choosing a venue such as the proximity to an airport, guest rooms for upwards of 400 people that are not dormitory-style accommodations, enough meeting spaces for large plenary sessions, seminars, and a chapel, with food service to meet the various needs of our attendees. Our meeting-planning partner, Nix, does a wonderful job investigating venues through their network, but if you know of spaces that meet these parameters, [please let Kathleen know](#).

I understand not everyone can participate annually for varied reasons, but it is helpful, if at all possible, to budget for every other or even every third year when we quasi-rotate locations from East to Midwest to West.

Since we’re talking about our governing documents, Article V of the Constitution outlines the obligations of members. The second paragraph says that “each Active member has the obligation to support the Society in a positive manner, not merely by the payment of annual dues but also, and importantly, by active participation in general meetings, by presentation of papers at such meetings, by cooperation with the other members in all the projects of the Society.” Even though it’s a bit dated regarding ‘papers,’ I find this a bit challenging. I cannot honestly say that I have lived up to this over most years of my membership. Not everyone can attend the annual conventions with our general assembly meetings, but we can creatively dialogue ways and means as canonical colleagues to enrich our pastoral ministry. I will specifically create opportunities for us to do this in the coming year.

Maintaining Communications

One of the ways I’d like to dialogue is by creating additional touch points in the coming year between the



Board and members. I will be leading an online orientation for new members on February 6 at 8 p.m. EST. If you have joined the Society in the last year, or if you haven’t been in touch with us lately, I welcome you to join us. I will

review the benefits of CLSA membership and listen to your thoughts on how we might better serve you and the Church. There is no cost to attend, but you do need to [register here](#). Other touch points for other members are under discussion for facilitation, too.

Building for the Future

Just as we are looking forward to creating a stronger Society as a whole, I am working with the BOG to create a stronger foundation on which to build. This year, we are undertaking a comprehensive review of our internal documents, such as policies, job descriptions, committee handbooks, convention evaluations and more. Many of these are outdated or non-existent, and I hope to have this completed by the 2024 Convention.

I anticipate a very full year of the Board's "G" or governance engagement – so I ask your prayers for me, your Board, our staff, and all the members (present, future and past). We are only as vitally strong as our members ... and thank you for your canonical ministry and witness!

CLSA Elects New Members of Board of Governors at 85th Annual Convention

The Canon Law Society of America (CLSA) announces its 2023-2024 Board of Governors. Five new members were elected at the organization's 85th Annual Convention in Milwaukee in October. (See photo on page 10)

The Very Rev. Kenneth Riley, a priest of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO, and Vicar General, Moderator of the Curia, and Chancellor for the diocese was elected President. The Very Rev. Patrick Cooney, OSM, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Owensboro, KY was elected Vice President/President-Elect. Sister Rose Marie Timmer, a perpetually professed member of Institute of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, and Chancellor of the Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, was elected Secretary, a three-year term.

In addition, CLSA members elected two new consultants for three-year terms: Dr. Jeannine Marino, a laywoman from the Archdiocese of Washington, DC and Secretary of Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns for the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, and the Rev. Msgr. Robert Oliver, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, and Judicial Vicar for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Rev. John P. Donovan, Syracuse, NY, assumes the office of Past President. Additional members continuing on the Board of Governors are the Very Rev. Jamin S. David, Baton Rouge, LA, Treasurer; and Consultants Dr. David Castronovo, Beaumont, TX; Sister Tracey Sharp, SCRH, Rolling Hills, CA; the Rev. Msgr. Stephen S. Doktorczyk, Orange, CA; and Mr. Benedict T. Nguyen, Houston, TX.

From the Desk of the Executive Coordinator

Donna Miller, JD, JCL



My column is short this time because on November 18, my mother-in-law passed away unexpectedly, just as my husband and I arrived in San Antonio to spend Thanksgiving with her.

My mother-in-law was not Catholic; a hospice chaplain came to the hospital room during the last hour of Mom's life. She was amazingly supportive and knew just what to say—and not to say. I found myself literally leaning on her as we prayed and sang Mom into the afterlife. I will be forever grateful to this stranger for her Christ-like, comforting presence. That brief but meaningful encounter will stay in my heart forever. We even invited her to lead the prayer service at the funeral home and graveside on December 2 since my mother-in-law, although baptized, did not attend any church.

Since the convention, most of our convention speakers have submitted their texts for *Proceedings*; I have been steadily editing and formatting them. We will announce when you can pre-order your free copy in the spring. Our work on the commentary has made progress, thanks to the diligent efforts of Chorbishop John Faris and four new editors: Rev. Brian Austin, FSSP; Rev. Msgr. John Foster; Rev. Becket Soule, OP; and Dr. Siobhan Verbeek. There is still a great deal of work yet to be done, so we are not able to project a publication date yet. Thank you to our editors and all our contributors!

The Eastern code revision is also continuing to progress. We are working to secure the required permissions and a license agreement from the Vatican Secretary of State. The Eastern bishops also must approve the revised text. Completion of this revision will continue to be a primary focus for us in early 2024.

I wish to thank all who have offered kind words of condolence and support. Be assured of my prayers for all of you as we prepare for our Lord's birth. Maranatha!

Sr. Nancy Bauer, OSB Named 2023 Role of Law Recipient

The Canon Law Society of America (CLSA) named Sister Nancy Bauer, OSB, JCD, the 2023 Role of Law Award recipient at the 85th Annual Convention in Milwaukee in October. The award was presented by CLSA President Rev. John Donovan.

Each year CLSA presents its Role of Law Award to an individual considered to be outstanding in the field of canonical science. The Board selects a person who demonstrates a pastoral attitude and a commitment to research and study; who participates in the development of law; who is willing to respond to needs or practical assistance; who facilitates dialogue and the interchange of ideas within the Society and with other groups.

Sister Nancy drew from the Benedictine charism in her acceptance remarks. "The ancient monastic rules were among the earliest forms of legislation within the Church, and the Rule of Benedict is among the few still in use today," she pointed out.

"The Rule is a hybrid sort of document. It is a spiritual text. It is wisdom literature. It contains a liturgical ordo. But it is also a code, a book of rules or regulations to order a community toward its proper end. As someone who has lived according to this Rule for more than 40 years, I am convinced it does have something significant to contribute to our understanding and practice of church law."

Concluding her remarks with the first word of the Benedictine Rule, *audire*, Sr. Nancy said, "Listen. Listen carefully. Listen with the ear of your heart.



Listen for the voice of Christ in the voice of petitioners, respondents, witnesses, and clients. Listen for the voice of Christ in all those who call on you for canonical assistance." The full text of Sister Nancy's remarks will be published in the 2023 *Proceedings*.

From the Desk of the General Secretary

Kathleen Butler



Our 85th convention in Milwaukee was a wonderful few days with more than 400 attendees. Our local hosts were warm and welcoming, and our Installation Mass at the [Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist](#) was beautiful. We are grateful to Most Reverend Jerome Listeki, JCD, who designated the CLSA Scholarship Funds as the beneficiary of the Wednesday collection. Amazingly, we collected **\$2,023** in donations that evening.

Thank you for embracing our convention Guidebook this year. The spike in users was thrilling to see! It is still live both on the app and [desktop version](#), so if there was a session handout you missed, you still have time to download it. Many attendees used the online evaluations as well, which allowed us to collect your comments in a much more timely manner. The Board, staff, and I have read every comment and have already made some changes as a result.

We are also grateful to the local [Millennial Catholic Gentlemen/JP2 Men's Group](#), who shared their "mobile sacristy" (photo of their travel trailer below) to make sure we had everything we needed for onsite liturgies. Their ministry is truly unique.

As always, we look forward to the end of the year since it's a little slower in the office. It affords us time to catch our breath after the convention before we launch into a



new year. We're taking the lessons we learned in the last 12 months and making adjustments. Let me highlight a few of these lessons and tell you how we will be implementing what we learned.

Giving You Control of Your Information

At the convention, Mark Francisco, our membership coordinator, and I demonstrated some of the things you can do in your CLSA member profile. If you need a copy of your dues invoice or a receipt for a book, for instance, you can log in and print one out whenever you need it. We're always happy to help you, but our system gives you access to what you need, anytime you need it. Several people told me afterward they were surprised to learn they could do those things.

In this newsletter and subsequent ones, we will provide screenshots and step-by-step instructions to show you how to find various kinds of information.

Giving You Access to Resources

Speaking of the member benefits, remember that your online Member Center gives you 24/7 access to many resources as well. For instance, the *2023 Convention Workbook* is posted under **Documents and Downloads**. You can read the officers' reports, final committee reports, the 2024 budget, and the FY 23 audit report. We have been providing this for a few years now, so there is transparency in what CLSA does and how CLSA spends its money. Older issues of *Proceedings* and *Roman Replies* are available as free PDFs when you are signed in as are previous webinars and podcasts.

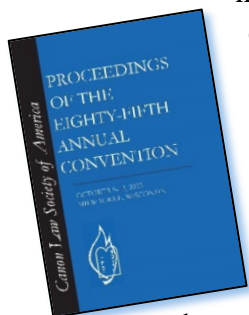
Opportunities to Serve CLSA

I have been talking about this for some time, but your online profile is the hub for CLSA activities and communications. Only 27% of our eligible members have indicated an interest in serving on committees within their member profile. The Board works to diversify our committees. There is turnover each year and we need new committee members. Please double-check the information in your profile. Scroll to the Additional Information area and look for the heading called "Committees you are interested in serving on." Consider your availability, expertise and interests and choose *two or three* that would best serve CLSA.

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Ordering 2023 Proceedings

Last year, we piloted a new process for mailing *Proceedings* to members, and the Board has decided to make that a permanent process. Receiving a free copy of *Proceedings* each year is a benefit of your membership. Last year, we changed our process from simply sending a copy to everyone in our member database to sending a copy to everyone who requested it. We did this to save on printing and postage costs we incur sending the book to people who don't want it or sending it to undeliverable or outdated addresses.



We learned a number of lessons. I expected there to be some discomfort and confusion in changing to a new system, and there was. Taking orders in December was too early, we

learned. Therefore, we will announce via email and the March newsletter when and how to order your 2023 copy. Another lesson we learned was that this process ensured members reviewed and updated their contact information, so we had fewer dues notices returned for bad addresses, which helped bring in dues revenue on time. Please keep an eye on your emails and our social channels in early 2024 for ordering information.

We also learned that our member engagement with our communications is low, so we will ask all of you, who regularly read our newsletters, to share the information with your colleagues when it's time to order.

Morrissey Membership Accepting Applicants

I'm excited to tell you that the membership category created in honor of the late Fr. Frank Morrissey, OMI, is now accepting applications. [Complete information](#) and the application are available on our website. The deadline for materials is **March 1**. Please share this news with your network, especially those overseas.



New Member Open House

Calling all new members! Have you joined CLSA in the last year? We are hosting a New Member Open House on **February 6, 2024 at 8 p.m. Eastern time**. CLSA President Ken Riley, 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!**

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 2024-2025 academic year.

Scholarships are possible through your generosity. 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.

And Finally...

Thank you to all our members who have reached out, paid dues, bought books, made donations, participated in the convention, volunteered in numerous ways, sent us nice emails, and generally been so supportive of our small but mighty staff. We appreciate you.

Can't access your account?

Forgot your password or user name?

Give us a call!

202-832-2350

CLSA Creates Membership Category to Honor Fr. Francis Morrissey, OMI

CLSA has created a Morrissey Membership category in honor of the late Rev. Francis Morrissey, OMI (1936-2020). A recipient of CLSA's 1990 Role of Law Award, Fr. Morrissey often personally provided resources and professional advice to canonists worldwide, particularly in areas of very limited finances.



The Morrissey Membership category is designed to ensure that canonists with limited financial resources outside of North America have access to CLSA's rich library of materials. Two two-year, non-voting memberships may be awarded to up to three people from a single Diocese, Eparchy, Institute of Consecrated Life or Society of Apostolic Life each year by a subcommittee of the CLSA Board specifically convened for this review. To honor the spirit of Fr. Morrissey's work, preference will be given to applicants outside of North America, accepted from

all areas of the world. Unlike the CLSA scholarships, applicants are not required to be U.S. citizens.

The Very Rev. Kenneth Riley, CLSA President, notes, "Fr. Morrissey was a giant in our canonical community. His selfless gifts of time and mentorship around the world will live on through this named membership. Not only was Fr. Morrissey a vital member of CLSA, but he traveled

extensively, even when ill, to instruct canonists around the world, sometimes even at risk of physical danger in parts of the world hostile to Catholicism."

The first two-year Morrissey Memberships become available beginning with the July 2024 membership year. **Applications are due March 1** of each year, although they may be submitted at any time. [Full details of the membership](#), including qualifications, can be found on the CLSA website at clsa.org.

CLICK HERE FOR FULL DETAILS OF THE MORRISSEY MEMBERSHIP

CLSA Offers Reviews for Tribunal Effectiveness

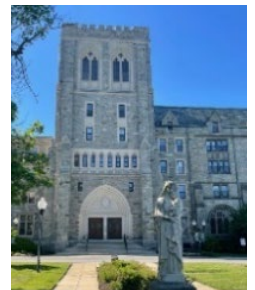
One of the ways CLSA serves the Church is by helping (arch)dioceses who may want an outside review of their tribunal's processes and procedures. CLSA can provide a team of experienced reviewers, who will come to your tribunal, review procedures, interview staff, and write a confidential report.

If your tribunal is in need of assistance, the first step is for the bishop to contact the CLSA President, Very Rev. Kenneth Riley 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.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE FOR NEW MEMBERS

February 6, 2024 8 p.m. EST

New CLSA members and those interested in learning more are invited to join us online and meet CLSA President Very Rev. Kenneth Riley, JCL, to learn how CLSA can help you:



- Get more out of your CLSA membership
- Access member-only resources
- Become a better servant of the church
- Be a more effective canonist

Click this ad to register!

We look forward to seeing you online!



CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA
www.clsa.org

WELCOME NEW CLSA MEMBERS!

Please join us in welcoming the following new members who have joined the Society between September 2023 and November 2023. 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.

Rt. Rev. Seraphim Mary Gondek, OFM
Ottawa, ON, Canada

Fr. Martin J. Leopold
San Antonio, TX

Mr. Roger L. Parra-Villasmil
Chicago, IL

Rev. Curtis Meris
Willemstad, Curaçao

Fr. Kyle Poje
Bethesda, MD

Rev. Joseph Petrone
Erie, PA

Mr. Brian Kilmartin
Brisbane, QLD, Australia

Fr. Valentine Edoize Ossai, SJ
Washington, DC

Rev. Alberto J. Chavez Godoy
Washington, DC

Fr. Jon Norman Tveit
Washington, DC

Fr. Alan Soto Hopkins
Nogales, AZ

Rev. Alex Christian Kramer
Des Moines, IA

Ms. Sydney LeBlond
Rome, Italy

Rev. Jonas C. Achacoso
Woodside, NY

Mr. Adam Rust
Jackson, TN

Mr. Claude Roy
Montreal, QC, Canada

Mr. Dave Wyrwich
Biloxi, MS

Fr. Shane Lynch
Massena, NY

SAVE THE DATE!

CLSA Annual Convention
October 14-17, 2024
Albuquerque, New Mexico



85th Annual CLSA Convention



Educational seminars – presentations will be printed in the 2023 *Proceedings*



Wednesday Installation Mass: Most Rev. Jerome Listeki, Archbishop of Milwaukee, presides at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

Newly-elected Board members: Rev. Msgr. Robert Oliver, Consultor; Very Rev. Kenneth Riley, President; Dr. Jeannine Marino, Consultor; Very Rev. Patrick Cooney, OSB, Vice President/ President-Elect; Sr. Rose Marie Timmer, RSM, Secretary.



Zabrina Decker photo

Thank you to all our hosts, volunteers, exhibitors and sponsors for their support!

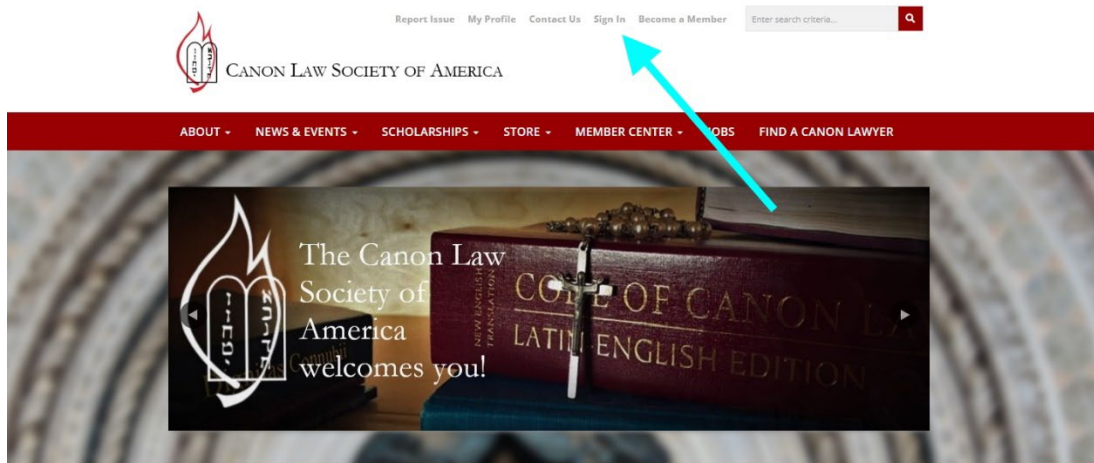


UPDATING AND USING YOUR CLSA PROFILE

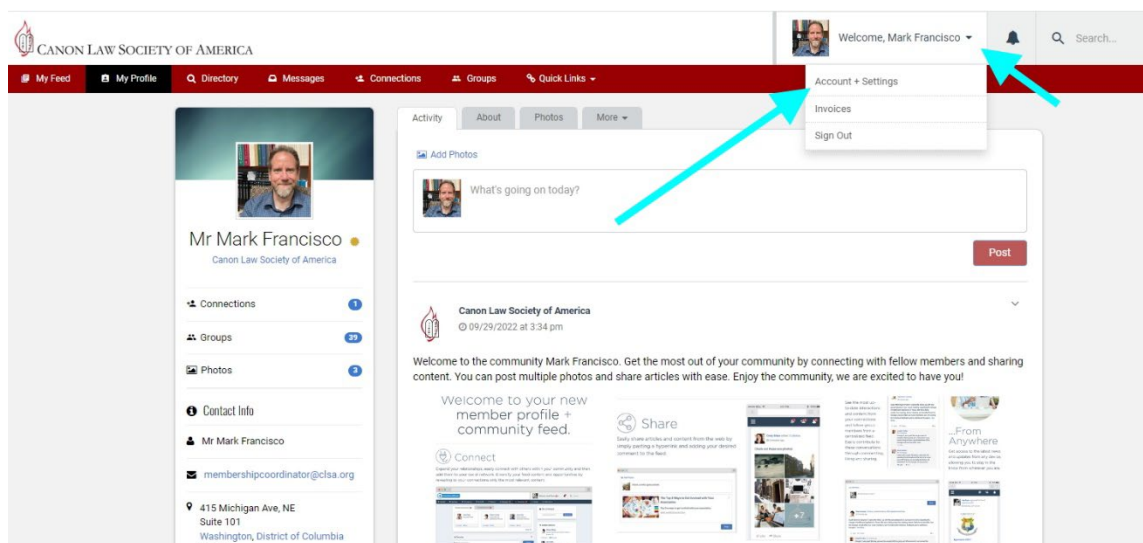
BY MARK FRANCISCO

You can use the guide below to familiarize yourself with the basic features of your cls.org member profile and the many ways it can help you connect with your fellow members. Future guides will explore additional features such as accessing invoices and making purchases through the online store.

As always, the first step is to login to cls.org using your username and password. If you have any difficulties logging in, don't hesitate to contact the Administrative Office at (202) 832-2350 or email me at membershipcoordinator@cls.org and we'll help you out!



Once you're signed in, click on the **“Welcome, ...”** dropdown in the upper right of the screen and select **“Account + Settings”** to update your profile and preferences.



TIP!: Remember to Update your **Additional Information** section! This is a critical resource used by the Board of Governors to select members for service. If you're interested in getting more involved, let us know here! Also, be sure to select YES to being listed in CLSA'S **Find a Canon Lawyer** directory if you want members of the public to be able to contact you on canonical matters.

Finally, you can use your profile on CLSA.org to connect with other members in a variety of ways by using the red menu bar at the top of the screen. These options are:

1. **My Feed.** Similar to a Facebook feed—write and comment on messages and photos.
2. **My Profile.** Similar to a LinkedIn profile, this is your public Profile and what other members see when they look you up in the Directory.
3. **Directory.** Find, Connect to, and Message a CLSA member.
4. **Messages.** Your inbox for all internal CLSA website messages.
5. **Connections.** Other members that you are Connected with.
6. **Groups.** Use this function to Join and follow a Special Interest Group within the CLSA community such as those for *JCL Students*, *Judicial Vicars* and *Penal Law Practitioners*.
7. **Quick Links.** This dropdown allows you to Navigate back to the Main Website or to the CLSA Forums, which is another way to connect with your fellow canonists on topics of interests.

