

Canon Law Society of America

MARCH 2026

A QUARTERLY eNEWSLETTER FROM THE SOCIETY

Presidential Reflections

Dr. Diane Barr, JCD



As we continue our Lenten observances in preparation for the coming Resurrection of Easter, I wanted to make everyone aware of some changes that are taking place with the BOG and with the physical location of the CLSA offices.

Appointment of an Interim Secretary and Resignation of a Second-Year Consultor

In January, our elected CLSA Secretary Sister Rose Marie Timmer, RSM resigned from her position. As permitted under the CLSA Constitution and after consultation with the BOG and others, I have appointed Dr. Sioban Verbeek to serve in this role until the membership elects a new secretary at the coming 2026 Annual Convention in St. Louis.

In March, Dr. Felix Menendez resigned his position on the College of Consultors. He was midway through a three-year term, and I will be discussing the future of the vacancy with the other members of the BOG at the April meeting of the group.

New Address for the CLSA Offices

Beginning on April 1, 2026, the physical offices of the CLSA will be relocated to Gowan Hall on the

campus of The Catholic University of America. As a result, there will be a new mailing address and a new phone number for the CLSA beginning on that date. As a result, the office will be closed from March 25, 2026 to April 1, 2026 to allow the staff to get settled at this new location. The actual new physical address and phone number are listed below.

This also means that our staff at that location, Kathleen Butler and Mark Francisco, will be facilitating the move of furniture, files, etc. from the current site of the office at the Theological College to the new location. As anyone who has had to make a major move knows, this kind of transition after more than ten years in the current office space is a major task.

Why Move?

The BOG has continued to seek out ways to meet the goal of reducing expenses for the Society given that we have had to use our savings to address several years of deficits related to the preparation of the new CLSA commentary project. The BOG decided to make this move after studying several options including entering another lease with Theological College, seeking out rental of office space with other Catholic groups in the broader mid-Atlantic area (beyond DC), or establishing a virtual office.

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CLSA IS MOVING!

Please make a note of our new address
effective April 1.

620 Michigan Ave. NE
Gowan Hall #200
Washington, DC 20064
202-238-1460

Presidential Reflections *from page 1*

The Catholic University of America proposal provided the most cost-effective way forward for the office at this time without an especially long contractual period. The BOG felt it was important to make sure that it would be possible to transition to any other structures resulting from the possible changes that will be proposed by the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) and approved by the membership. In short, the BOG wanted to save money and make sure future changes could be made as needed.

The new arrangement is simply a rental agreement for space. It is not any kind of merger with the canonical faculty at CUA. The space itself is not in the same vicinity as the Department of Canon Law at CUA, but is closer to the DC subway stop. The CLSA remains independent of CUA as a non-profit corporation, and that will not change. Regardless of where you received your canonical degree, you will continue to receive the good service you have always experienced.

CRC Process Continues

The members of the CRC continue to work to envision the future of the CLSA. If you have not already, please add yourself to their CLSA group which is called “Open: Constitution Revision Feedback” (you can add yourself through your CLSA profile).

Also, please mark your calendar for the CRC virtual town hall that is scheduled for Friday, April 17, 2026 at 2 p.m. EDT. This meeting will be conducted via Zoom. You are essential to the success of this project! It is important to give your views now so the CRC can make sure they have heard from everyone ahead of the coming October convention.



BOG Committee on Advancement

The BOG also approved the creation of a BOG committee to be chaired by Mr. Benjamin Roodhouse. The success of this kind of effort is essential to keeping convention fees and CLSA dues down in years to come. This committee will be seeking out potential sponsors for CLSA-related purposes such as the underwriting the costs associated with a convention presentation or activity such as the convention liturgies or meals. If you think a particular entity or purpose would be a good group to approach for this financial support, please [email Mr. Roodhouse](#).

Publications

Recently, the BOG considered whether to recommend the reprinting of Rev. Larry Wrenn’s book, *The Invalid Marriage*. The late Fr. Wrenn gifted the copyright to the CLSA at the time of its original printing. Given the most recent sales information on the publication and the costs of printing, the BOG voted to recommend that it be made available to all members online rather than in paper form.

Committees

The CLSA committee chairs have submitted their reports for the membership, and you can find them on page 3. If you have an interest in committee service, please complete the online [Committee Interest Form](#). **Deadline: June 1.**

FROM THE TREASURER

By Fr. Chris Palladino, JCL

The budget process has started for the 2027 fiscal year, and my thanks to Kathleen Butler, the General Secretary, and past-Treasurer, Very Rev. Jamin David, for guiding and mentoring me along the way. We have nearly completed a thorough a line-by-line review of the budget and anticipated changes/enhancements. The first meeting of the newly constituted RAM Committee was held on March 13th (of all days!) to bring them up to date and it will reconvene prior to the April BOG meeting in Baltimore to discuss and, hopefully approve, the 2028 budget.

The Society is reliant on savings because publications income is down. And while the Commentary project appears to be within budgeted limits, it is still not anticipated to be published until mid-2027 or possibly 2028. I am not aware of any active projects or upcoming new publications that might create some interest and income for the Society and await the update from the Chair of PAB at the next meeting. That noted, the budget process has been focused on relying solely on income from member dues and reviewing areas for cost savings; affordability of dues; the annual convention; and many other areas.

For the past couple of years, the BOG and appointed subcommittee(s) have discussed finding consistent/stable annual convention locations that are convenient, enjoyable and reasonably priced. In my opinion, Orlando is a viable location for future conventions with a possible other stable location in San Diego or the surrounding area. Nix and Associates will be invited to investigate future locations for consideration and has been diligently working on sites for 2028 and beyond. This is to stabilize expenses and provide consistent income for the Society.

A major step to decrease expenses while maintaining a professional setting is the relocation of the CLSA offices to the CUA campus. I have contributed in a small way to the tireless work of the BOG subcommittee tasked to work with the staff in vetting the location and negotiating a lease. We visited the new location and spoke with the team from CUA in November 2025. My hope is that by April 2026 the move will be complete, and the cost effectiveness realized soon after.

Feel free to [contact me](#) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.



Lenten Scholarship Appeal Going on Now!

Can you support a canonist as part of your Lenten almsgiving this year?

See the letter from CLSA President Dr. Diane Barr on the last page of the newsletter for details!

CLSA COMMITTEE UPDATES

Based on requests from the membership through the Strategic Visioning Task Force's surveys, CLSA President Dr. Diane Barr, has continued the practice of asking committee chairs to provide updates for each of our quarterly newsletters. Committees meet on different schedules based on their mandates and/or project deadlines, so there may not always be a report from every committee in each newsletter. Most CLSA committees and task forces meet virtually. In-person meetings require approval of the Treasurer based on the Society's budget and the committee's anticipated workload. All committee chairs submit a final report for the convention booklet, which will be posted in your Member Center before the October Business Meeting.

Our website has a [listing of committees and their mandates](#) and a [roster of committee members](#).

Clergy Committee

The CLSA Clergy Committee met in person at the 2025 Convention and has continued since that time, as it was before then, in meeting electronically on a monthly basis. Noted in previous newsletter reports, our committee has focused its efforts on a project whose goal is to assist bishops and canonists (and those they serve) in more effectively addressing the challenges that exist in assigning clerics to public ministry when nuanced circumstances, canonical or otherwise, make such a ministry problematic. After further discussion, it has been decided that the Clergy Committee will present a seminar on this topic at the 2026 CLSA Convention. The presentation will be made by the members of the Clergy Committee, and the presentation will focus on hypothetical "case studies" that attempt to highlight various types of circumstances and situations that make the assigning of clergy (particularly priests) more problematic. As with other convention seminars, a paper on this topic (which will be updated to include discussion had at the seminar) will be included in the convention *Proceedings* that will be published in the normal course in the spring of 2027. Our committee will continue to meet on a monthly basis as we prepare for our seminar presentation in St. Louis.

Fr. Sean Bransfield, Chair

Constitution Revision Commission

We would like to thank you for your continued participation in the process of revising the Constitution. The CRC continues to meet online every week and is working well within our budget. The Board of Governors has established a Bylaws Committee that is working on the revision of our Bylaws. We are collaborating with them to make sure that these two governing documents align and are effective. We continue to collaborate with others whose input is needed for different aspects of this revision such as Lucy Johnson, our professional parliamentarian, whom you met at the convention in Orlando.

As you are aware, we have continually sought input from the membership by means of surveys and the Open Forum discussion at our last convention. Your input has been greatly appreciated and several recommendations have already been incorporated into the draft texts. Our most recent survey dealt with our Purpose as a Society as well as a proposal for moving to a system of Slate Elections. This proposal hinges on the Nominations Committee being elected by the membership. For those who have not yet completed this survey, please [click this link to provide feedback](#). The results of all of the surveys are available for your review at the [Forum Section](#) of the CLSA website under "Constitution Revision Feedback."

We are currently planning a **Virtual Town Hall for April 17 at 2 p.m. Eastern time**, which is open to all CLSA members so that we can discuss and receive your feedback on committees and elections. Our parliamentarian will help facilitate this meeting. We invite all members to participate in the Virtual Town Hall and to respond to future surveys. Our goal is to have the Constitution (or at least significant parts of it) ready for a vote by the membership at our next convention.

We look forward to your continued collaboration and invite any feedback that you might have.

Fr. Luke Millette, Chair

Convention Planning Committee

The annual CLSA Convention is among the most effective means for the Society to fulfill its mission to advance canonical scholarship and support the work of juridical practitioners in various venues of ecclesial life. While the CLSA Board of Governors has the last word in approving topics and speakers for the convention, the Standing Committee on Convention Planning, according to and beyond its mandates, seeks to encourage and identify the most appropriate topics and speakers for the purposes of the convention and the needs and interests of its participants. These include the juridical initiatives of ecclesiastical authority, timely

issues and concerns in ecclesial life, themes articulated by the BOG, and recent practical and scholarly publications in the world of canon law. CLSA members are welcome to identify prospective topics and speakers (including themselves). [Email committee chair Fr. James Conn, SJ with your ideas.](#)

Rev. James Conn, SJ, Chair

Eastern Churches Committee

On Monday, 12 January 2026, the Committee on Eastern Churches gathered for a remote meeting. The members include: Rev. Richard Bona, Dr. Margaret Chalmers, Msgr. Stephen Doktorczyk (Chair), Dr. Sean Doyle, and Rev. James Goodwin. The liaison between the committee and the Board of Governors is Rev. Chris Palladino. After introductions were made, the members observed that it is becoming more common for pastors and canon lawyers who care for Eastern Rite Catholics who attend a Latin Rite Church to be ill-equipped to offer sound canonical advice to these members of the faithful. It was suggested that the committee consider taking on a project to address this concern. Upon further research after the meeting, it was discovered that the CLSA publication in 2020 of *Eastern Catholics and Latin Pastors: Issues and Canonical Norms* by Chorbishop John Faris is a useful and helpful resource. We highly recommend this book for those who could make use of it.

Msgr. Stephen Doktorczyk, Chair

Laity Committee

The Laity Committee continues to work on the canonist mentoring and canonist wellness projects currently requested by the Board of Governors.

The committee is preparing for the implementation of the CLSA Canonist Mentoring Program. The hope is that this program will be a catalyst to foster relationships between new canonists and experienced canonists who are willing to share their experience and expertise in the practice of canon law. The Board of Governors has named a Director of Mentoring for the CLSA. The implementation and rollout of the program will likely begin with a pilot phase of the program.

The second project for the Laity Committee is identifying resources for addressing canonist wellness and methods for making these resources available to CLSA members, through convention presentations, webinars, or other forms of content delivery. We continue to discuss possible topics and available resources to address wellness issues.

In November, the committee contributed to the USCCB National Pastoral on the Laity Consultation Process on behalf of the CLSA. The objective of this nationwide consultation is to assist the U.S. bishops as they discover how the People of God understand their baptismal identity and co-responsible mission of the laity within Church and society.

Deacon Andrew Haskins, Chair

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for a virtual Town Hall with the Constitution Revision Commission on **Friday, April 17 at 2 p.m. Eastern time.**

At this live, interactive meeting, the commission will review their work and the response of the membership to their proposals.

You'll want to attend to make your voice heard and help shape the Society's future!

Watch your email for a registration link after Easter.



AROUND THE CLSA OFFICE

Office Move This Month

After ten years at the Theological College, the office is moving onto the campus of The Catholic University of America. As you might imagine, there are lots of loose ends to tie up before and after, so the office will be closed for a few days heading into Holy Week and Easter.

Beginning March 25, the staff will be preparing for the move, and the office will be closed. We plan to be partially operational by April 2 but we will be fully re-open after Easter on April 7. During this time, we will likely have little (if any) access to emails or calls, so please be patient. Online orders will likely be delayed during this time.

Please make a note of our new address and phone number and share it with your finance department so that payments arrive at the right place.

CLSA IS MOVING!

Please make a note of our new address effective April 1.

620 Michigan Ave. NE
Gowan Hall #200
Washington, DC 20064
202-238-1460



Dues Notices Will Mail in April

You can expect to receive a paper copy of your dues invoice in mid- to late April. Is your address correct? Now is the time to check!

You can begin paying online as early as April 1 if you like, but your current dues do not expire until June 30, 2026. The membership voted to raise the dues for Active and Associate members at the convention last fall. The dues for the coming fiscal year are:

Active members \$400
Associate \$400
Student..... \$175

The most common error with dues is when a diocese pays for several people's dues with one check, but there is no documentation that indicates who the payments are for. When this happens, we return the check, and your dues payment is delayed. Please be sure that a

copy of your invoice is included with the check or that your name is included on the check.

If someone else is paying your dues (like a finance department), please call their attention to the new mailing address. After ten years, it's tempting to just use the address the billing system, and we want to make sure everyone's dues get to the right place.

Scholarship Deadline April 15

Do you know someone who is starting a JCL or JCD program this fall? There is still time for them to apply for a CLSA scholarship. 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](#).

Indicate Committee Interest by June 1

Let us know if you have time and interest in serving on a committee next year. CLSA committees are "working committees," meaning they do the work on their projects themselves. Each member's willingness to attend meetings and complete assigned tasks is important. We will begin making assignments in the late summer and early fall so that the committees can get started on their committee work right after the convention.

To show interest for appointment to a committee beginning in the fall of 2026 please:

1. [Review the FAQs](#) regarding committee member selection.
2. Complete your CLSA online profile and make sure it is up to date so the Vice President can review if a particular committee assignment is a good fit.
3. Upload a picture to your online profile if you haven't already, and
4. **Submit an indication of interest** of your top three committees on the online [Committee Interest Form](#).
Deadline: June 1.



AROUND THE CLSA OFFICE

2026 Convention News

Are you building your budget for next year? The CLSA Board has set the fees for the convention at the same prices as 2025. Complete program information will be available in June.

Hotel

The convention hotel is the Hyatt Regency at the Arch in St. Louis, Missouri October 12-15, 2026.

The room rate is \$174 + 17.9% tax. Your registration materials that will be available in June will have more details about how to get the convention rate when you book a room.

Registration

Active/Assoc. Members	Early Bird (thru 8/31)	Regular (9/1-30)	Late (after 9/30)
Pre-Conv. Wkshop	\$350	\$475	\$575
Convention	\$525	\$700	\$850

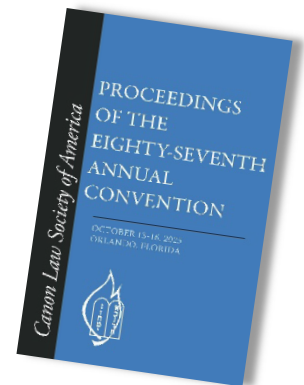
Student Members	Early Bird (thru 8/31)	Regular (9/1-30)	Late (after 9/30)
Pre-Conv. Wkshop	\$350	\$475	\$575
Convention	\$375	\$450	\$500

Non-Members	Early Bird (thru 8/31)	Regular (9/1-30)	Late (after 9/30)
Pre-Conv. Wkshop	\$350	\$475	\$575
Convention	\$850	\$850	\$850

REQUEST YOUR COPY OF THE 2025 PROCEEDINGS TODAY!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Log in to your Member Center. (Call us if you need help logging on.)
2. From the CLSA store, search for 2025 *Proceedings* or [click this link](#) to go to the 2025 *Proceedings* page.
3. Add **one copy** to your cart. (Multiples copies or additional publications will delay your order.)
4. In the box that says "Apply Promotion Code," type **Proceedings2025** and then click the link that says **Update Price**. This will give you a 100% discount on the book and free shipping **until June 30, 2026**.
5. **Do not add anything else to your cart.** If you wish to purchase a publication, please create a separate order.
6. Click the red "**Check out**" button.
7. 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.)
8. Click the red button that says "**Proceed to Confirmation.**"



Please note:

- *Proceedings* are shipping now!
- You can order your free copy at any time until June 30, 2026.
- Members may order one free copy with the promo code. You will get an error code if you order a second copy.
- If you do not request your free copy by June 30 with the code, you can still order a copy, but it will be at the member list price (\$30).

**Promo code
Proceedings2025
expires 6-30-26**

WELCOME NEW CLSA MEMBERS!

Please join us in welcoming the following new members who have joined the Society between December 2025 and February 2026. 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.

Dr. Liz Ozaeta
North Bend, WA

Mr. Aaron Olson
Orlando, FL

Rev. Paulo E. Salazar
Vatican City, Vatican

Sr. Christine Hernandez
Rapid City, SD

Ms. Mallory McAvoy-Daniels
Las Vegas, NV

Mrs. Anna Gallardo
Tucson, AZ

Rev. Joseph Peter McLoughlin
Sutton Coldfield,
United Kingdom

Scholarship Donations

In Memory Of

Rev. John “Jack” Lynch, CSP &
Sr. Patricia McGreevy, OSB

Rev. Frank Morrisey

Rev. Patrick Shea, OFM &
Rev. Art Espelage, OFM

Most Rev. Thomas Doran

Rev. Paul Golden, CM

Rev. Msgr. Francis Schneider

Rev. Greg Daigle

Most Rev. John C. Reiss, JCD

Rev. James Coriden

Rev. Dan Smilanic



Join the conversation on the [Constitution Revision Feedback Group](#) on the CLSA website.

1. Log in to your Member Center and look for the GROUPS link in the red horizontal bar.
2. On the right side, you will see AVAILABLE GROUPS.
3. If you don't see the Constitution Feedback group there, you may need to click the View All link at the bottom of the white box.
4. Once you find the Constitution Feedback group, just click the +JOIN GROUP link. Remember, you must be logged in to your account.

CRC will post updates in the FORUM area of the group and you can read and respond there. Visit often and share your thoughts on this critical initiative.



... in Christ Jesus the life-giving
law of the Spirit has set you
free from the law of sin and death.

(Rom. 8:2)

CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Office of the President

Lent 2026

CLSA members, I bring you my prayers for a blessed Lenten season.

Each year at this time, we come to you humbly to ask that you consider supporting the CLSA Scholarship Fund in your Lenten almsgiving. *Not every student in canon law is supported by a diocese or religious community so scholarships like ours are so important and we all know the need for trained canonists continues to be great. Promoting canonical studies is at the heart of the mission of the Canon Law Society of America, but [we can't do it without your help.](#)*

As President, I'm privileged to receive updates from our scholarship recipients, and their gratitude and excitement for their canonical vocation is always a pleasure to read. These letters remind me that our scholarships, whatever the size, serve the people of God and build the Church in powerful ways. Last year, one recipient wrote:

Thank you for your assistance in my education; I can hardly believe that I'm starting my third year! To be this far into the JCL already would not be possible without your assistance; please know of my gratitude and prayers. Last term, I continued studies in marriage topics. It was a very interesting experience reading jurisprudence from the Roman Rota and drafting jurisprudence myself for the first time. I'm looking forward to the CLSA convention in St. Louis next year and to participating in another edifying conference.

Can I count on your support this Lent? It's easy and secure to [donate online.](#)

If you prefer to mail your donation, you can send a check to CLSA Scholarship Fund, 620 Michigan Ave. NE, Gowan #200, Washington, DC 20064. Scholarship donations are allocated 75% to our Licentiate fund, and 25% to our Doctoral fund. If you would like to designate 100% of your contribution to a particular fund, simply note it on your check or online donation. Likewise, if you wish to designate your gift in honor or in memory of canonists who served the Church and our Society simply note that as well, and we will acknowledge it in an upcoming newsletter.

We must continue to support the training of the canonists of the future to continue the Church's ministry of justice, mercy and equity.. [Can you assist us this Lent?](#)

Please join me and the CLSA Board of Governors this Lent in our commitment to educate future canonists for the service of law and justice in the Church. Please make a contribution today.

Also, if you know of someone in need of financial support for their canonical studies, please be sure they apply for a CLSA scholarship now. The scholarship application deadline is April 15, so there is still time to apply. [Complete application information is available on our website.](#)

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this request.

With gratitude for your generosity in Christ,

Dr. Diane L. Barr, JD, JCD, PhD
President