



4 September 2020

Dear Friends and Fathers,

Greetings from the OTSA Executive Committee.

We would like to update you about the fall meeting and provide important links to the projects we have undertaken.

- 1. The Pandemic and Holy Communion Survey and Webinar:** Our previous letter explained that, given the unusual circumstances of the pandemic, and the diversity of thought and parish practices regarding the manner of worship in the pandemic, OTSA sponsored a survey on this topic. The survey went out to all the clergy of Orthodox Churches that are members of the Assembly of Bishops, and we had an excellent response with over 600 clergy participating. In addition, OTSA organized a webinar entitled “The Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Communion Practice in the Orthodox Church,” which ran on August 22, with presentations by Orthodox faithful who are distinguished scientists and theologians. The online symposium drew over 100 participants. The full report and summary of the survey, and the video of the webinar, along with summaries, slides, texts of the presenters, and opening and closing prayers, are now posted to the OTSA website at:  
<https://www.otsamerica.net/the-coronavirus-covid-19-and-communion-practice-in-the-orthodox-church/>  
 As part of our ongoing dialogue, we invite responses (< 1000 words) to the webinar, which we will also post. Please send responses to [secretary@otsamerica.org](mailto:secretary@otsamerica.org).
- 2. The Church and the Academy blog project:** Our blog project reflecting on issues of academic freedom affecting Orthodox educators and writers begins with the first posting to the OTSA website, "Can We Talk? The Church and Her Academy in the Dialogue of Liturgical Renewal" by Fr. Stelyios Muksuris, accessed here:  
<https://www.otsamerica.net/2020/09/01/can-we-talk-muksuris/>  
 We plan to post the essays one at a time at intervals, and will run the blog for an extended time. We encourage members to continue to submit short essays (<1000 words) on the topic. The author’s identity could be confidential if requested in order to enable honest

expression. These essays may be cross-posted at Public Orthodoxy, subject to their required parameters and timeline. Please submit your essay to [secretary@otsamerica.org](mailto:secretary@otsamerica.org).

- 3. Update on Annual Fall Meeting 2020:** As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, the speaker for the Florovsky Lecture will be Fr. Michael Plekon, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Sociology, Religion and Culture, The City University of New York-Baruch College. The title of the lecture is “Community as Church, Church as Community: Death and Resurrection in the Parish Today.” Fr. Plekon has recently published a new book, *The World as Sacrament: An Ecumenical Path toward a Worldly Spirituality*, which has been reviewed by Adam DeVille, accessed at <https://iota-web.org/2020/08/24/michael-plekon-the-world-as-sacrament/>

**CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANELS (Deadline for Proposals: Sept. 15, 2020).**

The annual meeting will be virtual this year, held on Nov. 12- 14, 2020, Thursday afternoon through Saturday afternoon. This year’s theme is Theological Anthropology, and we encourage you to submit a proposal for a paper or a panel presentation that explores this timely and significant theme. However, we also welcome papers on other topics, especially those of current concern. Requirements for the proposals include an abstract of less than 250 words and an abbreviated CV of the presenter(s). Presenters of papers have 20 minutes to give their paper and an additional 10 minutes for Q&A. The length of panels will be determined by the number of papers and the schedule of the meeting. Please send the proposals to the OTSA secretary, Helen Theodoropoulos, at [secretary@otsamerica.org](mailto:secretary@otsamerica.org) or [helen60076@yahoo.com](mailto:helen60076@yahoo.com). All presenters must be members in good standing.

- 4. DUES: Thank you to those members who are current with their dues. If you have not submitted them, please take a few minutes to do that.** We are operating at a deficit and your contributions will make a difference. The membership year starts January 1 and runs through December 31. Any member who has not paid their dues for three (3) consecutive years is considered inactive and can be removed from membership. However, we would much rather keep you involved in the society! If your membership has lapsed and you would like to return it to good standing, you can also pay for past years on the OTSA website. You can pay online at <https://www.otsamerica.org/pay-dues/>. If you prefer, you can pay by check; please contact our Treasurer, Fr. Gabriel Rochelle, for further information: [gabrielcroch@aol.com](mailto:gabrielcroch@aol.com).

We look forward to the dynamic dialogue ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Teva Regule, PhD, OTSA President  
Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos, PhD, OTSA Secretary