



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GOTELECOM

REPORT TO THE 43RD BIENNIAL CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

“You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World”
As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20:21).

GOTelecom, Greek Orthodox Telecommunications, is the television ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and is part of the Communications Department. Our mission is to serve the needs of the Greek Orthodox Church in America by producing and disseminating religious, cultural and educational mass media materials pertaining to Orthodox Christianity and Hellenic Culture.

The mission is three-fold, 1) internally – to archive the activities of the Archdiocese and the Archbishop, 2) to produce in-house programs that educate and awaken our faithful about the ministries of our Archdiocese and, to produce programs of quality that can be distributed nationally on television and through video (full-length programs and public service announcements), and 3) to distribute high quality programming via radio, television, internet and social media

The theme of this Congress resonates specifically in our work and our mission. In His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios’ Clergy-Laity Congress Theme Article - Part III, he writes,

As our theme affirms, we live in a changing world. ..Due to multiple means of communication and “real time” information, we are presented constantly with events and moments of change from around the world. All of this can be overwhelming, causing many to become insular and reject change or to feel lost while attempting to find meaning and purpose in the midst of change.

We have seen rapid change in technology and the tremendous impact this has had on our lives and societies. In this constant change many advancements have been made that save lives, enhance education and access to information, show the power of human ingenuity, and improve the quality of life. We also see and experience many challenges related to these changes: cost and access to technology, environmental impacts, materialism, and the threats from abuse. Many are asking how to navigate these constant changes in our world and make wise decisions. Others question how to live when so many things seem beyond our control.

The voice of Christ is needed in addressing such rapid change, for His voice is the voice of wisdom. His voice offers discernment in evaluating the benefits of technological change in relation to human life, purpose and well-being. His voice guides us to look beyond convenience and wants to reflect carefully on the broader impact of change in our lives, our communities, and the entire world. The voice of Christ answers the questions regarding what is good, what is true, what restores our relationships with God and each other, and what leads to salvation. He says to us and through us, I am the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

GOTELECOM PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Throughout our more than twenty years, we have produced over 325 programs and have received awards from many organizations including two EMMY Awards, De-Rose Hinkhouse Memorial Awards and various national Telly Awards. In the past two years we have worked on the following projects:

HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Staff is working with the official press team for the Council to assist with production of pre-packaged videos. Additionally, Senior Producer/Director Nicholas Furriss is heading the video production team that will document this historic event and also produce live programming that will be available on television and on the internet. Video news releases will be produced as well.

STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT

This video series, produced under the direction of the Department of Stewardship, Outreach and Development entitled, "The Orthodox Christian Church: Your Spiritual Home." The series, produced with a grant from Leadership 100, offers very short 'viral videos' that will inspire and move the viewers. Some footage came from Jerusalem footage gathered in May 2014 during the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Pope. The project is ongoing.

ST. NICHOLAS SHRINE DOCUMENTARY

GOTelecom is video documenting the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Shrine. Taping occurs as progress is being made at the site. Additional videotaping and interviews will occur over this summer and throughout the next years.

HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

GOTelecom worked with HCHC to produce a short video to promote the school. The video, "I am Hellenic College" appears on their website and will be used nationwide.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY

GOTelecom worked with OCMP to produce a series of instructional and informative videos on the work of this very important ministry that serves our nation's prisons and those who are in prison. Videotaping occurred in September 2015 in various locations in Florida, including a church, prison and a studio. The videos were disseminated online. Please visit their website for information - <https://theocpm.org/>

GROUND BLESSING OF ST. NICHOLAS NATIONAL SHRINE

GOTelecom coordinated the and directed the video production and satellite distribution of the historic Ground Blessing Ceremony at St. Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center. A 5-camera production was fed to news stations and through internet.

YOUR MINISTRY UPDATES

Working with the Department of Administration and their Leadership 100 Grant, GOTelecom continues to produce short videos describing the work and mission of our ministries and the projects of the Departments. Videotaping occurred at the Archdiocese headquarters with a “green screen” and directors were asked to speak about their work. Editing and b-roll was completed. Videos have been posted on the Archdiocese YouTube Channel and promotion occurred through email blasts and home page spotlights. The goal of the project is to inform and educate the faithful about the work being produced by our Archdiocesan Ministries, with the generous gifts of stewardship from the parishes and faithful. Additional videos are scheduled for production.

NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS ANNIVERSARY VIDEO

GOTelecom staff is working with National Philoptochos to produce an 85th Anniversary videotape. Christine Karavites is the executive producer. The video will be shown at the Philoptochos Convention in Nashville.

MEETING OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AND POPE FRANCIS IN JERUSALEM

In 2014, GOTelecom and Communications staff assisted in the communications tasks associated with the meeting of these two religious leaders. Nicholas Furriss coordinated media and the press office for this historic meeting. He traveled to the Jerusalem and Rome for pre-production logistical meetings and with the blessings of His All Holiness and Archbishop Demetrios worked on the coordination of video and media before, during and after the meeting.

DISCOVERING ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

GOTelecom is grateful for a grant received from the Leadership 100 Endowment Fund for the production of the 26 programs – 22 talk shows and 6 Bible Studies. The series, titled “Discovering Orthodox Christianity” was videotaped at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Guests include professors from the School as well as experts in the field from around the country. Additionally, four Bible studies, presented by Archbishop Demetrios were also recorded. All of the programs have been completed and are digitized for the internet.

You can view the programs during the Congress on your hotel room television set (in-house channel). Additionally, a DVD set of all the programs has been designed, packaged and marketed through the Orthodox Observer and through the listserv.

LEADERSHIP 100 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

In February 2014, Leadership 100 honored GOTelecom with the Award for Excellence for the programs produced in the past and most especially for the 26- part Discovering Orthodox Christianity series. GOTelecom staff is extremely proud and humbled by this honor and would like to thank Archbishop Demetrios, all of the members of Leadership 100, Executive Director Paulette Poulos, the Executive and Grant Committees, Drake Behrakis, Jerry Dimitriou and the office staff for their confidence and support.

DISTRIBUTION

The Department has continued its sales of videotapes and now books, through ads in the Orthodox Observer, to our parishes, schools, universities and homes. Our daily duties include fulfillment of these orders. Additionally, GOTELECOM has acquired the rights to distribute numerous outside productions. In addition to distribution, relationships with Greek Orthodox distributors and bookstores of other Orthodox jurisdictions. Each parish in America should have our entire library of DVDs and videos available in a "lending library". Additionally, university, college and high school libraries should have our major titles available for research and information. GOTELECOM also distributes its programs through the Department of Religious Education and Orthodox Marketplace.

VIDEO AND RADIO MESSAGES OF ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS

The Department staff continues to schedule, videotape, edit and distribute the Christmas and Paschal Message of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. These short messages are sent to Greek American radio and television producers across the country, as well as select programs in Greece, for broadcast on their stations. Additionally, the messages are posted on the goarch website.

We also videotape message for those submitting official requests.

Marissa P. Costidis, Managing Director, is a member of the Religious Communicators Council and on the Membership Board of Odyssey, whose membership is composed of over 64 different faith groups. Odyssey was a partner with the nationally distributed Hallmark Channel.

Respectfully Submitted

Marissa P. Costidis