



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ORTHODOX OBSERVER

Report to the 2016 Clergy Laity Congress

The Orthodox Observer, the national publication of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, is the only direct physical link between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, its institutions and ministries, with the parishes and individual Church members.

It is a publication with several functions.

1. As the primary news and information connection between the Archdiocese, Metropolises, parishes and individual parishioners. Its presentation of news covers the gamut of significant events at the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archdiocese, Metropolis and Parish level, the Assembly of Bishops, OCMC, IOCC and other Church-related organizations and institutions. Publication of Record: Texts of official messages of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Archdiocese relating to encyclicals and other official documents for widespread dissemination; obituaries of clergy and lay leaders of the Church; listings of clergy ordinations and assignments and other pertinent information. Most recently, the Orthodox Observer published the texts of the documents discussed at the Holy and Great Council.
2. Teaching tool: Articles relating to the dissemination of the Orthodox Christian faith by theologians and clergy, including, but not limited to significant social and moral issues facing contemporary society.
3. Informational tool: the National Ministries, availability of scholarships for college students, how readers can contribute to humanitarian causes; and contact information for various Church organizations.
4. Coverage of various annual activities and events of parishes and groups such as the youth: This presents the Archdiocese the opportunity to reach out to Church members, including young people, to recognize their efforts. Major activities receiving extensive coverage includes dance festivals, GOYA Olympics, summer camps, Greek parades and other activities throughout the year.

Circulation

The *Orthodox Observer* is mailed to about 155,000 addresses 10 times a year to members in every state as part of their parish stewardship, and to institutions such as colleges, libraries and others.

A few hundred copies also are mailed to readers in the following 35 countries: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China (Hong Kong), Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom and the Vatican.

Circulation versus readership

Circulation and readership are not synonymous. Publications in general factor in a multiplier effect of readers per copy. The Orthodox Observer conservatively figures about three readers per copy, thus the true readership is about 465,000 persons.

Mailing and printing costs are about \$65,000 per issue, and advertising revenue for 2015 was nearly \$135,000, about \$12,000 more than in 2014.

The annual cost to each addressee as part of their stewardship is about \$4.20 per year. (42 cents a month).

Since the recession of a few years ago, advertising has been on the upswing. The *Orthodox Observer* aims for a ratio of about 20 to 25 percent advertising in a typical 32-page issue. The Christmas and Pascha issues exceed that percentage. The Christmas 2015 issue contained 44 percent and the April Pascha issue had 30 percent. Other revenue includes individual donations of about \$4,000 per year.

Recent and Upcoming Coverage Highlights

Over the recent past, the *Orthodox Observer* has featured series on the Metropolises, the Archdiocese Day Schools, most recently, progress on St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, and the Synaxis of the heads of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches held in Chambesy, Switzerland in late January.

For the remainder of 2016, major event coverage will include Holy and Great Council of the 14 Autocephalous Orthodox Churches involving nearly 400 bishops and other clergy from every canonical Orthodox jurisdiction taking place in mid-June in Crete, the Clergy-Laity Congress in Nashville now taking place and the 25th Anniversary of the enthronement of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in October.

Long-range projects

The Centennial of the Archdiocese is seven years away. The *Orthodox Observer* will be planning to include coverage over the 10 issues scheduled for 2022 and has asked for article ideas from Dr. William Samonides, who writes the Church History feature in the *Orthodox Observer*, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald, professor of Church History at HCHC, and the Rev. Dr. Milton Efthimiou, retired director of the Archdiocese Office of Church and Society and a former professor of history, and other possible contributors.

The indexing project begun in 2012 by the *Orthodox Observer's* administrative assistant, Soula Podaras, has been continuing. Issues as far back as 1985. Eventually, readers will have access to a searchable on-line index to search for specific information. Her regular office duties include updating address changes for the mailing list, and bookkeeping.

Staff

In addition to the editor and Ms. Podaras, a native of the island of Evia, Greece, the *Orthodox Observer* has two other staff members: Eleftherios Pissalidis, originally from Thessaloniki, who serves as the advertising manager, production manager and Greek section editor; and Abel Montoya, a native of Colombia, South America, the graphic artist who processes the individual advertisements and color correction of photographs appearing in the newspaper.

Historical background

Archbishop Iakovos established the *Orthodox Observer* in 1971 in a tabloid newspaper format with the mission: of presenting the Orthodox Christian faith to the American-born generations. It is the successor to the publication founded in 1934 by Archbishop Athenagoras in a journal format that was named the *Orthodox Observer*. Until 1990, the *Observer* published twice a month, then changed to a monthly frequency.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Golding