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2024 Clergy-Laity Congress to Highlight Outreach Ministries



The upcoming Clergy-Laity Congress, slated to take place in San Diego this summer, will feature the significance of Outreach Ministries within the life of the church. Scheduled from June 30 to July 4th, the Congress will not only focus on the business of the church but will also emphasize the imperative of making a difference in the Archdiocese and the broader community.

Attendees at this summer's Clergy-Laity Congress will have the invaluable opportunity to engage in a variety of impactful initiatives designed to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Among these initiatives is the "Postcards for Soldiers" campaign, which will be launched during the enchanting "Moonlight on the Midway" welcome event on Monday evening of the Congress. Participants will be warmly encouraged to write personal notes of gratitude and encouragement to those serving in the Armed Forces These messages will then be distributed to active-duty soldiers stationed across the globe, serving as powerful reminders of the unwavering support and gratitude of their fellow citizens back home.

Furthermore, the Congress will host a blood drive in collaboration with the American Red Cross. Blood drives, as renowned for their life-saving potential as they are for their communal spirit, play an indispensable role in addressing the ongoing demand for blood transfusions and ensuring that patients in need receive

the vital care they require. Echoing the sentiments of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, who once remarked, “Donating blood is a sacred duty. It is a duty of love and self-sacrifice in favor of our fellow human beings who are suffering,” the Congress emphasizes the profound act of giving as a testament to the boundless compassion and solidarity inherent within humanity. Individuals eager to contribute to this noble cause during the Congress are encouraged to secure their appointments in advance by visiting the official Clergy-Laity Congress website.

The third Outreach Ministry that will be offered is the Prayer Shawl Ministry, a compassionate outreach initiative offered by parishes and Philoptochos chapters where dedicated volunteers knit and crochet shawls for people in need of support and prayers. These shawls serve as symbols of comfort, solace, and healing for individuals experiencing illness, grief, or hardship. Crafted with care, each shawl is imbued with prayers and love for the recipient’s well-being and spiritual journey. When presented to those in need, the prayer shawls offer a physical reminder of God’s love and presence, providing warmth, encouragement, and spiritual support during challenging times.

Lastly, the Congress will partner with the National Marrow Donor Program (formerly known as “Be the Match”) People diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma and other life-threatening diseases depend on a bone marrow or cord blood transplant as their best or only hope for a cure. Yet 70% of patients who need a transplant do not have a fully matched donor in their family. Those patients depend on NMDP® to find a match to save their life. By simply getting their cheek swabbed, participants can join the registry and potentially save a life.

“These Outreach ministries are tangible ways we can put our faith into action and show the boundless nature of Christ’s love and the eagerness of the Orthodox Church to serve all those in need and be present and relevant in the communities in which we live and work,” stated His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos.

For more information and to register for the Congress, please visit www.clergylaity.org.

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