

Apologia: A Gathering of Orthodox Apologists

Give an Answer to Every Man that Asketh

The Windmill Winery and Historic Florence Auditorium (FUSD), Florence, AZ
December 3-5, 2026

CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

This unprecedented and historic conference, bringing together Orthodox apologists and catechists, will take place in **Florence, Arizona from December 3-5** on the theme: *Apologia: Give an Answer to Every Man that Asketh* (1 Peter 3:15). With the blessing and participation from His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America esteemed clergy and lay apologists who are firmly rooted in the patristic teaching will guide us in understanding the Orthodox Way of Apologia. Near St. Anthony's Monastery, in the tranquility of the Sonora Desert, celebrating the Feast of Saint Cleopa of Sihastria, in English for the first time, all in attendance will have an opportunity to be edified, shaped and spiritually energized, as iron sharpens iron. A rare gathering and an exceptional opportunity you won't want to miss!

CHAIRMAN

His Eminence Metropolitan NICOLAE of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America

SPEAKERS:

His Eminence Metropolitan NICOLAE of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia

His Eminence Archbishop ALEXEI of Alaska

His Eminence Metropolitan NEOPHYTOS of Morphou, Cyprus

Archpriest Josiah Trenham, Rector of St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, Riverside, CA

Archpriest John Whiteford, Rector of St. Jonah Orthodox Church, Spring, TX

Archpriest Peter Heers, Rector of Ss. Paisius of Mt. Athos and Cleopa of Sihastria Orthodox Church, Florence, AZ

Monk Filotheu Bălan, Petru Voda Monastery, Romania

Constantine Zalalas, Saint Nikodemos Publications, Bethlehem, PA

Jay Dyer, Palm Coast, Florida

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Conference Registration (18 and up)	\$195
5 Meals, all ages	\$100

* All prices are per person, include taxes and gratuity

* Registration deadline is November 8, 2026

* Lodging is booked separately, see below.

* Questions, please email: UMPadmin@icloud.com

VENUES

WINDMILL WINERY

1140 West Butte Avenue

Florence AZ 85132

Thursday evening and Friday morning events are held at Windmill Winery in the Red Barn, 2 miles from the Green Tree Inn and Suites Hotel.

Historic Florence Auditorium (FUSD)

1000 S Main St., Florence, AZ 85132

Location of Friday and Saturday conference talks and meals, an 8 minute walk from the Green Tree Inn.

LODGING

GREEN TREE INN & SUITES, FLORENCE AZ

- SOLD OUT -

Call Green Tree Inn: 520-868-9900

Please reference Group: Uncut Mountain Press

\$159+ King Room

\$169+ Queen Room

OVERFLOW HOTELS:

Gold Canyon Golf Resort

(480) 982-9090

- BOOK ASAP -

-35 minute drive from the Green Tree Inn

Gold Canyon is offering a \$135 ++ rate at this [LINK](#)

Group name: Uncut Mountain Press

Fairfield Inn by Marriott in Casa Grande

Group Rate to be announced shortly

Holiday Inn Express in Casa Grande

Group Rate to be announced shortly

Rancho Sonora Inn and RV Park

520-868-8000

- SOLD OUT -

-8 minute drive from the Green Tree Inn
Call for availability, M-Sat, 8am-12pm

Consider [AirBnB options](#), as well.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY – DECEMBER 3

- 3:30 PM Registration Opens
4:30 PM **VESPERS** [Winery]
6:00 PM Dinner [Winery]
6:30 PM **OPENING OF CONFERENCE:** Archpriest Peter Heers
6:45 PM **OPENING ADDRESS:** Met. Nicolae: *Contemporary Challenges to American Orthodoxy*
7:10 PM **Lecture 1:** Bishop Alexei of Alaska: *Faithfulness to Holy Tradition: Apologetics in Sacred Alaska*
7:40 PM **Lecture 2:** Archpriest Josiah Trenham: *Apologetics as Evangelism: Calling the World to Christ*
8:10 PM **Q & A / DISCUSSION**

FRIDAY – DECEMBER 4

- 7:00 AM Orthros [Winery]
8:30 AM Divine Liturgy [Winery]
11:00 PM Breakfast [Auditorium FUSD 1000 S Main St.]
11:45 AM **INTERVIEW:** Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou: *Orthodox Mission Today*
12:30 PM **Lecture 3:** Monk Filotheu Bălan: *St. Cleopa: the Apogee of Orthodox Apologetics*
1:00 PM **Q&A + CLERGY ROUND TABLE:** Frs. Turbo Qualls, Sebastian Craffey, Jonathan Ivanoff, & Dn. Ananias Sorem: *How Not to Do Online Apologetics Or Healing for the Digital Addicted*
1:45 PM **NEW BOOK:** David Nak: *An Analysis of Anti-Chalcedonian Claims*
2:00 PM Lunch Break
3:00 PM Depart for St. Anthony's Monastery: Visit, Vespers
6:00 PM Return to Florence Auditorium (1000 S Main St.)
6:30 PM Dinner at the Florence Auditorium courtyard (1000 S Main St.)
7:30 PM **Lecture 4:** Archpriest Peter Heers: *The Ethos of Orthodox Apologetics*
8:00 PM **Lecture 5:** Archim. Savas: *Apologetics of the Saints: By Their Life, Speech, Mission & Martyrdom*
8:30 PM **Lecture 6:** Fr. John Whiteford: *Hieromonk Seraphim: Apologetics of the Heart & Super-Correctness*
9:00 PM **Q&A / ROUND TABLE:** Frs. Joseph Huneycutt, John Valadez, Seraphim Holland, and Dn. Patrick Mitchell ~ *Salt and Light That They May Glorify Our Father: What is our Goal Online?*

SATURDAY – DECEMBER 5

- 8:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM **CHRISTIANITIES THE MOVIE:** Basil Neil DeGraide gives an update
9:15 AM **Lecture 7:** Constantine Zalalas: *Monks & Martyrs: The Necessity of Hesychastic Prayer and Ascetic Struggle to be an Apologist*
9:45 AM **Lecture 8:** Jay Dyer: *The Right (and Wrong) Way to Do Orthodox Apologetics*
10:15 AM Short Break

- 10:30 AM** **Q&A / ROUND TABLE:** + Alex Sorin, D.P. Harry, Ben Michael Langlois: *The Layman's Guide to The Orthodox Way of Online Witness*
- 11:15 AM** **APOLOGIA 2026 REPRISE:** Fr. Sebastian Craffey, Fr. Turbo Qualls, Dn. Patrick Mitchell, Reader Paul Trinca, Seraphim "Buck" Johnson
- 12:00 PM** **CLOSING REMARKS:** Archpriest Peter Heers

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

His Eminence Metropolitan **NICOLAE** of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae (Condrea) serves as the head of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas, a jurisdiction under the Romanian Patriarchate that encompasses the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America and the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada.

Born in Constanța in 1967, he was ordained as a priest in 1997 and elected Archbishop of the Archdiocese in 2002, with his enthronement taking place in Montreal. On October 28, 2016, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church elevated him to the rank of Metropolitan, establishing the new Metropolia structure to better organize church life across North and South America.

In 1992, His Eminence finished the Andrei Șaguna Orthodox Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, defending his degree in theology with the dissertation, "The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas."

From 1995 to 2001 His Eminence attended the Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg, where, on November 10, 2001, he defended his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Matters of Psychology in the Works of Evagrius Ponticus" and obtained the degree of Doctor in Theology.

His Eminence Archbishop **ALEXEI** of Alaska

His Eminence Archbishop Alexei (secular name Alexis Trader, born February 24, 1965, in Dover, Delaware) is the ruling hierarch of the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska in the Orthodox Church in America.

He was raised in a pious Christian household and attended Roman Catholic parochial school as a child. He later received a B.A. in chemistry from Franklin and Marshall College, an M.A. in religion from the University of Chicago, an M.Div. from Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in theology from the University of Thessaloniki.

He entered monastic life at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania in 1990, serving as a lecturer in patristics. After about ten years, he moved to Karakallou Monastery on Mount Athos, Greece, where he was ordained a deacon (1996) and a priest (2001). He later served at a women's monastery dependency in Greece, where he became a spiritual father and completed his doctoral dissertation, published as *Ancient Christian Wisdom and Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy* (2011).

He returned to the United States in 2019 at the invitation of Metropolitan Tikhon. On November 12, 2019, the Holy Synod elected him Bishop-elect of Bethesda, and he was consecrated on January 25, 2020.

He was appointed locum tenens of the Diocese of Alaska in November 2020, then elected Bishop of Sitka and Alaska on March 15, 2022, and enthroned at Saint Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage on March 27, 2022. On March 19, 2025, the Holy Synod unanimously elevated him to the dignity of Archbishop.

Since his enthronement, he has focused on strengthening clergy, securing the return of St. Innocent of Alaska's 18th-century Gospel to the cathedral in Sitka, and the canonization of St. Olga of Alaska, the first Orthodox female saint of North America.

His Eminence Metropolitan NEOPHYTOS of Morphou, Cyprus

His Eminence Neophytos of Morphou, born Omiros Masouras on January 21, 1962, in the Cypriot village of Ano Zodia, is a prominent hierarch of the Church of Cyprus.

His early life was marked by tragedy, including the death of his father when he was eight and the loss of his brother during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which displaced him to a refugee settlement in Nicosia.

He initially studied Law at the University of Athens, graduating in 1985, but was spiritually inspired by St. Iakovos (Tsalikis) of Evia to pursue monastic life. He returned to Cyprus in 1987, joined the Ayios Georgios Kontas Monastery, and was tonsured a monk with the name Neophytos.

He was ordained a deacon in 1987 and a priest in 1993, later earning a degree in Theology from the University of Athens. Elected Metropolitan of Morphou in 1998, he serves the Greek Cypriot community displaced from the Turkish-occupied northern part of the island.

He is widely recognized for his deep spiritual wisdom, having served as a confidant to contemporary saints such as St. Paisios, St. Porphyrios, and St. Iakovos. His recent works

include published homilies and strong, prophetic public stances against COVID-19 measures and the pan-heresy of ecumenism.

Archpriest Josiah Trenham, Rector of St. Andrew's Orthodox Church, Riverside, CA

Fr. Josiah is a native Southern Californian. He was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in 1993, and was awarded the Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Durham, England, in 2004. He has served as pastor of St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Riverside, Ca. since 1998. Father Josiah was married in 1988, and has ten children and five grandchildren.

Father is the founder and director of *Patristic Nectar Publications*, a company dedicated to “nourishing the spiritually thirsty with the sweet teachings of the Holy Fathers.” Father Josiah’s weekly homilies and additional theological reflections are published weekly and listened to by thousands all over the globe on *The Arena* podcast.

Father has served as a professor at California Baptist University (2004-2011) and the University of St. Katherine (2011-2017). He served as a member of the Secretariat of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops from its inception in 2010 until 2017. He has conducted numerous diocesan, parish, and clergy retreats and seminars for every Orthodox Christian jurisdiction in America and in Canada, and has spoken at numerous colleges, universities, and international gatherings. Father Josiah’s books and articles have been published by St. Herman Press, New Rome Press, Zoe Press, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Journal, Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies, The Journal of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, CIVA: The Journal of Christians in the Visual Arts, Divine Ascent, The Word Magazine, Orthodoxy Today, American Orthodox Institute, Sourozh, Pemptousia, Eastern Churches Review, and more.

Archpriest John Whiteford, Rector of St. Jonah Orthodox Church, Spring, TX

Archpriest John is Archpriest and pastor at St. Jonah Orthodox Church, in Spring, Texas. He was born in Riverside, California in 1966, and lived in Grand Terrace, California. Father John and his family moved to Murray, Kentucky in 1976, and then to Houston, Texas in 1978. He was raised in the Church of the Nazarene, but began studying Orthodoxy while working on his B.A. in Theology at Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Fr. John decided to convert not long after graduating from there in 1990. He was baptized at St. Benedict Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City on November 10th, 1990.

Fr. John wrote an article entitled *Sola Scriptura: In the Vanity of Their Minds*, which laid out many of the theological reasons for his conversion. This article was published in the Christian Activist in 1995, and then was published in a revised and somewhat expanded form by Conciliar Press in 1996, under the title *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology*.

Fr. John was a representative of the ROCOR Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America at the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, in Moscow, on May 17, 2007. He is currently the general editor of the St. Innocent Liturgical Calendar. He is also the dean of the southern deanery (Texas and Louisiana) of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America ROCOR.

Archpriest Peter Heers, Rector of Ss. Paisius of Mt. Athos and Cleopa of Sihastria Orthodox Church, Florence, AZ

Fr. Peter is rector of the church of Ss. Paisius of Mt. Athos and Cleopa of Sihastria in Florence, Arizona, a parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States. He is the founder and current head of Uncut Mountain Press (founded in 2000), the founder and head of [The Orthodox Ethos](#), and the founder and first editor of “Divine Ascent, A Journal of Orthodox Faith” (begun in 1995). Fr. Peter was also the host of the podcast, [Postcards from Greece](#).

Fr. Peter is the author of [The Missionary Origins of Modern Ecumenism: Milestones Leading up to 1920](#), as well as [The Ecclesiological Renovation of the Second Vatican Council: An Orthodox Examination of Rome’s Ecumenical Theology Regarding Baptism and the Church](#), which was released in November 2015 and is available here. It is also available in Greek. He is also the author of [Formation in the Love of Truth: Principles of Orthodox Education](#).

Fr. Peter is also the translator of several books, including [The Life of Elder Paisios \(co-translator\)](#) and [The Epistles of Elder Paisios](#), The Truth of our Faith (vols. [1](#) & [2](#)) by St. Cleopa and [Apostle to Zaire: The Life of Fr. Cosmas of Grigoriou](#), as well as the children’s book [From I-ville to You-ville](#).

Fr. Peter Heers was born in Dallas, Texas and grew up near San Francisco. The son of an Anglican priest, in 1992 his parents and much of his father’s parish converted to the Orthodox Church. In 1996 he came to Thessaloniki, Greece, in order to visit Mt. Athos, returning in 1998 to begin the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki. Fr. Peter has undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in Dogmatic Theology from the Theological School of the University of Thessalonica, all completed under the tutelage of Professor Demetrios Tselingides. He lived in the Thessaloniki area for 19 years where he was married to a Thessaloniki native (and blessed with 5 children) and ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 2003, in the Diocese of Kastoria. In 2014 he was made Protopresbyteros and Spiritual Father of the Diocese of Ierissou and Agion Oros. He was the rector and spiritual father of the parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Petrokerasa, a small village in the mountains outside of Thessalonica, Greece, from 2006 until 2017.

From January 2017 until May 2018, Fr. Peter was the instructor of Old and New Testament at Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary in Jordanville, New York, and then as a Lecturer of

Ecclesiology in the Certificate of Theological Studies Program. From May 2018 until December 2019, Fr. Peter was the Headmaster of Three Hierarchs Academy In Florence, Arizona.

Monk Filotheu Bălan, Petru Voda Monastery, Romania

Monk Filotheu was tonsured at the Sihăstria Monastery, under the supervision of Archimandrite Fathers Cleopa Ilie and Ioanichie Bălan, and from 1999 at the Petru Vodă Monastery, under Archimandrite Father Justin Pârnu. Between 1996-2024 he was engaged in the research of the Orthodox patristic heritage, especially that of the legacy of St. Paisie Velichkovsky, on two branches - theological and musical - with the blessing and support of the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bucovina. His research activity, spread throughout all the Romanian libraries, those of the Holy Mount Athos and of the world, has resulted in many writings, dozens of printed volumes, thousands of pages of unpublished musical scores, countless conferences and collaborations with many universities in the country and abroad.

Constantine Zalalas, Saint Nikodemos Publications, Bethlehem, PA

Mr. Zalalas is an international speaker and retreat master for all Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States and abroad. He holds a Masters (with honors) in Dogmatic Theology from the University of Thessalonica. He has published a number of pamphlets and books. His most recent publications include: *In Search of the Truth* (partnering with St. Anthony's Monastery in AZ), Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, of *On the Book of the Revelation* by Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios (Zoe Press), *My Exodus from Roman Catholicism* by Bishop of Nanzianzus Paul De Ballester and *Tears of Repentance* by Athanasios Katigkas.

Mr. Constantine Zalalas was born on January 30, 1956, on the island of Kos in Greece and while in his early teens, immigrated to the United States with his family. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at Millersville University of Pennsylvania in 1978. Mr. Zalalas is currently a member and a pastoral assistant of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he resides with his family.

In 1988, while on pilgrimage to the holy places of Greece, he met Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios, the great elder, teacher and interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. Soon, with the blessing of the Elder, by God's grace, Constantine began translating and presenting the homilies of the elder. Today, over 200 one hour long teachings have been translated and are available on several web sites (www.saintnikodemos.com, www.pantocrator.gr) and on the YouTube channel "Nicodemos Hagiorite."

Jay Dyer, of jaysanalysis.com, Palm Coast, Florida

Jay Dyer is an author, podcaster, debater, and presenter of Orthodox theology online, as well as an analyst known for his deep exposé of Hollywood and the dark webs of contemporary

geopolitics. His graduate work focused on psychological warfare and film and he is the author of two books, *Esoteric Hollywood 1 & 2* and the co-creator and co-host of the television show *Hollywood Decoded*. His more recent books focus on philosophy and theology. He has appeared as a guest on the Tucker Carlson and Timcast shows and in debates with some of the world's top debaters, and, since 2023, a weekly host of *The Alex Jones Show*.

Jay was raised Baptist, moved through Charismatic and Presbyterian-Reformed Calvinism before converting to Roman Catholicism at age 21, largely through reading St. Augustine's *City of God*. After a short examination of Sedevacantism he converted to Orthodoxy in 2012.

Jay holds a BA in philosophy and graduate work in psychological warfare, film, and geopolitics. His key theological works include: *Essays on Theology and Philosophy* (2019), *The Red Book: Essays on Theology & Philosophy* (2026), and *Meta-Narratives: Essays on Philosophy and Symbolism* (2022).

Jay puts forward a form of presuppositional apologetics adapted to Orthodox presuppositions (sometimes called "neopatristic presuppositionalism"), arguing that Orthodox conciliarity and apostolic succession are the axiomatic starting point for all theological discourse. His recurring themes include: the essence/energy distinction and uncreated grace (drawing heavily on St. Gregory Palamas), critique of divine simplicity as a post-patristic Western innovation, opposition to the Filioque and papal primacy. In Orthodox fashion, following the Holy Fathers, Jay heavily cites the Church Fathers (St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John of Damascus, etc.).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can children attend the conference?

Yes, children are welcome.

Can you tell me about the meals?

Meals consist of Thursday dinner/ Friday breakfast, lunch, dinner/ Saturday breakfast served buffet-style with various food and drink options. Meals will be fasting, with fish and seafood options available. For food allergies, or any dietary concerns please email UMPadmin@icloud.com no later than November 18, 2026.

Is there a part-time registration, or partial meal plan?

There is one standard registration fee which helps cover all the costs associated with providing the conference. We won't be able to offer partial registrations unless we reach a certain threshold.

Are the talks going to be recorded and offered at a later date?

Talks will be recorded but a livestream offering is still to be determined. The overriding focus is to provide a meaningful retreat for the faithful with enriching fellowship.

For all questions please email: UMPadmin@icloud.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Airport: The closest commercial airport is Phoenix International Airport located, a one-hour drive to Florence.

Driving/RV Parking: There is plenty of on-site parking for guests at the venue locations. There is a RV park 8 miles away at [Rancho Sonora Inn and RV Park](#), 9198 Arizona 79, Florence, AZ.

Specific dietary requests: For food allergies, or any dietary concerns please contact UMPadmin@icloud.com no later than November 18, 2026.

Weather/attire: December temperatures typically range from high of 70F° to lows of 42F°. You may want to bring a mix of casual, outdoor, and church attire for the conference. PLEASE NOTE: Vespers and Divine Liturgy will be held outdoors at the Windmill Winery location, please bring a warm jacket as evening and morning hours will feel cool.

Conference Registration Refunds: Refunds for Registration and Meals are available until November 8, 2026 by emailing: UMPadmin@icloud.com

We are looking forward to seeing you in December!

VENUE PHOTOS

WINDMILL WINERY



GREEN TREE INN & SUITES



Historic Florence Auditorium (FUSD)



ST. ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX MONASTERY

<https://stanthonysmonastery.org/>



