



220 Mason Manatee Way
St. Augustine, FL 32086

INSIDE

Here's your new issue of *Mission*:

*stories of how YOU are
sharing your Faith with the world!*

Window, Do Not Print



With your help, OCMC Missionaries Fr. Chris and Mat. Jen Moore are keeping Orthodox families strong.

With your help, OCMC Missionaries in South Korea Fr. Chris and Mat. Jen Moore are keeping Orthodox families strong during the pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic may have changed how they're doing it, but through God's grace and your prayerful support, the commitment of our OCMC missionaries to share our Orthodox Faith with the world hasn't changed one bit. Thank you so much for continuing to stand with us through these difficult times!

When the virus first hit South Korea, OCMC Missionary Fr. Chris Moore was serving his church in Daegu City, in the southeast part of the country. His wife, Mat. Jen, and their sons were back home in the U.S., visiting family and friends. It took almost a month before the family was reunited, and they had to spend two weeks in quarantine once they were. Fortunately, Fr. Chris says, "Some of the faithful of the church were kind enough to supply us with extra food from time to time."

Social-distancing restrictions limited the number of people

who could be in the church at one time, but during Holy Week and Pascha, they were able to livestream services on the internet. "A group of women — Koreans, Americans, Greeks, and a Georgian — beautifully decorated our epitaphios," Fr. Chris says. The church received a catechumen in May, and later that month a family donated some grapevines to the church.

Now restrictions have been loosened in Korea, Fr. Chris says, and while he thanks God that

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You're Invited! Form a Team and Join the Trek!

Usually, it's our Mission Teams who put in the miles to share our beautiful Orthodox Faith with the world. But now, while we wait for borders to reopen, we're asking you to support Orthodox missionaries by putting in the miles instead!

How? By taking part in OCMC's 2020 **Virtual Trek4Missions** between August 9 and September 14, 2020.

Unlike a traditional Mission Walk where crowds gather, this unique trek is about staying healthy, having fun, and coming together virtually to support the training and building up of a new generation of Orthodox missionaries.

Trek4Missions is free to join, all ages are welcome, and every participant will receive a t-shirt. All it takes is for you and nine friends from your church community to form a team, commit to walking, running, cycling, swimming, or otherwise logging a total of 1,200 miles or more between you, and raising at least \$2,000 in five weeks. Our nationwide goal is to complete 600,000 miles and raise \$100,000! Please join us!

For more information or to register, visit ocmc.org/Trek4Missions or email events@ocmc.org
Thank you!

MY NEXT GIFT TO SUPPORT ORTHODOX MISSIONS

Yes, Fr. Martin! You can count on me to continue to share the Gospel through my prayerful support of OCMC Missionaries. **Here is my gift of:**

\$XX1 \$XX2 \$XX3 \$_____

I want to join the Sts. Cyril & Methodius Society with a monthly gift of: \$_____

To give online visit www.ocmc.org/donate. Thank you!

Your gift is tax deductible. Please make your check payable to OCMC and send it to 220 Mason Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086. Please remember OCMC in your estate planning.



Sts. Cosmas and Damian of Rome The Holy Unmercenaries

Sainted Unmercenaries and Wonder Workers, regard our infirmities; freely you have received, freely share with us.

The brothers Cosmas and Damian were third-century Roman doctors who refused to accept any form of payment for their healing services. That's what "unmercenary" means. Instead, they shared the Gospel of Christ with those they cared for. Tradition says the brothers were denounced and killed by a pagan doctor. Sts. Cosmas and Damian are honored as unmercenaries, wonderworkers, and martyrs. Their feast day is July 1.



God bless you for your faithfulness and generosity!

2020 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER

SUMMER 2020

MISSION

Reports from around the world for supporters and friends of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center

SPECIAL PANDEMIC REPORT



WE ARE HOPEFUL
that slowly life will return to normal

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Go and make disciples of all nations. — MATTHEW 28:19

Do you want to trek for missions?
See page 4!

Your Light Shines Around the World!



Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director

How many times in the last few months have you heard someone say, "We could all use a little good news?" When times are dark, a word of hope, peace, or love somehow seems to shine even more brightly than usual.

That's why, when international borders began to close last spring and organizations like the Peace Corps called their teams home, many of the OCMC missionaries you support hurried, not back to the U.S., but to rejoin the communities they serve. In fact, though each was offered the option of evacuation, not one OCMC missionary chose to leave their country of service due to the crisis!

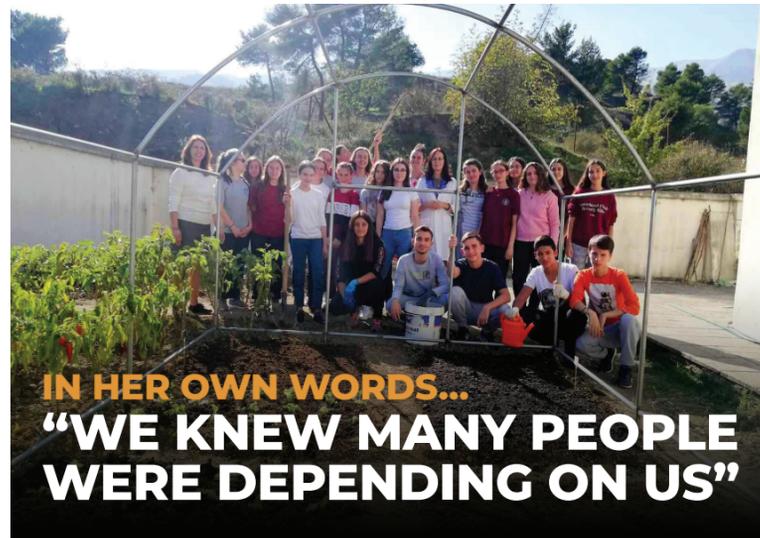
As you'll read in this special issue of MISSION, their commitment to their calling and their love for the people they serve has given our missionaries amazing opportunities to share the Orthodox Christian message of hope and salvation in Christ.

Let me say again what a vital role you play in OCMC's work, even if you never join us on a mission team or serve as a missionary. Your generous prayer and financial support shares "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" with a world hungry for good news in a time of darkness (2 Cor. 4:4).

Thank you, and God bless you for your faithful partnership.

In Christ,

Fr. Martin



We asked OCMC Missionary Anastasia Pamela Barksdale how the COVID-19 pandemic affected her Team's work in Albania. Here's what she told us.

Our borders closed as the first cases appeared in March, and immediately the whole country went into a very strict lockdown. Our Church's private schools closed with all the public schools, as did public transportation. Stores opened only a few hours in the mornings, and we were allowed outside our homes for only one hour a day. This lasted about two months before restrictions began to ease.

Like many Orthodox Churches around the world, the Orthodox churches in Albania were closed to the public. The clergy, a deacon, and a chanter celebrated all the services, matins, liturgies, vespers, paraklesis, with someone recording the services for our radio station, Resurrection Radio. I am fortunate to live in a building with other missionaries, clergy, and workers of the Church, and we celebrated some of the services of Holy Week together. It was such a blessing.

Our Church's schools and preschools immediately began offering classes online. All our teachers made heroic efforts to create virtual classrooms and lessons. His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios forgave tuition payments for the preschools during the quarantine, and we reduced school tuition by 50% and are giving parents time to pay. Our soup kitchens and social ministries offered meals and bags of food for people to take home. We knew many people were depending on the meals we provided to get them through this difficult time.

We continue to pray for all who are suffering. His Beatitude's Pascha message comes back to me often, reminding me that we must resist fear — it is a terrible companion — and cling with faith to our Lord Jesus Christ and His promise of salvation.

More Missionaries are Preparing for Field Service — Thanks to You!

Many new OCMC missionaries have been praying, preparing, and raising support as they await the opportunity to begin their ministry in the field. We wanted to introduce you to some of them. Please remember these brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers as they prepare to answer the call to serve those who are longing to know God.



Name: Elaine Piniat | Country of Service: Sweden

Elaine is an experienced journalist and an equally experienced volunteer in a wide range of Orthodox groups and ministries. She's done everything from coach volleyball, to build houses, to combat human trafficking. And she's a veteran of three previous OCMC short-term mission trips.

Like much of Europe, Sweden is a so-called "post-Christian" society, with 73% of the population describing themselves as "not religious" or "atheist." Elaine asks for your prayers as she shares the Gospel, both in person, and by helping create a multi-platform online presence for the Metropolis of Sweden and its churches.



Name: Josef and Euphrosini Candelario | Country of Service: Sweden

Josef and Euphrosini are both converts to Orthodoxy and feel the call of the mission field so strongly that, after they were married in 2014, they spent part of their honeymoon with the Ritsi family in Albania to experience mission life firsthand. They moved to Greece in 2016 to learn Greek and study theology.

In Sweden, Josef will serve as a pastoral assistant at St. George Cathedral in Stockholm and work with youth and campus ministries, while Effy will be part of the Internet Ministries team. They invite you to follow their story at their blog, "Candles Abroad," at candlesabroad.wordpress.com.



Name: Steve and Theophani Sarigianis | Country of Service: Albania

You could say that mission work is in Steve and Theophani's blood. Each comes from a family of priests, church planters, and missionaries, and they met while serving on the Missions Committee at Hellenic College-Holy Cross. They've each made mission trips before, but serving in Albania will be their first trip together as a married couple!

For many years, Steve and Theophani have felt called to long-term missionary service. They ask for your prayers and support as they seek the Lord's guidance, and as they share the Good News of Christ in Albania.

"We are hopeful"... continued from page 1

Daegu City wasn't hit as hard by COVID-19 as some parts of the country, he says some families in the church have been suffering due to lost hours and wages.

"Our faithful were really missing meeting together, and I didn't always know what they needed

from me," Fr. Chris admits. "It's still hard to communicate with my poor language abilities, but I tried to call people and let them know I was thinking of them and praying for them."

"Our biggest joy has been reopening the church as soon as

we were able," he says, "and our Metropolitan Ambrosios blessing us to offer services again. We had more than 40 people come to celebrate! We have been reconnecting with one another, and we are hopeful that slowly life will return to normal."

My Next Gift to Support Orthodox Missions

Yes, Fr. Martin! You can count on me to continue to share the Gospel through my prayerful support of OCMC Missionaries.

Here is my gift of:

- \$<MRG> \$<MRG*1.5> \$<MRG*2> \$_____
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Mr. and Mrs. Demetri Samplopoulos
6559 15th Avenue NW #102
Seattle, WA 98117
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My prayer request

Sts. Cosmas and Damian God pray for us!

OCMC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization eligible for tax-deductible contributions. As faithful stewards of your donations, we apply all funds received as designated. Please note that in the event the missionary, project, or fund you designate is over-funded or no longer applicable, your donation will be applied to the area most needed to continue the work.



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