



220 Mason Manatee Way
St. Augustine, FL 32086

INSIDE ▶

Your next issue of *Mission*, stories of *YOUR* impact around the world!

Window, Do No Print



Here's how you can help change more lives ... including your own!

Is God calling you to join us on an OCMC mission trip? We're saving a place for you!

The wonderful stories you read in every issue of Mission happen because of God's grace and your generous support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. Your faithfulness puts you at the very center of our work. But there's another way you can be on the front lines of our ministry: by joining an OCMC mission team!

Some mission team members have medical, dental, or other specialized training. But that's not a requirement. The most important qualifications are a deep love for Christ and a passion for sharing your Orthodox Faith. You'll be a blessing to others ... and many team members report their own spiritual lives were strengthened by their time in the field.

The OCMC sends out short-term mission teams to every part of the world each year. If you would like to explore becoming an OCMC mission team member, please let us know!

Here's our contact information:

Phone: (904) 829-5132
Toll Free: 1-877-463-6784
Fax: (904) 829-1635
E-mail: missions@ocmc.org

God bless you for your generous support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center!



Icon of
Apostle Philip
of the 70

"How can I understand unless someone guides me?"

On October 11, we commemorate Apostle Philip of the Seventy. His life should be a daily inspiration to us who share the Good News with the world.

We first meet Philip in Acts 6, where he is one of the seven deacons elected by the Church in Jerusalem. He is best remembered for an encounter on the road to Gaza, where he heard a high-ranking Ethiopian official reading the Prophet Isaiah. Philip ran and asked the man if he understood what he was reading. The man replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" Then, the Bible says, "Philip opened his mouth, and ... preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:35). Soon, the man believed and was baptized!

People still ask the Ethiopian's question today: "How can I understand unless someone guides me?" That's why Apostle Philip's example should always be before us. We are commanded to guide others to Divine Truth ... and that's just what you're doing, through your support of OCMC!



God bless you for your faithfulness and generosity!

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER

MISSION

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



Albanian kids rediscover their ancient Orthodox heritage

As a nation comes out of the darkness of atheism, you're helping young people find God's love

For 40 years following World War II, Albania's repressive Communist regime kept the small country cut off from the world while it brutally enforced a policy of official atheism.

But Albania's ancient Orthodox Faith could never be completely smothered. In the years since the fall of Communism, your support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center has been helping Orthodoxy flower in Albania once again!

Last spring, an OCMC mission team traveled to Albania with a special focus on ministry to children and young adults. For more than a week, they met with students for worship, study, fellowship, and fun. "Our schedules were busy," team member Anna Conte says, "but they were full of community, full of prayer, and full of joy."

Fr. Basil Gikas, another team member, was amazed by how hungry Albanians are for God's Word.

"I was struck by the fervor and interest of the approximately 150 young adults from Tirana and the surrounding areas who prayed with us, chanted with us, and listened attentively to our talks," Fr. Basil recalls. "I did not expect this kind of sincere response to a first-time American missionary."

With your support, the OCMC will continue to work with, and pray for, the youth of Albania as they grow in faith. Thank you for your partnership!

MY GIFT TO SUPPORT ORTHODOX MISSIONS

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

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$_____

For credit card gifts, please call or give online at www.ocmc.org/donate. Thank you!

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.

2016 JULY NEWSLETTER



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER OCTOBER, 2016

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS.

— MATTHEW 28:19

FR. MARTIN'S COLUMN

You're sending blessings around the world!

I'm excited to welcome you to the third issue of *Mission*, the newsletter that tells you about the amazing impact you're having on the world — and on people's lives — through your support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center.



The Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director

The stories in this issue were selected to show you the wonderful, positive impact your prayerful generosity is having on children and young people. From sunny African grasslands to snowy Alaskan villages ... from the Albanian people with their ancient Orthodox heritage to the Turkana people, many of whom have never heard the Gospel at all... your partnership is changing young lives for all eternity!

As Christians, that is our mission — to bring the Good News to all the world. Thank you for having a generous and caring heart that reaches out around the world to share our Orthodox Faith with hungry, seeking hearts.

In Christ,

Fr. Martin

P.S. Your prayers and gifts help carry out the Great Commission and connect you with our Orthodox brothers and sisters around the world. But there's another way you can do this: Join an OCMC mission team! Find out how you can have this unforgettable experience on page 4. And thanks again!

African villages hear the Gospel for the first time ever, thanks to you!

Imagine driving for hours across a dusty, sun-baked desert, only to stop under a lonely tree, apparently in the middle of nowhere. As you get out of your rickety old truck, you're met by a small group of men, some carrying knives or automatic rifles. As intimidating as that might be, you also hear a joyous chorus of voices off in the distance. You know you are welcome!

The members of the OCMC mission team who climbed out of that truck last spring weren't scared. The men were members of the Turkana ethnic group in Kenya and they led the team to a dry riverbed where their entire village had gathered to greet the team with song and dance. Thanks to your generous support, the OCMC has been working with the Turkana since 2007, sharing the Good News and welcoming many of them into the Orthodox Faith. The Turkana gave the team a warm welcome!

On this trip, the team, led by OCMC Executive Director Fr. Martin Ritsi made a point of visiting villages that had never heard the Gospel before. They presented skits of Bible stories, translated for the villagers by Turkana Orthodox priests. Then, everyone broke into small groups to discuss what they'd seen and dive deeper into the Bible message. Special groups for teens, and even for young children, made sure nobody was left out.

The goal was not to win converts, but to plant seeds that can be nourished over time by our Orthodox brothers and sisters among the Turkana. With your support, we will continue to work with, and pray for, our Turkana friends as they grow in faith. Thank you for your partnership!



In isolated Alaskan villages, Orthodox kids are learning more about their faith

Thanks to you, dozens of Native American children in two remote Alaskan villages learned about Jesus Christ's love for them last summer. It's not easy to get to Kwethluk and Napaskiak, 450 miles west of Anchorage, but your generosity sent an OCMC mission team there with the specific goal of helping young Alaskans experience the joy of Christian love and fellowship.

Seventy-eight children from the two villages participated in summer Orthodox Church youth camps. OCMC team members were there to teach Bible studies, share Gospel-based life lessons, lead craft projects, and much more. There was also plenty of time for team members and kids to worship and pray together.

These Alaskan children have inherited a rich Orthodox heritage and it is vital to help them remain strong in the



Faith. So, as the Alaskan people welcomed Orthodox missionaries two centuries ago, their descendants are doing the same today! Thank you for sharing the Gospel, even in the remotest corners of North America!

Your generosity reaches deep into the mountains of Mexico

Tucked away in remote villages in the mountainous Mexican state of Hidalgo, about 5,000 members of the Natua and Otomi people, descendants of the Aztecs, proudly call themselves Orthodox Christians.

The villages are incredibly hard to get to, and the priest who serves these believers, Fr. Serafim, can't visit them as often as he'd like. This has him worried. "The people are good, and they have a lot of faith," he says. "We cannot lose them." That's why priest and people alike are so happy to welcome the OCMC mission teams you send several times a year!

Team member Hannah Valentine explains that the villagers "have

little knowledge of the Church, its history, traditions, and creed. Our team's goal was simple enough: to lay a foundation for the faithful so Fr. Serafim has something to build upon."

Every morning of their visit, OCMC team members led village children in activities designed to help them understand the Divine Liturgy and the Orthodox Faith, while filling their hearts with Christian love and fellowship. As team member Fernando Arango remembers, "The children happily participated, and their eyes shone like the heavens. It was like the Holy Spirit filled all of us with joy." Thank you for helping

make this wonderful visit possible, through your support of the OCMC. Your generosity is being felt all over the world!



My Gift to Support Orthodox Missions

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

Here is my gift of:

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My prayer request

**Most Holy Theotokos, Ever-Virgin Mary,
Mother of 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.

Three horizontal lines for an address or return address.

2016 OCTOBER NEWSLETTER



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