

## URGENT NEED! Is God calling you to long-term mission service?

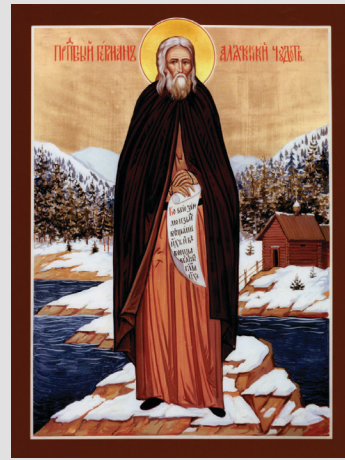
The OCMC is looking for Orthodox Christians from all walks of life for mission service around the world. Help the Church grow, and have a life-changing experience! support the mission work of OCMC!

We are hearing an urgent call from the Orthodox Church around the world: “Send us more long-term missionaries!”

In lands as diverse as Albania, Kenya, Tonga, and India, among others, there is a serious need for men and women willing to give two or more years to help our local brothers and sisters in the Faith build a stronger, more energetic, and growing Orthodox community.

Clergy, healthcare professionals, educators, administrators, musicians ... whatever your calling or specialty, if you have a heart full of love for our beautiful Faith and a willingness to work hard sharing it with others, we have a place for you!

If God is speaking to you about mission service, or if you just want to know more, go to [ocmc.org](http://ocmc.org) and click on “Get Involved.” And if you know of someone else who might be interested, please let them know too. Thank you!



### North Star of Christ's Holy Church

On August 9, we commemorate our venerable father Herman of Alaska, one of the first Orthodox missionaries to North America and the first saint to be glorified by the Orthodox Church in America. All of us in the mission field (which includes you, thanks to your partnership with OCMC!) should find inspiration and strength in his example.

How wild, distant, and foreign Alaska must have seemed when he and his brother monks came to America from northwestern Russia in 1793! But he quickly became beloved by the local Aleutian Islanders, as he lived a life of extreme simplicity and self-denial, sharing the Gospel with them until his death in 1837.

The natives called him Apa (“grandfather”), but in his Troparion he is remembered as the “north star of Christ's holy Church.” Much more information about his inspiring life can be found online. O Holy Father Herman of Alaska, pray to God for us!



*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

## Orthodox Christians in Albania depend on YOUR help

*Can Joanna hold on to her Orthodox faith after having to marry a non-Christian at such a young age?*

*Your generosity is helping the children of Albania learn and grow in their newfound Orthodox Christian faith!*

Your support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center helps OCMC missionaries share the Faith in places where those who call themselves Orthodox are a minority. The story of a brave young woman named Joanna shows the challenges Orthodox Christian teens face in some villages in Albania!

The Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist stands in the center of the village of Krokra. Dcn. Stephanos and Dkn. Alexandria

Ritsi have been ministering here for four years. The church's regular priest serves multiple congregations and lives 90 minutes away by bus, so the Ritsis and students from the seminary in Albania visit as often as they can!

Through God's grace, their church has a growing group of youth and young adults as members. Many of them come from atheist or Muslim families — and while their parents have consented to their children

receiving baptism as Christians, it can be extremely hard for a young person from one of these families to live an Orthodox Christian lifestyle.

Joanna was one of the most popular and talented members of the St. John the Baptist youth group. Her parents did not support her in her new Orthodox lifestyle, but she did her best to attend every liturgy and event she could.

Then, Joanna's parents discovered she had been speaking

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## MY NEXT 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 ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

*For credit card gifts, please call or give online at [www.ocmc.org/donate](http://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.

2017 JULY NEWSLETTER



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER

JULY 2017

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS.

— MATTHEW 28:19



## We Need You!

I am very grateful to the many Orthodox Christian Mission Center supporters who have served on mission trips over the years.

What a wonderful way to share your faith, help the holy Church expand, get to know your brothers and sisters in Christ, and have an unforgettable experience!



The Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi  
Executive Director

Is your heart calling you to something more? There is a cry coming from the Church in every corner of the world for *long-term* missionaries — men and women who can devote two or more years to mission work. You can read more about this on page 4 of this issue of *Mission*. If you're feeling any sort of call to the mission field, I hope you will talk with your spiritual father about it and prayerfully consider this urgent need.

Of course, I also want to thank you for your generous financial and prayer support of OCMC. Those two actions — praying and giving — are not only important spiritual disciplines, but are crucial to sustaining the work of the OCMC around the world. Whether, like St. Herman of Alaska, you travel to the farthest reaches of the world, or remember us in your prayers and giving at home, all of us here deeply appreciate your partnership. May our Lord bless you!

In Christ,

*Fr. Martin Ritsi*

Fr. Martin

P.S. The new **Sts. Cyril & Methodius Society** makes it easy for you to support OCMC with your prayers and regular monthly giving. Members enjoy special recognition and a thank-you gift. If you'd like to join this group, please check the box on the enclosed reply form.

## So many new believers, the priests ran out of chrism!

Your support of OCMC touches lives all over the world. Then, like ripples in a pond, those lives influence others, and so on, and so on. That's what it means for the Church to be one Body!

In Guatemala, for example, OCMC missionaries regularly train local Orthodox believers to be lay leaders and evangelists. They, in turn, spread out throughout Guatemala and southern Mexico, sharing the Gospel and teaching members of remote rural parishes. It was through the work of those lay leaders that, last spring, Fr. Daniel Muxtay chrismated more than 150 new Orthodox Christians at his church in Pebilpam, Guatemala.

Our friends in Guatemala and southern Mexico report that right now, there are over 300 additional people still waiting to be chrismated. The Church is growing so quickly, in fact, that after the chrismations in April, Fr. Daniel and his colleagues had to send an urgent petition to their archbishop for more chrism to be delivered!



A few months ago, Fr. Daniel Muxtay chrismated 153 new Orthodox Christians at a service in Guatemala. You helped them prepare to enter the Church by supporting OCMC!



These are some of your new brothers and sisters in Christ. You're part of the reason they're Orthodox Christians today.

## Prayer and hard work are paying off in the South Pacific

For many years, OCMC missionary Fr. Paul Patitsas has served Christ and His Church in the South Pacific, not only in his home parish in New Zealand, but in the growing mission fields of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. On these South Pacific islands, people have been very receptive to the Gospel message, and the Orthodox Church is establishing itself on solid ground. In Fiji alone there are now three Orthodox priests!

"Our work is not glamorous," Fr. Paul says. "Some people are called to sow and others get to reap. We must pray the seeds we are planting will someday be harvested." Your generous financial and prayer partnership of OCMC makes you a key part of the mission process ... both sowing and reaping! From supporting priests like Fr. Paul and their families, to sending mission teams to help new believers grow in their faith, your love and generosity reach even the far-flung islands of the Pacific.



Thank you for sharing your Faith around the world through your support of OCMC!



Your support of OCMC helps plant the seeds of the Gospel in the South Pacific, and your hard work is bearing fruit!

## Orthodox Christians in Albania depend on YOUR help, continued...

with boys her age. Even though she was only 16, her parents quickly arranged a marriage with a Muslim man in another village. Joanna is no longer permitted to go to church or to communicate with her Orthodox Christian friends. We hear she is trying to live her Orthodox Faith in secret, but with no contact with other believers, it is getting harder and harder to do.

**Please remember Joanna and all the young Orthodox Christians of Albania in your prayers. Your continued support of OCMC helps them live and grow in their faith every day!**

