

## A Few Minutes Planning can Have an Eternal Impact



This last year has reminded all of us how important ensuring the Church's future mission work can be. Prayerfully consider remembering OCMC in your estate planning, so that the light of Christ can continue to be shared with the world no matter what challenges may arise.

**It only takes a few minutes to update your will or other estate plans. Just go to [ocmc.org](http://ocmc.org), click "Donate" in the upper right, and select "Leave a Legacy." Or call 1-877-463-6784 to speak with us in person. Thank you!**

## "You're Sharing Your Faith with the World"

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Different OCMC Virtual Mission Teams spent time with young people and youth leaders in Uganda and Kenya. Another team was blessed to spend a day with 45 women from the Nigerian Church's Orthodox Women Organization.

His Eminence Metropolitan Alexander of Nigeria and His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mount Kenya each extended their gratitude to the OCMC Mission Team members. Metropolitan Alexander expressed his "deepest, deepest, deepest thanks and gratitude for the organization of this retreat. There is a great need to re-evangelize, and with the youth, this will not be just for Nigeria, but all Africa!"

## Virtually or in the Field, There's a Place for You on OCMC Mission Teams!

We are trusting that health and travel restrictions will soon be lifted, and that OCMC Mission Teams will once again be able to share their Orthodox Faith with the world in person. But until then, as you've seen in this issue, God has opened new doors for sharing His Word online. **If you have been feeling a call to mission service, here are some of our many upcoming opportunities!**

You can find the full list of upcoming Mission Team opportunities and details on how you can join or support a team at: [www.ocmc.org/how-we-serve/orthodox-mission-teams](http://www.ocmc.org/how-we-serve/orthodox-mission-teams)

OCMC is committed to following local, federal, and international safety regulations related to COVID-19 in the US and throughout the world and is closely monitoring the situation. Dates and locations are subject to change, in concert with these regulations. Our goal is to continue to send Mission Teams in the safest way possible.



## Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

Celebrated on May 16 in 2021. The Gospels make it clear the Lord Jesus had many women among His followers. There was His mother, the most holy Theotokos, of course, but also Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and many others. Few of their names are recorded, but their importance in the mission of His Church is clear: He appeared to them first after His resurrection and they became the first to proclaim His Resurrection to the world!

### Apolytikon for Holy Myrrhbearers Sunday in the Second Tone

*Standing by the tomb the angel said to the myrrh-bearing women: "Myrrh is for the dead; but Christ has shown Himself stranger to death." So go and cry aloud, "The Lord has risen and granted the world His great mercy."*

# MISSION

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



Even in a pandemic ...

## YOU'RE SHARING YOUR FAITH WITH THE WORLD

### OCMC Mission Teams don't have to leave home to share God's love with our Orthodox brothers and sisters!

**E**ven if we can't travel, your support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center allows us to stay in contact with Orthodox communities far away, and to share His Gospel with the world!

The Bible teaches us that "though many, we are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:5). Your support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center over the last year has helped prove that, even when members of that body can't

assemble together in person, we can still pray, worship, and learn together!

For example, earlier this year, about 100 people from Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico came together to learn about the Holy Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, the vehicles of God's love and grace on earth, from an OCMC Mission Team.

How did they do it? The way we're all meeting these days: on Zoom!

Because of the pandemic, our Colombia Mission Team couldn't

travel to South America. But the community of St. Athanasios Orthodox Church in the coastal town of Cereté was hungry to continue learning more about the Orthodox Faith. Your support made it possible for the team, and Orthodox believers from around Central and South America, to come together around screens and webcams for a day of learning and fellowship. The event was so successful that a second one was held a few weeks later.

And that's just one example.

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

**A FEW MINUTES PLANNING CAN HAVE AN ETERNAL IMPACT**

See page 4!



# Thank You, Thank You, Thank You



Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi  
Executive Director

That's really the most important thing I can say right now. So I'll repeat: Thank you!

It's easy to see why someone might wonder if they should support international mission work when overseas travel is difficult or even impossible.

But I guess that never even crossed your minds. You and other OCMC partners and friends have been so generous and steadfast in your financial and prayer support over the last year. Because of you, OCMC has been able to keep our missionaries in the field and is very well-positioned, not only to resume, but even to expand our Orthodox witness around the world as restrictions ease.

That's why I keep saying "thank you."

2020 was a year of profound challenges. So many families and parishes have suffered losses. I mourn with you. But, it was also a year of victories! Our Lord, Who overcomes tribulations and even death, showed us new ways of connecting, worshipping and learning together, reaching out to others, and sharing in His victory.

You helped make that happen! So, I hope you won't mind if I say it just one more time:

Thank you!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Fr. Martin



*Kenya is a long way from North America, but your generosity and compassion are being felt there daily.*

## Even When People Can't Travel, Your Love Does

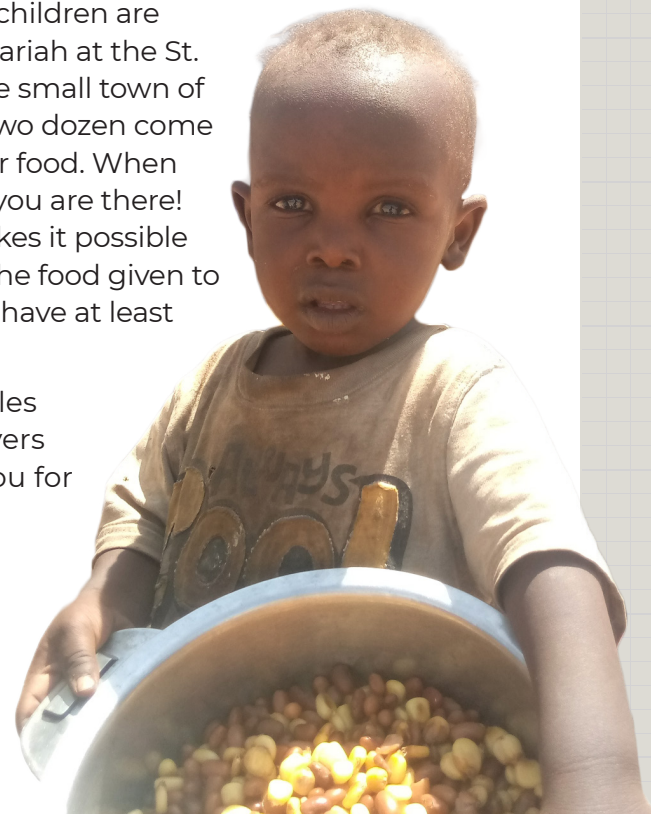
**We're limited in our ability to travel, but financial support moves freely. And thanks to that, children and families in so many places are being helped by your donations to OCMC.**

The kids at the Orthodox Children's Home of Hope in Albania would love to tell you how much your friendship and generosity mean to them. They had barely begun to recover from an earthquake in late 2019 when COVID-19 forced a nationwide lockdown. With your help, OCMC let them know they hadn't been forgotten. Funds from OCMC paid to refurbish and upgrade the Home's playground. Later, more than a dozen OCMC volunteers came together to take part in a virtual "summer camp" with the kids.

Far to the south, about 30 children are being cared for by Fr. Zachariah at the St. Nicholas Community in the small town of Lokichar, Kenya. Another two dozen come to St. Nicholas every day for food. When they arrive each morning, you are there! Your support of OCMC makes it possible for us to cover the cost of the food given to these children so they can have at least one nutritious meal daily.

Those are just two examples of why your gifts and prayers matter so much! Thank you for your generosity and love.

*Every day, your love and support provide both physical and spiritual sustenance for the children of the St. Nicholas Community in Lokichar, Kenya.*



## You're Helping Missionaries and Their Families Prepare to Serve

As you've seen in this newsletter, OCMC didn't just close down and wait for the pandemic to end. We trust in God's grace and your generosity, so we have been able to keep our long-term missionaries in the field and continue with our important work of preparing new missionaries to travel to their mission fields as soon as it's possible to do so.

**Recent graduates from our New Candidate Orientation program include:**



### Michael and Megan Jones

Anchorage, AK – Will be serving in Fiji where they will be assisting with building construction projects for the church and teaching



### Susan Townszen

Reno, NV – Will be serving in Mexico City providing administrative support in the Metropolis Office



### Gabriella Hesselink

Milwaukie, OR – Will be serving in Guatemala and working at a medical clinic



### Shannon Todd

Loveland, CO – Will be serving at Project Mexico teaching catechism



### Faeli Heise

Rochester, NY – Will be serving at Project Mexico teaching catechism



### Anna Cunningham

Cleveland, OH – Will be serving at Project Mexico