

You Can Be the Help a Priest  
Has Been Praying for



The help you provide as part of our SAMP program reaches out to touch lives in parishes around the world.

We thank God for everyone who supports the work of OCMC with their prayers and financial gifts. But every October, we make a special point of thanking the generous friends who give every month as part of our Support a Mission Priest Program!

As you’ve been reading in this and previous issues of MISSION, dioceses around the world need your help now more than ever. And that’s especially true for many of the almost 400 priests in 16 countries — some of whom serve more than one parish — who are supported by our SAMP donors.

You can help sustain Orthodox priests through these tough times, and for years to come, by becoming a SAMP donor today. Just go to [ocmc.org](http://ocmc.org), click **"Donate"** in the upper right, and select **"Support a Mission Priest."** Thank you!

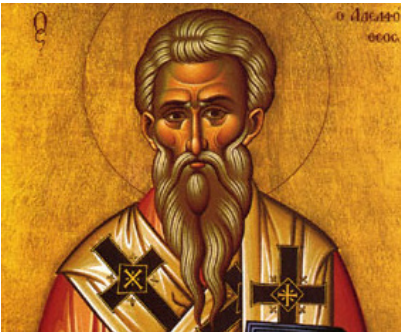
MY NEXT GIFT TO SUPPORT ORTHODOX MISSIONS

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

- ☐ \$XX1   ☐ \$XX2   ☐ \$XX3   ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I want to join the Ss. Cyril & Methodius Society with a monthly gift of: \$\_\_\_\_\_

To give online visit [www.ocmc.org/donate](http://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.



James the Apostle,  
Brother of Our Lord

Celebrated on October 23. James was a son of Joseph the Betrothed by a wife he had before he was betrothed to the Ever-Virgin, or possibly a nephew, making him our Lord’s cousin. Whatever the case, Scripture refers to him as the “brother of the Lord” (Galatians 1:19). James became the first bishop of Jerusalem, and after preaching the Gospel from the highest point of the Temple on the day of Passover, was thrown down from there and stoned to death while he prayed for his murderers.

Kontakion of James (Iakovos),  
the Brother of the Lord in the  
Fourth Tone

*O wondrous Iakovos, God the Logos, only-begotten of the Father, who dwelt among us in latter days, declared you, the first shepherd and teacher of Jerusalem, and faithful steward of the spiritual mysteries. Wherefore, we all honor you, O Apostle.*



God bless you for your faithfulness and generosity!

MISSION

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



**"SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM"**  
**YOU'RE SHARING GOD'S KINGDOM, EVERY DAY**

In this special edition of MISSION, we go in-depth to show you the great things happening in Guatemala, through God’s grace and your support of OCMC!

**Even though OCMC Mission Teams have been limited in their travel because of the pandemic, your prayers and generous giving are empowering the work of OCMC Missionaries in Guatemala. Here are some recent updates from friends hard at work helping the growing and maturing Orthodox Church in this Central American land!**

Father Thomas Manuel gives thanks to God for his ordination to the Holy Priesthood! He

will be assisting the Vicar at the Annunciation Cathedral in Aguacate with home visits and other ministry to the approximately seven hundred faithful in the parish. A teacher by profession, Fr. Thomas has also been developing curricula for Bible study classes on apologetics, Orthodox teachings on sexuality and gender, and other important topics. Presbytera Elizabeth Manuel, a music teacher, has been devoting time to updating books and other materials for

Holy Week and translating the Paraklesis into Spanish. She extends her thanks to the many people with strong knowledge of Spanish or Greek who have helped her in this work! Father Juvenal Repass has been recovering from recent surgery but has been making significant progress in translating important liturgical works into English, in hopes of eventually translating them into Spanish and other languages.

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

SPECIAL  
GUATEMALA  
EDITION

Seek First the Kingdom!



Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi  
Executive Director

In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord tells us not to be like the people who get anxious about their clothes, or what they will eat or drink. Instead of seeking after those things, He teaches us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness,” and everything else will follow (Matt. 6:32). By supporting OCMC missions as generously as you do, you are proving not only how important it is to you to seek God’s kingdom yourself, but to share it with others, too! Thank you so much for the work you’re making possible around the world through your generosity. We decided to devote this whole edition of MISSION to one powerful example of where this work is happening — the Central American nation of Guatemala. It’s an amazing story that’s still unfolding, and your prayers and your gifts put you right at the center of it! In this time when everything seems so unstable, the world desperately needs the witness of God’s transformational love and grace. You are sharing His kingdom and righteousness with hungry hearts in Guatemala and the world over. In His name, thank you for your partnership.

*Fr. Martin Ritsi*

Fr. Martin  
P.S. Speaking of partnership, I hope you will consider joining our Support a Mission Priest program. Your faithful giving can make a huge difference in the life of an Orthodox priest! You can read more on page 4!



The people of Aguacate have few options for medical care besides our clinic. They thank you for your love and support!

Here’s How You’re Sharing Life and Health in Guatemala Every Day

**For the past several years, one of OCMC’s most important projects in Guatemala has been supporting a medical and dental clinic serving the indigenous Mayan community in the remote village of Aguacate.**

Support from generous OCMC supporters like you, and in particular from Holy Cross Church in Pittsburgh, has been critical in establishing the clinic, filling it with medical equipment, and keeping its doors open. Frequent visits from OCMC mission teams — which have included doctors, dentists, RNs, midwives, and med students, as well as caring volunteers — have supported the local doctors, nurses, and dental techs who work there day to day.

The clinic was closed for several months last year because of the pandemic, but OCMC Missionary Fr. John Chakos reports that it is now open and fully staffed with medical and dental students serving their clinical rotations. This is good news, because the people of Aguacate have little to no access to medical or dental care besides what’s available at the clinic.

The Aguacate clinic is a wonderful example of how your support of OCMC dramatically affects not only the spiritual growth, but also the day-to-day lives of people in communities thousands of miles away. The people of Aguacate have adopted this clinic as their own, and they are grateful, not only for the OCMC Mission Teams who come to visit them, but also the friends like you who help make it all possible.

And of course, we are grateful, too!



Your generosity touches lives every day. Thank you.



With Your Help, the Future is Being Built Today

In the previous issue of MISSION, we told you about an exciting new development in the growth of the Orthodox Faith in Guatemala, the start of construction of a new seminary and training center for priests and catechists. Now we can update you that great progress is being made: Fr. John Chakos, OCMC long-term missionary in Guatemala, estimates construction on the Ss. Peter and Paul Seminary and Mission Training Center will be finished some time next spring!

Right now, there are ten Guatemalan seminarians eagerly looking forward to moving into the new facility to continue their studies. Additionally, at least 300 catechists from across Guatemala already come to the site a few times a year to study and share. “They are really the foot soldiers,” Fr. John explains, “doing the work in the trenches and holding the communities together in the absence of a priest, which is most of the time.”

Fr. John says missionary training should also be underway by this time next year. That will prepare men and women to share the Orthodox Faith in cities, towns, and villages across Guatemala, and in other parts of Central America, too.

**The thrilling vision of an active and vibrant center of Orthodox worship, study, and preparation in the highlands of western Guatemala is getting closer and closer to reality every day, and you’re a big part of it thanks to your support of OCMC! Thank you so much.**

“Missionaries in Guatemala”... continued from page 1

Meanwhile, Missionaries Jesse Brandow and Juanita Pascual have moved to the capital city of Guatemala City, where Juanita is continuing her medical education. Jesse has finished the broad outline of curriculum for the mission school and has received the Archbishop’s approval for this work. He’s now developing detailed lesson plans.

From parish work, to education, to translating our beautiful Orthodox liturgy into Spanish, your support of OCMC is empowering the daily ministry of Missionaries in Guatemala. Thank you for your prayers, your generosity, and most of all, for your love for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Guatemala and around the world!

