

There's Room for You on Upcoming OCMC Mission Teams!

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily disrupted travel and community work all over the world, we are continuing to accept and process Team applications, for when we hope travel will resume safely! Here are a few of the exciting opportunities for the months ahead.

Accra, Ghana Jul 27-Aug 7

Offer continuing education and guidance at a clergy retreat.

Larteh, Ghana Aug 4-18

Provide fellowship and teaching at a camp for young Orthodox believers

Newhalen, Alaska Aug 6-17

Prepare and offer lessons for the Orthodox youth at their annual youth camp.

Kisumu, Kenya Aug 8 - 17

Share with women of the Diocese as they gather at an annual conference to learn more about their faith.

Korca, Albania Aug 11-22

Assist with teaching and renovat work at St. John the Baptist Monastery.

Kisumu, Kenya Aug 26-Sep 6

Provide health care and education to rural communities. Healthcare professionals are needed

Cerete, Colombia Oct 14-23

Provide health care and education to rural communities. Healthcare professionals are needed

Kisumu, Kenya Dec 6-15

Participate in an annual event for youth and teens to learn more about Orthodoxy.



Get the latest updates, and see the full list of Orthodox Mission Team opportunities, at ocmc.org.

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" (Matthew 9: 37-38)

MY NEXT GIFT TO SUPPORT ORTHODOX MISSIONS

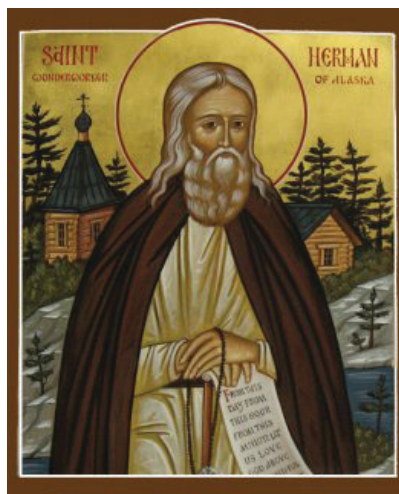
Yes, Fr. Martin! You can count on me to continue to share the Gospel through my prayerful support of OCMC Mission Teams. **Here is my gift of:**

☐ \$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.



St. Herman of Alaska Wonderworker of All America

It's appropriate that we honor the 50th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Herman in this special Teams-focused issue of Mission, because the Saint himself came to the North American mission field as part of an Orthodox missionary team! In 1794, he and six other monks from Valaam Monastery in Russia traveled over 7,000 miles to Kodiak, Alaska, where they taught and baptized the native Alaskans. Life there wasn't easy, and soon Herman was the only surviving monk. He built a hermitage on Spruce Island and called it New Valaam. He performed many miracles, and others were recorded after his repose in 1837. Herman was glorified as the first North American saint in August, 1970.



God bless you for your faithfulness and generosity!

2020 SPRING NEWSLETTER

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER

SUMMER 2020

MISSION

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

In his own words...

"WHERE WIND, WEATHER, AND WATER SET THE AGENDA"



Fr. John thanks you for sharing God's love with the people of Kenya!

Fr. John Chagnon reflects on serving on an OCMC team in Kenya

Last winter, Fr. John Chagnon of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in West St. Paul, Minnesota, went to Kenya as part of an OCMC short-term Mission Team. We asked him to tell you about his experience.

In Africa, nature still rules. We have machines and technology to overcome most obstacles, but Africa is still a place where wind and weather and water set the

agenda. It's a different kind of life, a different way of going from day to day and sometimes hour to hour. Most everything we count on in our hustle and bustle can be largely irrelevant in Africa, but only experiencing it for yourself can really teach this.

As always, I appreciate the faith of the people of Africa. They have done so much with so little and they persevere when many of the

rest of us would have given up. I'm always a better Priest and a better person for having traveled there. In Africa, I've learned lessons there that no seminary could ever have taught me.

Everything I have learned in my travels inspires me to see the same realized at home. In going on this trip, a part of me felt this would be my last run to Africa.

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

**SPECIAL
TEAMS
EDITION**

Is God calling
YOU to serve?
See page 4!

Christ is Risen!

Just as the OCMC staff and I were preparing this special Teams-focused issue of Mission, the full effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to be felt in the United States.



Rev. Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director

While this is a time of great uncertainty, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7). This pandemic even reminds us how interconnected our world is, and how important it is that we transmit the love of Christ. Our efforts to continue that transmission have not slowed down. Rather, they are needed more than ever.

I ask that you remember, pray for, and support our missionaries who continue to serve around the world spreading the love of Christ, who is the Healer of our souls and bodies.

I also want you to be confident that, in His wonderful grace, Christ will continue to provide opportunities for us to carry out His commandment to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. As you read about the impact you're having in Africa through your support of OCMC Mission Teams, I invite you to ask Him whether He is calling you to join a Team yourself and to pray for all those who continue to serve in these unprecedented times Thank you!

Truly the Lord is Risen,

In Christ,

Fr. Martin Ritsi

Fr. Martin

YOUR Support Makes All the Difference!

When we say your giving makes OCMC's work possible, we really mean it. Your generosity is the engine that sends 20 or more OCMC Mission Teams — over 120 faithful servants — around the world every year to work on projects specifically requested by our Orthodox brothers and sisters in the field. Every one of those projects is underwritten by donors like you. Without that financial support, this just couldn't happen!

YOUR GIVING:



Connects you and your parish to the global mission work of the Orthodox Church.



Helps Team Members and Missionaries be faithful to God's call on their lives.



Puts your money to work supporting the things that matter most to you.



Honors Christ's command to share His message with the world!

\$1 = \$2.50!

Plus, every \$1 you give to support OCMC Mission Teams activates more than \$1.50 in additional funding from other sources to support our teams and projects.

"This Has Stayed With Me, and Always Will"

OCMC has been sending Orthodox Mission Teams to Ghana in West Africa since 1989. Here are what some recent Ghana Team Members have said about the impact serving in Missions has had on their faith. These reflections are common amongst all who serve on Mission Teams around the world:



"I remember thinking we were going to Africa to help them, but I received so much more than I ever gave to those beautiful people and the church we served! They showed love, respect, and appreciation for everything. I learned all of that and so much more."

"Even at my age, my Mission Team service was a new experience. There has never been anything like it, before or since."

"The impact of my mission work in Ghana has stayed with me, and always will. I will always continue to give back."

The 5 Steps to being an OCMC Team Member

We love to tell you about the OCMC Mission Teams you're supporting, and the amazing experience team members have in the field. Teams are a great way for everyone to serve in missions! Have you ever wondered what it'd be like to be on a team? Here are the steps of a Team member's journey.

1. Apply

Submit a Missions Team Application (available at ocmc.org) and clergy reference.

2. Train

Once your application is accepted, you'll go through orientation — a time of training, preparation, and team building. The specifics of your training depend on your Team assignment.

3. Share

Tell family, friends, those in your church and community about the work you will be doing, and raise funds for support. We will help you do that effectively.

4. Go

You and your teammates will serve others and experience a new culture while offering a witness to the Faith.

5. Witness

Once you return home, share your knowledge with others, and if they feel called, encourage them to join an OCMC Mission Team too! (engage in missions and sharing Christ's love)



"In his own words"... continued from page 1

My time in the mission field has inspired me to witness here in America, a place so needy for the Gospel even if there are churches on every corner. Those doors haven't opened yet, but I keep praying they will.

The Team was fun, filled with unique personalities and

experienced travelers. One of our Team Members, Matushka Wendy was prepared and ready. Two others were like sons, Daniel, whose light heart and approachable nature made him a natural with the children; and Thomas — the observer — a quiet river running deep.

I will miss the faces, the sights, even the smells of that place. Hearts were touched, memories and friendships were made, Faith was strengthened. We simply have to trust God that the seeds planted will flower in His time, both in Kenya and within us. ■