

3 Ways You Can Have Even More Impact!

Missions isn't possible without your prayers, support, and service. You have already had an tremendous impact. Let us help you answer your call to do more!

Support Orthodox Missions with a Gift TODAY!



Give Now

Thank you for all you have done for Orthodox missions! Would you like to see more of what we shared in this newsletter happening around the world? If so, prayerfully consider scanning the QR code, or visiting www.ocmc.org/donate, and making a one-time, or recurring, gift to the Mission Center. Your sacrificial offering means more missionaries and more ministries sharing the light of Christ on five continents.

Leave a Legacy – Include OCMC in Your Will



Get Started

With so many people still needing to be presented with the saving message of the Gospel, please ensure that future generations of Orthodox faithful can continue the work which you believe to be so important. OCMC has free tools available for you to leave a legacy gift for missions. Visit www.freewill.com/ocmc or scan the code to learn more and begin the process of making your legacy gift today.

Answer the Call to Service



Learn More

For almost 40 years, OCMC has had missionaries from all walks of life - from lay professionals to students/seminarians and clergy. Missionaries just need a desire to spread the Gospel and to care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of others. If you feel God is calling you to this kind of service, contact Fr. Rob Spaliatsos at frrob@ocmc.org to start a conversation today.



St. Paraskevi the Righteous Martyr of Rome

St. Paraskevi, whose name means "preparation" or "preparedness", was born in a village near Rome. From childhood she was instructed in the sacred letters and devoted herself to the study of the Scriptures. She led a monastic life and guided many to Faith in Christ. During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, she was apprehended because she was a Christian and was urged to worship the idols, but she answered with the words of Jeremias: "Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth" (Jer. 10:11). She was martyred for her faith and is remembered on July 26th.

Apolytikion

*Appropriate to your calling,
O Champion Paraskevi,
you worshipped with the
readiness your name bears.
For an abode you obtained
faith, which is your namesake.
Wherefore, you pour forth
healing and intercede for our
souls.*

MISSION

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



Let the Little Children Come to Me OCMC Missionaries Help Bring Albanian Youth to Christ

The Church in Albania, under the leadership of His Beatitude Archbishop ANASTASIOS, is focused on ushering youth into a life of faith in Christ. These children, spared from the pain and persecution inflicted by the communist regime that lost power in the 1990s, are vital to establishing a life of hope and love found in Jesus Christ.

The Church's Central Children's office has been tasked with helping to re-introduce Orthodoxy and Christ to new generations of believers and engaging them in a vibrant

Church life. Nathan Hoppe, OCMC missionary and long-time director of the Office, observed, "For the first time, we organized a caroling event around the Christmas tree [in Tirana] which included participants from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Evangelical communities."

You have been essential to the success of the Children's Office by sending teams of missionaries to staff this critically important ministry alongside Albanian faithful. Its ministries include: the Spiritual Journey after school program,

family and youth camps, retreats, publications, feast day programs for Pascha and Christmas, and catechetical programs for adolescents through young adults.

Nathan's wife, Gabriela, (also an OCMC missionary) leads a vibrant ministry to adolescents and recently took on a major new responsibility by becoming editor of Gëzohu (Albanian for "Rejoice!"), the Church's monthly children's magazine. Another OCMC Missionary, Caryn Macdonald, collaborates with Gabriela on the magazine.

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

THREE WAYS YOU CAN HAVE EVEN MORE IMPACT! see how on page 4



Foot Soldiers for Christ

Catechists Being Trained at Sts. Peter & Paul Theological Training Center in Guatemala

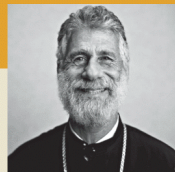
In past issues of Mission, we have shared information about the new San Andres Seminary and Sts. Peter & Paul Theological Training Center in Guatemala, that OCMC donors, like you, are helping to build. With the facility nearing completion, droves of catechists are already being trained and sent back to their villages to share the good news of the Gospel.

Every two months, more than 100 catechists come from across Guatemala for two-day training retreats that are primarily led by Guatemalan priests Archimandrite Evangelios and Fr. Daniel, as well as the seminarians who are studying theology at the training center. OCMC missionaries Fr. John Chakos, Fr. Juvenal Repass, and Fr. Thomas Manuel as well as translation team member Jesse Brandow have also offered instruction in the past.

Reflecting on why this is such a critical initiative for the region, OCMC Missionary Director Fr. Rob Spaliatsos, shares, “The San Andres Seminary and Theological Training Center is a needed resource to train future clergy in Guatemala and elsewhere in Central America.”

Through your prayers and sacrificial giving, catechists take what they learn back to their respective parishes to share with others and help build up their communities by deepening an understanding of how to live an Orthodox Christian life.

“Catechists are the foot soldiers for Christ and are holding the church together because there simply aren’t enough priests,” said Fr. John Chakos. “There are so many communities – of all sizes – that may only see a priest once or twice per year. Catechists are vital to growing the Orthodox Church.”



FROM FR. MARTIN: Bright Lights of Orthodoxy Shining Around the World

I am often awed by the scope of the Orthodox Christian

witness that the supporters of the Mission Center make possible.

Over the years, OCMC has helped shine the Light of Christ throughout the world in 50 countries!

To help put in context some of the impact you are having through your prayerful offerings, we wanted to share with you updates from

three countries where OCMC missionaries and ministries are helping to transform the lives of thousands of people.

You will read about how the youth are being guided to firmly embrace a life of faith in Albania. In Guatemala, you’ll learn about hundreds of catechists who are being trained to deepen the understanding of Christ and Orthodoxy in their communities. And, finally, we are excited to share how the Diocese of Kisumu in Kenya is being empowered to become

self-sustaining through beekeeping.

At the end of this issue of Mission, I invite you to prayerfully consider increasing your commitment to missions through service and/or legacy giving.

We could not be more grateful for the work you make possible. Thank you!

In Christ,

Fr. Martin Ritsi



A Golden Opportunity

Church’s Beekeeping Initiative in Kenya Working Toward Sustainability

For a Church to grow and multiply, it must be able to sustain itself. This is the driving belief behind a new project in Kenya that is being made possible by investments from donors to missions like you.

With the blessing of Bishop MARCOS of Kisumu and Western Kenya, sisters at the Monastery of Panaghia Triherousa are now managing three apiaries that will eventually each have 50 hives producing a high-grade honey which is in high demand in Kenya.

“What is so impactful,” states OCMC Projects and Grants Manager Santhe Loizos, “is that when the honey is ready, it will be sold to the public and the revenues will generate sustainable support for the expenses of the Diocese, including the salaries of the priests, operation of the schools sponsored by the Diocese, and charity work.”

One of the locations is close to the Panaghia Triherousa Monastery in the village of Chavogere. The second is housed on the land of the late Bishop ATHANASIOS (Akunda), which his father offered in his son’s memory. The third hive location is situated in Buhili. The land at this location was donated by a Muslim member of parliament because he admired and appreciated the work of our Church in the area.

With startup funding from the faithful in the United States, 35 of the initial 60 hives have been fully colonized and are expected to begin producing honey soon. Initiatives like this are needed so that local churches can generate funding streams that are sustainable and not dependent on outside sources once they are built and fully functioning.

Thank you for making initiatives like this possible!

Let the Little Children Come to Me...continued

Supporters of missions, like you, are also helping to increase the Church’s youth outreach by sending OCMC’s newest missionary, Hannah Valentine, to offer her talents to the Children’s office. Hannah is a contributor to Gëzohu; and she has adapted a book into a 45-minute play that will be used this summer in family and youth camps.

Your support of OCMC and its missionaries in Albania, and elsewhere, doesn’t just create programming, more importantly, has a lifetime impact on children’s lives. Their new life in Christ is firmly established by these efforts and bears spiritual fruit for generations to come.



OCMC Missionary, Gabriella Hoppe, holding issues of the Children’s Office new Gëzohu magazine.