

FROM FR. MARTIN: **New Faces and New Places**

into several new countries. These priests take the Gospel to parts of the world which may have never heard its lifesaving message. Additionally, the increased SAMP support that donors like you have sacrificially given allows hierarchs in mission lands to ordain more clergy who, in turn, will reach even more people.

You are sending Fr. Juvenal Repass to continue his service as a missionary priest in Brazil after years serving in Guatemala. And you are sending OCMC's newest missionary, Ruby Maggard, to join the Jones family in the South Pacific as the Church and its ministries continue to grow there as well.

Thanks to your support and heartfelt desire for more people to know hope, love, and salvation in Christ, the Mission Center continues to expand its global proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In recent months, you have enabled us to grow the number of priests receiving critical financial aid through the Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) program and expand its reach

In this edition of Mission, we invite you to learn more about these exciting new developments and the many lives you are impacting with your gifts to OCMC. Please also take time to learn about how you can help empower more mission priests by getting more involved with the SAMP program.

We celebrate your commitment to Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations", and we are ever thankful for your ongoing prayers and support for Orthodox missions.

In Christ,
Fr. Martin Ritsi

Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director

MISSION

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



Growing the Ranks, Growing the Witness

Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) Program
Expands to Assist 550 Clergy Across Africa

Many people don't know this, but one of the earliest ministries of the Mission Center was to offer financial support to priests serving mission lands. Over the years, thanks to special donors like you, this ministry expanded and evolved into a core OCMC program – Support a Mission Priest (SAMP).

Mission priests are essential to the mission work of the Church because they often spread the Gospel in the communities in which they live. These places can be remote, having had little or

no previous exposure to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These mission priests can preach in the language of the people receiving the Good News, and the ministries they establish align with the culture of the people they serve.

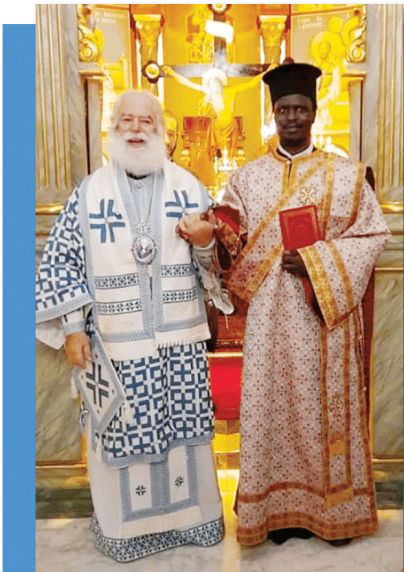
"Mission priests are one of the, if not THE, most effective ways to plant the Orthodox Church in new places," said OCMC Grants Manager Santhe Loizos.

Today, the SAMP program enables donors like you to pledge \$50 a month (\$600 per year) - money that is sent directly to hierarchs to

give as stipends to clergy serving in some of the most economically disadvantaged parts of the world. In fact, SAMP now provides this vital support to over 550 priests in more than 20 countries.

Thanks to you, all four of the dioceses in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Guinea, are receiving SAMP assistance for the first time. In these countries, people only earn between \$7 and \$17 a day on average. Reliable and regular SAMP stipends will make an impactful difference in the lives of priests in the

continued on page 3



SUPPORT A MISSION PRIEST

Every year, hundreds of priests across Africa receive critical financial assistance from Orthodox faithful just like you that helps them care for their families and give themselves fully to their ministry. With a commitment of just \$50 per month (\$600 per year), you too can offer a priest this vital and reliable aid. Become a SAMP supporter today. Empower a mission priest to share the Gospel and give hierarchs establishing and growing the Church in Africa an opportunity to ordain even more clergy who will serve the people.



Give online at ocmc.org/SAMP2023 or scan 

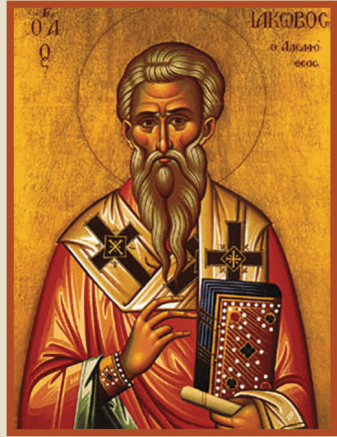


Go and make disciples
of all nations. - MATTHEW 28:19

**SUPPORT MISSION
PRIESTS IN AFRICA!**

see how on page 4

ORTHODOX MISSIONARY SAINT

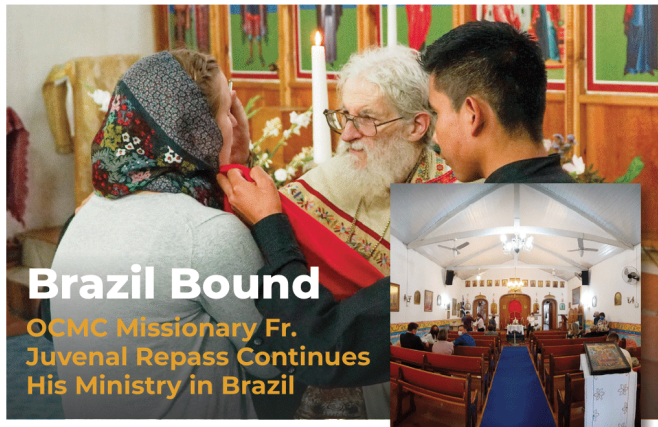


St. James the Apostle, brother of Our Lord

Having ascended the crest of the Temple on the day of the Passover at the prompting of all, he bore testimony from there concerning his belief in Jesus, and he proclaimed with a great voice that Jesus sits at the right hand of the great power of God and shall come again upon the clouds of heaven.

Apolytikion

As the Lord's disciple, O righteous One, you received the Gospel, as Martyr, you have unwavering courage, as the Lord's brother, you have forthrightness, as Hierarch, intercession. Intercede with Christ our God, that our souls may be saved.



Brazil Bound

OCMC Missionary Fr. Juvenal Repass Continues His Ministry in Brazil

A missionary's shoes are well worn. This is especially true of OCMC Missionary Fr. Juvenal Repass, who you helped send to Guatemala in 2017. After years of living and sharing the Gospel in Central America, your lasting support is allowing Fr. Juvenal to continue his ministry further south in Brazil.

With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan IOSIF, Fr. Juvenal will begin duties as a parish priest at the Church of the Dormition in Sao Paolo. Fr. Juvenal is looking forward to serving the Liturgy and the sacraments to this parish of primarily Brazilian faithful. To do so, he will need to learn Portuguese. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support that will strengthen and encourage him through this process.

On this journey, Fr. Juvenal will join Fr. Vasilios, a Brazilian priest who serves at the nearby Orthodox cathedral. Together they hope to develop and offer robust catechism to the faithful in Sao Paolo. Ultimately, Fr. Juvenal hopes

to take the Faith to people who have yet to experience the fullness of Orthodoxy.

Your gifts in support of Orthodox missions have helped train and send many people like Fr. Juvenal over the years. No one, however, is more thankful for your sacrificial offerings than the missionaries themselves. Like Paul in his letter to the Philippians, they are filled with gratitude:

"I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

– **Philippians 4:18-20**

These thanks are for their well-being which you ensure, and for the sharing of the Gospel you make possible in places like Guatemala, Brazil, and beyond.



Islands of Hope

Ruby Maggard Heads to Fiji Growing the Orthodox Missionary Presence in the South Pacific

Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa are small island chains in the South Pacific. It has been a joy to share with you how you have helped OCMC to support the work begun by His Eminence, Metropolitan AMPHILOCHIOS, and continued by His Eminence MYRON, to plant the seeds of the Orthodox Faith in these special places.

Gifts from donors like you were responsible for sending OCMC's first missionaries to the region, Fr. Paul and Pres. Katerina Patitsas, in 2016. You then sent the Jones family (who now serve in Tonga) to continue

the missionary witness there in 2022, and now joined by OCMC's newest missionary, Ruby Maggard, who will serve in the neighboring island nation of Fiji.

Thanks again to faithful supporters of Orthodox missions like you, Ruby will be helping initiate an early learning center at the St. Tabitha Orphanage. This center, initially for children of the Orphanage's staff, will ultimately provide enrichment to the children of the orphanage as well.

Ruby will be working under Dr. Eleni Athinodorou, who said, "Ruby will have the opportunity to contribute to the mission efforts in Fiji as she steps into her role at the Early Learning Center and begins to take on new tasks."

For the first several months of her service, however, Ruby will be tasked with learning the Fijian language and culture. Please keep Ruby, the Jones family, and the staff and children of the St. Tabitha Orphanage in your prayers.

Growing the Ranks, Growing the Witness...continued

DRC and Guinea and in the dioceses they serve.

Of the SAMP support his diocese receives, His Grace, Bishop MARKOS of Kisumu, Kenya, shares, "The SAMP program has been assisting and uplifting our Mission in Kenya all along the way. I feel humbly grateful towards all the donors of OCMC for their good-will, because our

priests do not fail to receive their monthly allowance from the Diocese, something that they need so much."

Thank you for making the ministries of mission priests possible and for ensuring that they can continue to care for the spiritual and liturgical needs of their communities.

