

Pentecost: Why It's an Important Moment in Missions

The Feast of Pentecost, when Disciples were equipped to become Apostles.

This year, on June 23rd, we in the Orthodox Church will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, a pivotal moment in Christ's ministry and a foundational one for the Church. During this Feast, we remember when the Holy Spirit came upon Christ's Disciples, granting them the gift of Divine Wisdom and the ability to share this wisdom in many languages. From this day, the work of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth making disciples of all nations would begin. Thus, we pray:

Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made fishermen all-wise, sending upon them the Holy Spirit and, through them, netting the world. O Loving One, glory to You.



How You Can Further the Story of Missions

None of the amazing stories we have shared with you in this edition of MISSION would be possible without the prayerful outpouring of support we receive from the faithful, like you, everyday. We know that missions is an important aspect of your spiritual journey, and we invite you to continue that journey with us as, together, we strive to support the Church and Her efforts to welcome more people in the Body of Christ:



Make a Gift Today
Included in this newsletter is a response card that you can use to grow the mission of the Church today! You can also make your gift online by scanning the code to the left. All amounts have an impact.



Become a Sustainer
With the pledge of a recurring gift, you will become a member of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Society and join the ranks of donors furthering mission work around the world with ongoing support.



Leave a Legacy
Looking for a way to support the work of OCMC without spending anything today? By including a legacy gift in your will, you can make disciples of all nations for generations to come. Scan to get started.

To explore all of the ways you can make the work of OCMC possible, visit us at:
www.ocmc.org/give

MISSION

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



The Next Chapter in Turkana

How you are enabling OCMC to help expand the Church in Northern Kenya.

In 2010, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center was invited by His Eminence MAKARIOS, Archbishop of Kenya, to join the Church's efforts in the remote Turkana region of Northern Kenya to share the teachings and love of the Orthodox Christian Faith with people who had not heard the gospel before. Supporters of the Mission Center like you rallied to send mission teams, missionaries, and staff to join local clergy in teaching the Faith to men, women, and children in villages across this arid region where people still largely live

as nomadic pastoralists. You helped establish schools, dig wells, and establish five Orthodox churches in Turkana that became homes to a growing body of believers.

The story of Orthodox Christianity and the Mission Center amongst the Turkana continues! Late last year, OCMC once again visited the Turkana and, along with the clergy there, planned out the steps in taking the Gospel further into Turkana's interior.

With the commitment of more than \$100k from the Mission Center that was

made possible by donors like you, the Church in Kenya will soon begin training 15 new catechists – one for each of the five villages where an Orthodox parish already exists, and one each for ten new villages where there is no Christian presence that would like to welcome the Church among them. Orthodox priests already serving in Turkana will visit these catechists for monthly training sessions. The catechists will then take what they learn and share it with their people, establishing a rhythm of a parish life, while

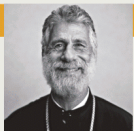
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Go and make disciples of all nations. - MATTHEW 28:19

HOW YOU CAN FURTHER THE STORY OF MISSIONS!

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FROM FR. MARTIN

**Christ is Risen!
Truly He is Risen!**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Turkana County of northern Kenya and across Central America, you have enabled the Mission Center to play a pivotal part in the ongoing saga of the Orthodox Church's growth amongst the people who call these regions home.

We are blessed to be able to share with you exciting developments in both areas as new chapters in the beautiful story of the Holy Spirit's movement in our world continues. ***In Turkana, new villages will soon be reached with the Gospel of Christ, and a new seminary and mission center have been opened in Guatemala to serve the Church in Central America.***

In this issue of MISSION we will also introduce you to ***new faces that supporters like you have helped answer their call to missionary service.*** Many of them will play their own parts as these new chapters in the history of the Church begin to write themselves. Thank you for playing your part in this miraculous story as well.

In Christ,

Fr. Martin Ritsi

Fr. Martin Ritsi
Executive Director

PS – I invite you to learn more about how you can continue to have an impact through missions by ***becoming a monthly giver, or making a legacy gift,*** to the Mission Center on the back page.



Before a crowd of more than 3,000 people, His Eminence BATHENAGORAS, Metropolitan of Vize (formerly of Mexico), officially opened the doors of the Ss. Peter and Paul Mission Center and St. Andrew Seminary in Huehuetenango, Guatemala. This was the culmination of a dream shared several years ago by His Eminence to help further establish the Orthodox Church in Guatemala and throughout Central America. Late last year, thanks to generous support from Orthodox faithful across North America like you, this dream became a reality!

As he celebrated this historic occasion, His Eminence exclaimed, "Where we are a Church of 50,000 now, with this seminary providing priests and lay leaders, I see Orthodoxy growing to two to three million faithful!"

The new seminary will now be able to train scores of new clergy and catechists to serve the hundreds of Orthodox communities now shining like beacons of hope and truth across Guatemala and Central America. The new mission center will coordinate efforts to help expand the ministries of these parishes and plant new ones as more people seek a spiritual home in the Orthodox Church.

The Next Chapter in Turkana
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also developing women's and youth ministries. As these communities grow, churches will be built in these villages as part of this new initiative as well. It is hoped that these catechists will follow in the footsteps of their elder clergy and become priests themselves, ministering to the new Orthodox parishes that they help found.

Thank you for your ongoing participation as this beautiful saga of faith continues to unfold.

New Faces

More Orthodox Christians from across the country are answering the call to missionary service because of your prayers and support.

Missionary service is a special calling made possible by the prayers and sacrifices of many. Recently, you have helped several of your brothers and sisters in faith answer this profound calling. We are excited to introduce you to them and share with you how they hope to further the Church's mission around the world and possibly serve to inspire your missionary calling.

Dana Bates

Missionary serving in youth education & ministry



Dana and his wife Brandi have developed an adventure education and ropes course summer camp called Viata ("the Life" in Romanian), and a service-learning model called IMPACT, both of which have introduced youth to the Orthodox Way of life. Dana plans to share these

experiential learning models throughout the world through OCMC, beginning in East Africa.

Margarita Mavroei

Missionary serving at Project Mexico



Following participation in the Project Mexico homebuilding program and after having served as a full-time counselor at the St. Innocent Orphanage, Margarita is now continuing her service in Mexico as the Educational Coordinator for the orphanage alongside

fellow OCMC missionary Theodora Veronis.

The Pak Family

Missionary serving in Mexico



Having graduated from St. Tikhon's Seminary, Michael, along with his wife Carlyn who has a background in biology and education, have been invited to help to establish Mexico's first Orthodox Christian seminary. Michael will be an instructor of Liturgics and Carlyn a catechist and children's ministry director.

Theodora Veronis

Missionary serving at Project Mexico



Theodora, with her extensive experience in missions having lived in Albania as a child with her missionary parents Fr. Luke and Pres. Faith Veronis, participated in several mission teams, and served as Project Mexico intern, has returned to Mexico to serve as a Tutor and Education Program Facilitator at the St. Innocent Orphanage.

*Learn more about the OCMC missionaries whose ministries you make possible and consider following their example by scanning or visiting: **www.ocmc.org/missionaries***

