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ORTHODOX MISSION

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORTHODOX MISSIONARY FRATERNITY





Ss. Missionaries Cyril and Methodius

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ORTHODOX MISSION

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Owner:

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Missionary Fraternity

6, Mackenzie King st., Hagia Sophia sq.

GR546 22 THESSALONIKI

2310 279910 fax. 2310 279902

<http://orthodoxmission.org.gr>

communications

@orthodoxmission.org.gr

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Aim: Moral and material support for the worldwide Eastern Orthodox Missions

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Founder : † Pantelis Bayas

Great Benefactor : † P. Papademetracopoulos

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Evangelia Traicoudes	Treasurer Assistant
Maria Cazamia	Member
Constantinos Caracolis	Member
Panagiotis Anastasiades	Member



Χριστός Ανέστη!

Христос воскрес!

Christ is risen!

Kristo Amefufukka!

Christ est ressuscité!

Kristo Azukidde!

Kristus nousi kuolleista!

基督復活了

Na Karisito tucake tale!

Cristo ha resucitado!

Icha'kuxi Kajvaltik Kristo!

Kristus telah bangkit!

Annual Report 2014

Another year has passed, full of blessings, gifts and lots of Godly love to all of us, which each one of us works in their own way and helps in order to make other fellow humans Christians, too. The Orthodox Overseas Mission gives us that opportunity.

We feel that in the past year 2014, the Board did what was humanly possible to do; with transparency, unity and, above all, fear of God, we handled what your love entrusted to us.

We praise the name of true God Who made us worthy to minister to the Orthodox Overseas Mission.

DIVINE LITURGIES

In the past year the monthly Divine Liturgies at St. John the Baptist Church were continued as such. These, as is known, are conducted on the second Sunday of each month. The Divine Liturgy is followed by a gathering in our meeting room with a speaker, usually a missionary, who informs us about the activities, projects financed by the Fraternity as well as their problems.

HOSPITALITY

In the year 2014 the Fraternity was visited by the following:

Metropolitans Demetrios of Irinoupolis, Alexios of Carthage, Ignatius of Madagascar, Ieronymos of Mwanza, Bishop Innocentios of Burundi and Rwanda, Missionaries Fr. Themistocles Adamopoulos

from Sierra Leone, Fr. Polycarpus of Hagia Anna from Madagascar, Fr. Ermolaos Iatrou from Malawi.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial support for the Missionary Centers continues to take place by bank transfer. We strive to complete those projects which we undertook to fund.

MAGAZINE

Our magazine titled "Orthodox Mission" continues to be published, constantly improved with color image display from the Mission centers, depicting the progress of their projects and activities. The magazine is also available through an interactive online edition in two languages, Greek and English, at the address shown on the second

page. As is known, the magazine is available free of charge, and you can recommend it to your acquaintances.

PRESENTATIONS

During the past year we made presentations on Overseas Missions and its work across different countries in both private and public schools. At the same time, there were slideshows and video presentations depicting a wealth of photographic material.

The speakers were Mr. Angelos Voyatzis, Mr. Constantine Metalides and Mrs Angeliki Arnaoutis, Board Members.

PARTNERS-ASSOCIATES

In the past year, the Fraternity collaborated with the following Holy Dioceses and Missionary centers: Accra (Ghana), Guinea, Irinoupolis, Zambia and Malawi, Cameroon, Carthage, Katanga, Central Africa (Congo-DRC), Kenya, Korea, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Uganda, Singapore (India), Tripoli (Libya), Hong Kong (Indonesia), Burundi and Rwanda, Brazzaville (Congo).

MISSIONARY VISITS

During the past year, three Fraternity members visited the Mis-

sions. Mrs. Maria Cazamia-Tsernou and Chrysanthe Perisoglou travelled to Central Africa, while Mr. Prodromos Calaitzides served in the Fiji islands.

HUMANITARIAN AID

The humanitarian aid to countries that have the greatest need of food and essentials was continued this past year, too.

Our Fraternity maintains at Philyron in Thessaloniki a warehouse facility, where relief items are collected, such as food and clothing items as well as school and church equipment and many others. This stuff is loaded into containers and sent to the Mission centers. What is very moving indeed is the big interest in voluntary work on the part of people of all ages, young and old. One admires the zeal, zest and enthusiasm of the volunteers loading the cargo into the containers on the shipment day. In 2014, there were shipments made for Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Romania.

THANKS

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all of you, friends and donors of the Orthodox Missions, as well as known and unknown fellow donors from abroad not only for your coop-

eration and your support but also for the strength that you give us to continue this noble struggle, which is worth fighting for.

“The work done for God is not tiresome”. And as Saint John Chrysostom says, "Pious people cannot get enough of God”.

We should not forget to make mention of our recently departed friends and associates and ask them to intercede with our Lord. We pray that the Lord will rest the souls of the deceased members and friends, clergy and lay missionaries.

It would be an oversight if we did not attribute thanks to Mr. Dimitrios Mertzemekis from Serres and Mrs. Maria Hatzoudis from Katerini for their interest in raising money,

which they offer to the Fraternity. Also to the ladies who offer us the coffee at every monthly meeting. Moreover, we would like to express our deep satisfaction and appreciation to the entire team of the Fraternity employees for the diligence and conscientiousness they exhibit in the performance of their duties.

Let us thank and praise our Lord for everything that His love granted to us in the past year. We appeal to Him with an ardent faith to give us all health of body and soul, and also in the New Year 2015, strength to continue working united and in peace for the progress of the Fraternity, always for His glory. May we have His blessing. Amen.

The Board

Our new Administration

We happily announce that at the poll of January 18th, the following administration bodies were elected:

Board of Directors

- Demetrios Sotirkos, President
- Nostis Psarras, Vice President
- Angeliki Cafantari-Arnaouti, Secretary General
- Charalampos Metallides, Treasurer
- Constantinos Metallides, Evangelia Traicoudi, Maria Cazamia-Tsernou, Constantinos Caracolis, Panagiotis Anastasiades

Auditing Commitee

Zenobios Iatrou, Aicaterine Alexandrou, Anna Antonara

Financial Statement 2014

Credits

A.	CASH AT THE BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR 2014	160.051,60 €
B.	<u>FISCAL YEAR REVENUES</u>	775.564,81 €
	SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS	712.368,86 €
	RENTS	61.482,00 €
	INTEREST ON DEPOSITS	1.644,32 €
	EXTRAORDINARY AND NON-OPERATING INCOME	69,63 €
C.	PREVIOUS YEARS REVENUE	23.181,50 €
	TOTAL REVENUES IN 2014	798.746,31 €
	TOTAL CREDITS	958.797,91 €

Debits

A.	<u>FISCAL YEAR EXPENSES</u>	678.409,06 €
	STAFF WAGES AND COSTS	55.491,57 €
	OTHER WAGES AND COSTS	1.017,83 €
	OTHER SERVICES	11.085,16 €
	TAXES AND FEES	31.454,57 €
	VARIOUS EXPENSES	576.509,86 €
	<u>Missionary expenses</u>	<u>555.555,97 €</u>
	Cash transfers to missionary divisions	436.661,00 €
	Charitable allowances	20.085,49 €
	In-kind aid to missionary divisions	98.809,48 €
	PR-Marketing	5.458,08 €
	Stationery & Magazine publication	10.596,22 €
	Immediate consumption materials	395,66 €
	Declaration expenses	128,56 €
	Various other expenses	4.375,37 €
	BANKING EXPENSES	2.681,92 €
	EXTRAORDINARY AND NON-OPERATING EXPENSES	168,15 €
B.	FISCAL YEAR PURCHASES	407,74 €
C.	PREVIOUS YEARS EXPENSES	9.891,16 €
D.	COMING YEARS EXPENSES	12.679,06 €
	TOTAL EXPENSES IN 2014	701.387,02 €
E.	CASH AT THE END OF FISCAL YEAR 2014	257.410,89 €
	TOTAL DEBITS	958.797,91 €



FIJI ISLANDS

A historic and holy day

February 8th, 2015 was indeed a historic and holy day because it is then that we had the inauguration ceremonies of the Holy Trinity Church, of an orphanage, and of a Safe Home (shelter for unprotected women) at Saweni, Fiji, filling us all with much hope and joy.

Sunday dawned and it was the first time that a holy vigil had been celebrated in that magnificent and unique church of the Holy Trinity and angelic hymns of the Anoxantaria hymns had been heard:

In the morning, five-year-old Ezekiel hanging from the rope could not get enough of ringing the church-bell.

“The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in His works. Glory to You, Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

We worship and praise Your name”.

Everyone was impressed by the Byzantine order and splendor with which the triple procession of the holy relics of martyrs was conducted around the church. With joy and pride the little Fijian children were holding up the Holy Cross and the cherubim, dressed in colorful costumes sewn with love by Greek women pilgrims.

And what can one say about the rich and impeccable hospitality that followed the Divine Liturgy and the celebration of the holy baptisms in the new sacred baptistery, which lasted for three consecutive days?

That three-day inauguration period was an ecumenical festival of Christian joy. The Holy Trinity generously blessed this place cho-

sen so that the all-holy name of the Triune God would be blessed forever and ever.

Since yesterday, St. Tabitha the Merciful's coeducational Orphanage has been operating in the courtyard of the inaugurated Church. It started with a force of 16 children, but, as seems likely, an extension to that will soon have to be built, because more and more orphans are coming, begging to be admitted, too.

The child care has been taken on by three people: a Fijian woman called Athena, who lives there with her two children, another Fijian woman who will be in charge of the kitchen and a night watchman; but the person who will oversee and be responsible for the smooth operation of the institute will primarily be Sister Gabrielle, who comes from

the Monastery of Ipseni in Rhodes. She will do that with the help of two Fijian Sisters, Melanie and Anysia, who received the monastic tonsure during the holy vigil.

We must extend our heartfelt thanks to the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity, whose members' generous contributions covered a large portion of the funds for the purchase of the land and the erection of the Holy Trinity Sacred Church, the orphanage and the Safe Home. We pray for all the known and unknown donors, benefactors and dedicators of the Mission, whose love becomes a source of joy for widows and orphans, as well as for all our fellow human beings, that God grants His abundant blessings to them and their families.

From the Holy Metropolis



**Mr. Prodomos Calaitzides, regular member of our Fraternity, 9
being the godfather in a Fijian baptism**



INDONESIA

The little flock of believers is growing

Dear Friends of the Mission,

I have just got back from our Orthodox parish community on the Island of Nias, where I stayed for a few days and conducted the group baptism of 28 catechumens as well as the Divine Liturgy. The parishioners were delighted by my visit there because they had been waiting for that for a whole year. When I met with them, they immediately spoke to me about their problems, among which is the lack of Holy Communion in our three communities there. This is perfectly natural given the fact that they have not got their own priest. This means that either I or another priest from Medan should go there to conduct the Divine Liturgy. The

point is that we cannot afford the fare because our parish community there does not have enough money to meet the transport costs so that we can go to Nias at least four times a year (once to each of the communities of St. Catherine, St. Martha and St. Nicholas, and once to our Saint Nicholas school). We need at least 1,000 € a year in order to visit Nias. So, please keep this matter in your prayers.

In Sumbul Sidikalang we have two parish communities, Saint Ephraim in the village of Lae Rias, and the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Pargambiran. In charge there we have appointed Deacon Luke with his wife and their child. The main problem

we are facing is the fact that we cannot afford to pay them with a regular salary. Whenever we find some money, we share it in the best possible way. Of course, we have a field there, which you purchased for us several years ago, where we have planted orange trees. The bad thing is that this field is very far from the church where our deacon lives. Near the church there is a sizable field on sale. I have seen it myself, and we intend to buy it and give it to Father Luke to cultivate it and have an income from it; this way, he will be able to continue the work of our Orthodox Mission in these two communities. Unfortunately, though, we cannot afford to buy it

ourselves because it costs 15,000€. If you can, my brothers, help our Orthodox mission here in Indonesia.

Our small chicken farm, which you helped us to get, has started to pay off. Within 35 days, we sold 9,500 chickens. Thus, within a year, we can brood 9-10 batches of chicks. This job brings in some income for our Mission and has facilitated us considerably regarding the payment of the priests' salaries. Therefore, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks for your great contribution to the Orthodox missionary work here in Indonesia. Please keep us in your prayers.

Fr. Chrysostomos Manalu





Another Church has been completed!

By the grace of God, the blessings of our Patriarch and your own efforts, last September the construction of Saint Charalampos church was completed in the city of Sangmelima in Southern Cameroon, only 140 km away from the capital city Yaoundé.

The construction started in 2007 and was financed through a Fraternity donation.

As I had explained, due to several design errors on the part of the contractor, the construction was halted at the foundation level. We resumed in November 2013 with a new contractor and with the help of God, in September 2014 we ended the construction, adding a small rectory for the priest as well.

On December 27, memory

of the First Martyr for Christ and Archdeacon Stephen, I visited the parish with other clergymen of the Holy Metropolis and conducted the Inauguration service of the S. Church as well as the first Divine Liturgy.

We expressed our gratitude to the Lord for this new opportunity given to us with the establishment of this parish for the promotion of the work of the Apostles in one of the major cities of Cameroon with excellent prospects.

We extended our warmest thanks to the Greek sponsor of the plot Mr. Stefanos Kokkinidis, local resident, who attended the Divine Liturgy with his family, to the former presidents of the Fraternity Mr. Vaios Prantzios and

Mr. Konstantinos Daoudakis for the adoption of the church on the part of the Fraternity, and also to our noble sponsors, living and dead, for the boldness of their faith and their love for the forgotten command "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." May the Lord grant them a hundredfold in return of their donations and give eternal rest to the deceased. We will humbly remember their names in every Divine Liturgy.

This is certainly only the beginning. A new field for struggle is opening before us now: to organize the parish, to start catechetical lessons until the

hearts of our newly illuminated brothers have been educated in Christ through His Grace.

We have put our hopes on the constant presence of Fr. John, the new active priest, who has good knowledge of the local dialect and moved here with his family, which comprises adoptive children as well.

For all these great and wonderful things for our Local Church, we ask for your wishes and prayers and greet you all with a holy kiss wishing every spiritual blessing in your struggle.

With ardent prayers unto the Lord

† **Gregory of Cameroon**





KENYA

Save the children

Daily we live the great drama of little children. In our own societies certain things are taken as a given. Our own child grows in its environment and under any conditions it should be offered the necessary food from morning until it is time to sleep. This is an absolutely normal situation. The child cannot live unless it is given food. Here, however, in Africa, things are different. Children wake up in the morning and in the evening they go to sleep starved, there is no guarantee that they will have the necessary food. This is something very common here; therefore, they are born and grow up in this environment, whether they want to or not.

The Orthodox Diocese of Kenya, among its various programs,

implemented a special feeding program for children and not only: it undertook a rescue crusade of young children, not only for daily food, i.e. breakfast and lunch, but also for educational opportunities for them at a payment of 20 euros per month. This effort met with response, and today the program has expanded throughout the country. The Greeks -even though they themselves are facing a financial crisis- made the strongest efforts and stood beside us to save as many souls as possible and relieve our children, who live under difficult and incomprehensible to us conditions. Unfortunately, there are no conditions suitable for children here. Therefore, through this program, the Diocese of Kenya has been trying to give a message

of hope and certainty that they will have the right to live and be educated.

Every year, besides the daily meals, extra meals are organized on various occasions as well. So this year, at Christmas, in the courtyard of the Cathedral gathered, apart from the children of kindergarten and primary school, the children of ourslum, for a sumptuous Christmas dinner and not only. Refreshments were offered, and each child got a small Christmas gift and stationery, notebooks, pencils etc.

A mother of two little children approached the Bishop and confessed that the food offered to them on Christmas day was the only one that they had the opportunity to eat. Otherwise, on that day the

children would stay hungry.

The efforts and programs of the Metropolis of Kenya will continue even under the current economic crisis. We must not let the children suffer and live in misery. We have to strive and do everything in our power to ensure that these poor children will not sleep hungry.

Those wishing to offer a minimum contribution can do so through the Fraternity with the indication “for Kenya”. This way we can support, encourage and give hope to these unprotected children living under adverse conditions and waiting for a helping hand to continue themselves, as creatures of God, their destination on our planet.

† Makarios of Kenya

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TANZANIA - DAR ES SALAAM

A clinic for the children of Iringa

Dear Mr. President,

I am glad to communicate with you both to congratulate you on your well deserved election as the new President of the oldest Missionary Fraternity of Greece, and because I feel the blessing of the prayers as well as the charitable interest of yours and of the distinguished associates, partners and donors of your Fraternity in our missionary work in Tanzania.

I am pleased to inform you that our work in Tanzania bears more fruit than we initially hoped it would. Day by day, new missionary horizons are opened, mainly in central Tanzania (in the Iringa

region), where, with the help of God, thirty-two new churches, ten clinics and seven schools have been erected in the ten years of my ministry. Thanks be to God, the Most Merciful!

It would be a great omission on our part not to refer to the assistance of the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity, which contributed greatly to the progress of both missionary and charity work of our Holy Metropolis.

Therefore, I would like once more to express my heartfelt thanks for the last donation of twenty thousand euros which I received from you in order to build the

"Holy Apostles Clinic" in Malangali, a town of the Iringa province in Central Tanzania, and be able to help thousands of our ailing indigenous brothers.

My brothers in Christ, I would like to thank you humbly, praise the Holy God and pray that the great giver of gifts, our Lord Jesus Christ, lavish every blessing upon you, making you worthy to see other people around us comprehend that "Christ is the light of the world."

At this point, I would like to inform you of our intention to proceed with five new water well drillings in the area. Each one of them will be fifty meters deep, which

makes the whole process even more difficult. The cost for each drilling will amount to approximately €3,000. Thus I would like to make an appeal to your noble-hearted donors and ask them, if they are able, to undertake a borehole each so that we can provide clean water to those people, who have been suffering for a long period of time due to the prolonged drought in the region, which has resulted in the death of a child every thirty minutes! Your contribution can save lives!

With cordial wishes
† **Demetrios of Irinoupolis**



**Bishop Demetrios outside the Holy Apostles Clinic,
a project of our Fraternity**



Central Nigeria

The program of the Orthodox Mission in Nigeria, “**Support Education – Combat Poverty**”, which started a few years ago, includes the construction of a kindergarten and primary school in Karmem, a mountainous village of Benue state in Central Nigeria.

The construction works began with the foundation of the school in May 2013 on land donated by the local authorities. Unhappily, it has been a year since the works on the school’s first wing were interrupted due to lack of the resources required for their continuation (roof work, ceiling finishing, plastering, electrical work, window and door installation, wall-painting, landscaping). The cost of

all this work amounts to €43,000 (in February 2015 rates).

The school continues to operate in a makeshift grass hut and the students remain exposed to the harsh climatic conditions (heat waves and heavy rain). The efforts and dedication of the teachers are actually superhuman and commendable. The same goes for young students, whose number this year has more than doubled, reaching 400! This is due to the fact that state schools have been closed for two years now because of the inability of the state government to pay the teachers’ salaries.

Furthermore, in the area there are refugee camps, displaced people from other areas in the state, due



400 children yearn for a school

to conflicts with populations of the nomadic Fulani tribe, who occupied much of the arable area of the region. It is a humanitarian crisis intertwined with other factors, such as lack of food, drinking water, sanitation and health care, schools, and many others. It is a crisis away from the spotlight and the public attention at both local and international level. Many of the children in the camps continue their education at the school of our Mission.

It is worth mentioning that the living standard of the local residents is well below the poverty line, life expectancy is very low, there are high illiteracy rates and marriage between young children

(13-15 years) is widely spread. It is in such an environment that our Mission strives through education to conduce to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation in the long run. We know that we cannot change the whole world, but we believe that by the grace of God we can change the lives of some people, even if they are not many; they in turn will make a difference.

In this effort, we pray that God reveals fellow Cyrenians of the poor. The Calvary does not intimidate us because we believe in the Resurrection. In the Resurrection which we know that is not after the Cross, but through the Cross.

† Alexander of Nigeria



SIERRA LEONE

Celebrating in a War Zone

“Our nation is at war with a vicious enemy.”
(E.B. Koroma, President of Sierra Leone, 17/12/14)

Except for going to church services all the population of Sierra Leone was instructed to stay home during the Christmas and New Year holidays. We are currently under a semi - lockdown mode for the Festive Season. No restaurants, no sporting events, no public celebrations, no wedding receptions, no street celebrations, all shops must close on weekdays by 6.00 PM, by noon of Saturdays and no trading on Sundays . Even church services were restricted – they were to be held during the day and only up to 5.00 PM. New Year Church Service was forbidden. Indeed the army and patrol volunteers are still out in force to ensure these decrees. Violators face

the full weight of the law. Add to that list of prohibition, school, college or university attendance.

Why? Are we experiencing some sort of state sponsored anti-Christian campaign? No! Then why these draconian measures during the Holy Festive Season and indeed indefinitely until further notice? The simple yet tragic answer is that this nation is at war again.

Just as ten times before in the last twenty years this nation is at war again through Christmas, New Year, Epiphany and beyond. But this time there are no AK47s or bullets killing innocent people. This time there are no rebel forces invading cities, towns and villages amputating arms and

legs indiscriminately. This time the enemy asks no questions, take no prisoners and is totally indiscriminate in its killing spree – babies, toddlers, teenagers, adults and the aged are all living under the shadow of imminent death.

- This is a time without pity.
- This time the enemy is silent, invisible, deadlier.
- This time there can be no truce or treaties. It's a zero-sum situation.
- This time the enemy is not the Revolutionary United Front amputating limbs!
- This time the enemy is an incurable microscopic virus producing a vicious and deadly haemorrhagic fever!
- This is a time of constant siren wailing ambulances striking macabre fears!
- This time the enemy is called

Ebola!

For this reason, the Government decreed that all Christmas and New Year celebrations were to be cancelled in order to avoid the gathering of a crowd of people in enclosed spaces and in that way limiting the risk of body contact – the essential source of Ebola contamination.

When I first heard this new decree my initial instinctive reaction was negative. But then I reconsidered the situation from a purely spiritual perspective. What is the true meaning of Christmas, New Year and Epiphany celebrations? Is it about drunken street dancing? Is it about wild parties? Is it about alcohol or other forms of intoxication? Is it about carousing all night? Or as the habit here in Freetown is to hold night and day street parades by the native so-called “Devil Dancers?”





Baptisms by the missionary Fr. Themistocles Adamopoulos

Perhaps these rigorous measures may be an unintended blessing in disguise. By removing all the unnecessary commercial and unspiritual layers from this Christmas, New Year and Epiphany, Sierra Leone has been given the opportunity – albeit unwillingly, to focus more on family re-unions rather than riotous street parties; to meditate more on the actual meaning of the Bethlehem Event, the arrival of the New Year or Epiphany in a spiritual manner rather than the indigenous “Devil Dancing” street parades. Hence, in the light of the present Ebola infested circumstance hopefully to reflect deeper on issues pertaining to personal physical hygiene and spiritual health. Indeed

to supplement these measures the President of Sierra Leone has requested a week of national prayer and fasting during the New Year period in a meta-physical campaign against Ebola.

I realize that many of you who are reading this message outside of West Africa also are facing many challenges. We all share an earth of increasing apocalyptic political, economic and environmental and medical uncertainties – deadly incurable epidemics and plagues, wars and monstrous violence, young boys recruited and converted into killing machines, massive refugee displacements, catastrophic bushfires, even the specter of nuclear war is now dimly looming over the

horizon in a Cold War II scenario. All these upheavals are threatening our very thin and fragile veneer of global civilization. And as if we are not content with our relentless drive for power and money we irresponsibly pollute our waters and degrade our natural environment endangering the very oxygen we breathe. And as a final nail to our negativity, traditional moral standards and Bible truths are considered outdated by a world obsessed in twisting and proclaiming error as righteousness.

But not all is lost!

We Christians are needed more than ever to proclaim and cling to the eternal and unchanging biblical truths.

- Let's try to keep this New Year holy and in obedience to Christ!
- Let us become peace makers.
- Let us also help the less fortunate!

- In other words let us bring back the authentic expression of this Festive Season.

To those who have helped and are continuing to help our Orthodox Mission in Sierra Leone, the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity, our sponsors and individual donors in Greece, Australia, Canada, Romania, Russia and the USA, kindly accept on behalf of all our people here a warm note of gratitude. Because of the Ebola outbreak many people are now out of work and in need of food. We are distributing the much needed food that you have sent us (rice, oil, sugar, tomato sauce etc) as best as we can to meet these needs in addition to the protective gloves and mask that you have donated.

Thank you!

The blessings of Christ be upon you.

Rev. Themistocles Adamopoulos









SOUTH SUDAN

Struggles and experiences from South Sudan

By God's grace and the blessing of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, we set out earlier this year on a tour of the inaccessible region of South Sudan.

For decades a fierce civil war had been raging and was still continuing unabated, which created continuous frustration and despair on the indigenous people.

I started without knowing where I was going, my destination was undetermined as all information and instructions were confusing and instead of clarifying things for me, in fact they confused me even more. Certainly the invariable advice was "be careful".

Those moments I remembered what I had read in the Bible and had

not fully understood. In Apostle Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11: *by faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he went.* The personal experience of access to an unknown place, showed me how difficult it is humanly to set out for someplace without knowing where you are going. And here even the best information for the South was disheartening.

However, there occurred the miracle of faith and everything went on very well: the churches that had been closed for many years were reopened; the Divine Liturgy was served again, filling the congregation with pious emotion and unspeakable joy. All those that re-

mained in the region of the capital of South Sudan like real heroes — literally risking their lives keeping alight the flame of Orthodoxy— received holy communion. The next day we blessed and shared out the Vasilopita and then we sat in the church yard, with relief and spiritual invigoration written over the faces of all the participants.

We also laid the foundation stone of the St. Mark new missionary center in Mogala region in the eastern end of the capital city Juba. There, for the blessing of water service we had no censer available, so looking for one around to give a rough and ready solution, the only thing I could find handy was a magazine of bullets from a kalashnikov. I lit the charcoal briquettes at the one end of the magazine, placed

the incense on top of them, held the magazine from the other end and censed the people accompanying me. I could not help thinking that with that magazine of the kalashnikov which had scattered death, I was meant to cense at the sacred service for the laying of the foundation stone of Saint Mark's first missionary center. Within me, I was praying that those tools of war and destruction would be transformed into God-worship utensils. Only then could peace and unity of the people reign in this country.

The second trip two days later involved my moving to the western tropical city of Wau in South Sudan. It was a revelation to me to find there people who are pure, sincere, genuine, and unfortunately absolutely poor without electricity



Baptism by bishop Narcissus



or water. Imagine how many essential things are lacking there, while for us in the western world they are unquestionably taken for granted. A pleasant discovery, however, was the fact that lack of electrical power could turn into something good... One can see the stars at night and feel like they are in a spacious place.

By the grace of God we baptized ten children and reopened Prophet Elijah church, which had been built by Greeks around the beginning of the previous century; the church bell rang again after many decades. I also read them the forgiveness prayer and they all received Holy Communion.

There, one night in the humble dinner which they so nobly prepared for me, where everyone ate with their hands from the same

big plate on the table, they told me around the brazier with the lit fire stories about how they lived in the days of the civil war... They tore off the tin from the roofs of their huts to cook on it in order to eat something, while at the same time food was scarce and disease was treated without even the basics, such as medicines or doctors.

Meanwhile, malaria has ravaged half the population. There is not a single person who has not got sick with malaria. The stronger organisms withstand, whereas the weaker die out, especially children. Everyone's life is on the razor's edge and anyone may die at any time. Life is uncertain, death is a daily routine, whether it comes from cholera or malaria or Ebola; and if one manages to escape all these, the

civil war awaits around the corner, which is why whoever survives there, is a champion of life.

Our Greek community in Wau consists of descendants of Greeks who got there at the beginning of the twentieth century, circa 1910. It was a great thrill for me to get there and find out that their first concern was to call me to go and conduct a Trisagion memorial service over their Greek fathers and ancestors that are buried in the Greek cemetery, which happened before I even had time to arrange my things...

Finally the day of return to the capital city Juba came due to an earlier meeting arrangement with the country's Foreign Minister. At the airport I felt that I did not want to leave, so when I had to say

goodbye to the people and head to the plane, I felt my heart bleed, as if it did not want to be separated from them. However, I was comforted as this little death, separation, will bring resurrection one day, since my return there is a given.

Dear members of the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity, as sadness when shared decreases and joy is multiplied, I have the pleasure of contacting you and making you partakers of our missionary efforts in Africa. We plant the seed, you water it and God makes it grow; therefore, I pray feverishly for the success of our joint efforts so that the holy name of God is praised in every place now and forever.

May His Grace keep you strong.
Narcissus (Gammoh) of Nubia





ZAMBIA & MALAWI

A new refuge and shelter of souls in Malawi

Let us rejoice, brothers, in the joy of God. Let us praise our Creator and let us ascribe words of thankfulness and gratitude unto Him for the marvels that we see take place around us every day...

The spread of Orthodoxy over the world since the time of the Apostle Paul to the present day is a great miracle. Also, miracle is the construction of the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the land of Malawi.

In fact, it is one of the many miracles that occur daily. It is God's answer to the fervent and incessant prayers of our indigenous brothers. They had been praying continuously for five years so they could acquire a sacred church. Under the guidance of indigenous

Father Sophronios they had been gathering for five years in the grass hut they had constructed in order to make their congregations and find a way out of the deadlock caused by the problems of their pained life.

Nothing could stop them or deter them from their goal. Trouble or pain, adverse conditions, scorching heat or threatening rain, mud or mold did not dishearten them.

Finally, gratitude pervades us all, indigenous and non-indigenous, for the pious sponsor from Greece, through whom the Orthodox Missionary Fraternity undertook the financial cost of the erection of the Sacred Church. Thanks to the donation of this generous brother, the church is

becoming large and spacious, about 350 square meters, in order to accommodate big congregations, and also strong and stable so as to resist the passage of time.

By the grace of God, this project may have taken a long time to start, however, it progressed really fast once it got started. Work began five months ago and God willing, the church will be ready in a month.

The thankfulness and gratitude of the native parishioners of the Ss Cosmas and Damian church is great and their prayers for the noble brother who made this donation will be incessant, since in every Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Church, the prayers for the founders always have a special place, as is the case with every sacred church.

From now on our prayers for

the near future will be focused on finding a noble brother who will carry the financial burden of building the rectory next to the newly erected church, that is, the small house for the Orthodox priest. This way, by living next to each temple, the priest along with his family becomes the guardian, the caretaker and the guard of the Orthodox Church property.

Let us all rejoice in the pure joy of the parishioners of the newly established Saints Cosmas and Damian parish in Malawi. Brethren, let us participate ourselves simply, humbly and in secret with our own little prayer in securing and consolidating our Orthodoxy in this small piece of land in remote Malawi, too.

Father Ermolaos from Malawi





BURUNDI & RWANDA

Two years of missionary ministry

For exactly two years, by the Grace of God and the blessings of His Beatitude Theodore II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, I have been serving the martyred Diocese of Burundi and Rwanda, which came into existence just a few years ago. Thus I will presume upon your love and patience in order to make a brief review of the management of your loving contributions during these two years of my ministry. Besides, it is proper that you should know where your money goes, which goals we have achieved, which we have missed as well as our plans for the future... I consider it necessary and honorable to make this accountability, so to speak, report.

As you all know, not so long ago Burundi and Rwanda came out of a fratricidal war, which resulted in genocide -in just 100 days one million people were massacred, among them innocent children; this marked the last decade of the 20th century and proved beyond the slightest doubt that “man is a wolf to man”. The war memorial museums in Rwanda bear undeniable witness to that. It is there that one wonders how man can be led to acts of brutality when driven by hatred, power lust, conflicting interests and personal ambitions.

It is such people that we minister to and try to comfort, alleviate their suffering and uplift their spirit. Like all wars, this war

ended at some point as well, giving peace a chance. It is then that our role started.

There are numerous needs to meet, spiritual as well as material. The visible physical wounds have healed, but there are wounds that are unseen, the wounds and scars of the soul, which are really very hard to erase. Our efforts are focused on making these poor creatures feel again that they are human beings and on helping them to live.

In Burundi, 40 kilometers northeast of Bujumbura, there is a vibrant Christian community of war refugees, rallied around the sacred church of Saint Alexius and the Twelve Apostles. These people, deprived of basic essentials, show

an unparalleled will to survive. Last summer, we ordained as a priest the director of the school community; this way, we provided a solution to the problem of the priest there.

Another intractable for the time being problem pertains to education. As many as 700 children are literally crammed into the five classrooms of the primary school. There is an urgent need to add at least four classrooms, but the construction costs in both Burundi and Rwanda are extremely high due to the transportation costs from neighboring countries, as everything is imported. As for a secondary school, things are equally disappointing. The nearest middle school is 10 km away, distance which





the few children that attend it have to cover on foot.

It is on foot as well that the sick have to go in order to reach the nearest “health station”, so to say. Also, the little students, before setting out for their school, have to walk 5 kilometers in order to fetch water for home -this is their own task – from the nearest borehole.

Both Burundi and Rwanda – even more in Rwanda – embraced Orthodoxy with great love. Seeking to explain the reason and without claiming infallibility, I concluded that this is due to the fact that our Mission is relatively new in the sense that it made its presence noticeable after the war, therefore, we are, in a way, incorruptible. Each

of our pastoral journeys is for them an event of great importance, which is why they give us a warm and hearty welcome. Simple-hearted people, most of them without any special education -and this is only naturally expected, since the war was a catalyst for the evolution of life thereof. However, despite their simple-heartedness, their questions about the teachings of our Church, its Mysteries, its holy figures and religious traditions are anything but simplistic.

I would also like to refer to the role of the state as regards the operation of the Orthodox Church and not only. The Missions operate under the watchful eye of the state, which intervenes even

in the selection of the building that houses us. According to the country's Constitution, we are obliged to submit the beliefs of our Orthodox faith, the doctrinal truths of the Gospel as well as the charter of operation. If approved, we are granted a temporary permit for one year, extendable indefinitely. We expect to get ours in the August of the current year because we have work to present.

Specifically, we have founded eight parish communities in Rwanda, we have performed four priestly ordinations and we have sent six young Rwandans to the Makarios III Theological Seminary in Nairobi, Kenya, to be ordained after their graduation. After catechesis, we have baptized about six hundred Rwandans, while

there are many more waiting to be baptized. Please note that all rites are performed outdoors, since we lack sacred churches. Also, the state gives special importance to social policy, which is why it works closely with us in the pursuit of social policy.

In general, the same applies to both countries with the following difference: In Burundi, the government gives us free land, provided we construct schools, churches and health stations. Indeed, we have already been granted two building plots, and we are trying to get the title deeds and find sponsors to promote the projects. Unlike Burundi, in Rwanda everything is sold at high prices.

In order not to inconvenience you any further, summing up, I will



remind you that we have neither an episcopal residence, nor spaces for confession, catechesis and hosting friends-volunteers, who visit us from time to time. Some work is still in progress mainly due to shortage of money but also because of some legal obstacles, which we will hopefully overcome.

A particular problem is that of our moving around within the country as well as our transition from one country to another. Our car was damaged in a traffic accident. As a result, it is not uncommon for us to get stuck on the road and go on our pastoral visits by means of public transport, which is not

at all frequent and makes us waste valuable time.

In closing, I would like once more to appeal to your love and your charity feelings, which evidently characterize you: Pray for us, become our companions, help us to teach the creatures of God that we have been ministering to for two years to recognize the miracles, that is, the essence of life, to teach them that life is a gift of God to us and that the way they will live their lives is their own gift to God. Let's make, then, all of us, this gift as wonderful as possible...

Innocentios of Burundi & Rwanda





CONGO (DRC) - KATANGA

Educational Sponsoring: guarantee of hope

Dear Friends of the Mission,

We would like to express our sincere thanks for the integration of indigent students of our Metropolis into the Educational Sponsoring program. Without this aid, these young people would never be able to study owing to the prevailing economic hardships that seem to have no end.

It is sad to see youths who possess the learning capabilities required to continue into higher education have their expectations for a better future cut off due to the economic crisis.

We have many examples because of the large number of students who graduate each year from our 70 schools asking for

financial support. It is practically impossible for us to respond to everyone, this is why we are deeply grateful to you for undertaking the "sacred duty" of helping these young people to continue with hope and courage this difficult struggle of life.

The great thing is that with your selection, this financial support is offered through the Orthodox mission and not by means of other entities. As we are informed, there is a wide range of organizations that may well be international in scope but lack the seal and guarantee of the Orthodox Church.

May the grace of our Lord
protect you all.

† **Meletios of Katanga**

[Click or tap to join the program](#)



In the bosom of cordial love

Taking part in the work of the Philanthropic Society of the Orthodox Church in India is truly to experience Sister Nektaria and who she is.

Just one facet of the works of the Society is a life commitment for any one person, and yet sister Nektaria all alone takes on the responsibilities required of an army of people: she manages five schools -four village schools and St. Ignatius English Medium School-, five medical clinics in the remote villages; twelve churches, the clergy, personnel; the daily morning feeding program which provides milk and biscuits to about 60 to 100 children in the morning. For some children this is the only meal they will receive all day. She also runs the daily Lunch Program which serves

prepared meals to 80-100 of the poorest of the poor. And of course she runs the Theotokos' Girls Hostel, home to 80 girls and St. Ignatius Boys' Hostel, which currently has 50 boys. On top of all that, she deals with the never-ending list of daily tasks, and the infuriating bureaucracy involved with everything.

The children are so beautiful and talented and intelligent. Sister has provided not just a shelter, but a home for them. More than lucky, they are blessed. They have hope and dream. They have accomplishments lined up ahead of them and the potential that radiates from them is infectious. They have so much love to share; it hits you in the face at full force from the moment you walk through the orphan-

age gates, and you are swept up in it, engulfed and locked tight into a this huge new family. Their smiles are constant, instantaneous and achingly genuine. I too was immediately bonded with them and became part of this big family.

The children have never owned anything; they never went to the school, don't know how to hold a pencil or how to wear their clothes properly or even how to bathe themselves. The transition from their old life of unimaginable poverty and pain to living at the hostel, where they have food three times a day, with seconds and thirds if they want, or where someone isn't beating them or shouting at them and they have a bed and a bathroom and walls and clean clothes and a mil-

lion other new things; this transition can be difficult for them; it's a completely new world, but you can see a transformation in them instantly.

Modumita whose mother died in an accident and her father was not fit to take care of her, came to the orphanage when she was very young and now 7 years old, through the education at St. Ignatius School, she can dream of becoming a teacher!

Ashim (Minas) is a 12-year old sweet boy, an orphan from father and his mother is suffering from incurable decease, unable to take care of even herself. He never went to school until he came to the boys' orphanage 5 years ago. Now he attends to class III at St. Ignatius School. He does not mind to be in



the class with the children who are younger than he. He is rather grateful for this opportunity and studies hard. When he grows up, he wants to be a priest. On Sundays he leaves the boys' orphanage early morning and walks to the church on the orphanage ground to serve in the altar. I found him in the altar at 6:50am every Sunday!

Sister Nektaria is blessed with so many incredible talents. She speaks many languages. She acts as administrator, as accountant, as teacher, as headmaster, as mother, as spiritual guide often all at the same time. And all this incredible humanitarian work she does in a state, where Christianity, let alone Orthodoxy, is a minute presence if

it is visible at all. Her Christian inspiration is entirely through her actions as a self-less, loving servant to God. And yet, everything she does is under suspicion.

I am not, by all means, writing this article to praise her. I am writing, because through our efforts perhaps we can lessen the burden that Sister has to bear and continue fulfilling the works of the Philanthropic Society of the Orthodox Church.

I hope I can see her again, so I can embrace her and her children and my children there with my heartfelt greetings;

kalimera sister, kalimera children.

Presbytera Lisa Koo, San Jose, CA





Two new containers of love

“A Christian”, St. John Chrysostom said, “endures sorrows, but doesn’t want others to suffer.” Our Orthodox Christian Fraternity, following Christ’s words on sacrificial love for every human being, shipped on January 11, **two containers of humanitarian aid to the long-suffering people of Sierra Leone and Madagascar.** They contained long-lasting food, medical supplies, church items, clothes, toys and most significantly warm wishes and prayers. This shipment aims to physically relieve our afflicted brothers in these tormented countries.

Therefore, we would like once more to express our thankfulness to our brothers from the USA and from Florina for their financial support; their hearts are burning for the missionary and charitable work among the nations. May God richly repay them with His grace and blessing.

Constantinos Metallides

Mother Angeliki (Tsaousi)

Singing along with the Angels in the Love of Christ

On your repose, the icy night of January 5th 2015 sought a veil of silence to cover up the grief while the dawn of the new Holy day of Epiphany was breaking in Fiji islands.

How paradoxical, indeed! While your sorely tried body chained to pain is terminating its human mission, your soul may be travelling to the islands of the South Pacific, as you used to say in moments of spiritual euphoria.

In the "Love of Christ", that creative institution characterized by a high degree of awareness and sensitivity to social issues, the children are dancing in their spring like the delicate butterflies in the garden of your heart, wishing to thank you for the medical care you offered them as a pediatrician. With your budding smile embracing the dizziness of the world, the sprouting hope in

tomorrow's life announces that you were the daughter of compassion to the forsaken man. Now I am looking at you in the mirror of thoughts dressed in swan wings bathed in the fragrant whiteness of the soul. You have already been transferred to the timeless vastness of the divine grace, singing along with the angels in the Love of Christ.

On July 19, 2014, you received the tonsure as a nun of the great schema from His Eminence the Holy Elder and Missionary Amphilochios Tsoukos of the Holy Metropolis of New Zealand and Oceania Islands. Tears of emotion are flowing from the spring of the heart to water your blooming memory with reverence and respect. May God grant you unhindered entrance into eternity.

Christ is Risen!
Nostis Psarras






Columns of Gratitude


Donations from 11.1.2014 to 2.28.2015

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For God loves a cheerful giver

A close-up photograph of a bird, likely a species of flycatcher, with vibrant blue plumage on its head and back, and a rich brown breast. The bird is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. The background is a soft-focus field of white and pink flowers, possibly cherry blossoms, with green leaves and buds. The overall scene is bright and natural, with a shallow depth of field that emphasizes the bird and the flowers in the foreground.

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A close-up photograph of a bird with vibrant blue feathers on its head and back, and a warm orange-brown breast. The bird is perched on a dark branch, surrounded by delicate pink and white blossoms. The background is softly blurred, creating a shallow depth of field that emphasizes the bird and the flowers in the foreground.

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A photograph of two birds, likely swallows, perched on a light-colored branch. The birds have iridescent blue heads and backs with white underparts. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

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