

Church Ministries / Departments

Special Appeals Report

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Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

Each year, as mandated by the All-American Council, The Orthodox Church in America holds a Mission Appeal in February, a Seminary Appeal in June, and a Charity Appeal in November. For each appeal an archpastoral message from His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman is distributed to all parishes, institutions, retired clergy, clergy widows, and faithful. A memo from Protopresbyter Robert S. Kondratik, OCA Chancellor, is also sent to all parish clergy requesting their assistance - by reading the letter to the faithful and encouraging financial assistance from the parish in general or through individual contributions. The letter also references resources, photos, information, and educational lessons that are available on the OCA web site.

The Metropolitan's message is also distributed to all individuals who have supported each appeal over the past five years. A detailed financial statement of their previous support is included, thanking them for their generosity and providing reference to appeal resources, as well as information about the distribution of the funds raised by the previous year's appeal. As a cost-saving measure, each mailing is prepared in-house for general distribution.

Since being assigned the responsibility of serving as the OCA's Special Appeals Coordinator in January 2003, I have prepared the materials distributed for each appeal in a timely manner to a mailing list of nearly 3,500 addresses, worked to create a section on the OCA web site for each appeal (with financial information and educational/vocational resources), and begun assembling a database for each appeal that tracks support from every parish, mission, and institution of the OCA since 1993.

In addition, when the need arises, special appeals are established in emergency situations to aid those with specific needs.

In March 2004, Metropolitan Herman approved a special appeal to assist with expenses at the SS. Cosmas and Damian Adult Home, Staten Island, NY. Nearly \$40,000 was raised through this appeal. In September 2004, special appeals were established to aid the victims of the terrorist tragedy in Beslan, Russia, and to help those who were affected by the series of hurricanes that caused significant damage in the United States.

More than 500 contributions totaling \$101,683.73 were made for the Beslan Appeal. Through the joint efforts of the Office of Special Appeals and the Department of Communications, the OCA received national media coverage highlighting The Orthodox Church in America's charitable efforts - with articles in the *New York Times* and Associated Press, and electronic media coverage on NBC News and the nationally syndicated radio program of Laura Ingram. Many of the individuals who contributed to the Beslan Appeal were not even Orthodox Christians.

On behalf of the OCA, the funds gathered were distributed by Archimandrite Zaccheaus (Wood), the OCA representative to the Moscow Patriarchate. Receiving the funds on behalf of those suffering from the terror attacks in Beslan were His Grace, Bishop Feofan of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz; foundations approved by the Russian Federation; embassy representatives of northern Ossetia in Moscow; and Keystone Humanitarian Services.

The \$36,476.62 raised to help those affected by hurricanes that struck the eastern United States in the fall of 2004 was distributed to a number of parishes, clergy, families, and individuals from Florida to Pennsylvania. Intercession of the Holy Virgin Church, Carnegie, PA, suffered the greatest loss when the remnants of Hurricane Ivan flooded the town and caused more than \$250,000 in damage to the church's interior.

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In the aftermath of the tsunami in South Asia, instead of establishing a separate appeal to aid the victims, the OCA administration decided to encourage the clergy and faithful of The Orthodox Church in America to contribute directly to the IOCC “Tsunami Appeal,” which to date has raised close to \$1.3 million.

In May 2005, at the direction of Metropolitan Herman, a special appeal to benefit the restoration of the Grabarka monastery in Poland was prepared and distributed to all parishes and clergy. In addition, information and an archpastoral letter from His Beatitude were included in the March issue of *The Orthodox Church* newspaper. Nearly \$7,000 has been gathered and will be presented to His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Poland by a representative of The Orthodox Church in America, along with letters and photos from church school classes collected by the OCA’s Department of Communications as part of the special appeal.

Focus

The overall focus of the OCA’s special appeals is to help those less fortunate than ourselves. When I work on preparing the appeals, I always keep this in mind, hoping to encourage more individuals and parishes to provide the financial assistance that enables The Orthodox Church in America to meet the numerous requests it receives.

Between appeals, and in addition to the other tasks and responsibilities I have at the Chancery, I am gathering statistical information on how individual parishes within the OCA support the annual appeals. The information, organized by diocese, shows how parishes are credited with supporting each appeal — either with a general parish collection, or with individual contributions. The results of this work have been extremely enlightening, showing specific trends and patterns of parish support, or the lack thereof.

Detailed reports with analysis of the data have been presented to the Holy Synod of Bishops at each of their sessions to ensure that they are kept informed about the levels of support from their dioceses for the annual appeals. Based on the research and statistical information gathered for each OCA appeal, a majority of parishes do not support the appeals. The results of the research show that on average, only 160 OCA communities out of 667, representing 24% of all parishes, support each appeal with a general collection. Therefore, *some 76% of parishes within the OCA do not and have never provided financial support* for the three annual appeals mandated by the All-American Council and blessed by the Holy Synod of Bishops. The number of parishes that support each appeal with a general collection and have individual members who also contribute to the appeals is 262 OCA communities out of 667, or 39.2%.

After an attempt in 2003 to use color brochures with photos and information to increase support, it was decided to keep expenses to a minimum and eliminate this design. Efforts have been made to keep costs down in 2005, in hopes that the message and information in a simple format will not affect overall financial support of the appeals.

♦ External Appeals

While the OCA has four major appeals each year, there is also a growing trend involving the distribution of additional appeals from every SCOBA agency, a number of OCA institutions and organizations, and non-OCA institutions and organizations - to say nothing of public radio and TV appeals by environmental causes and an endless list of charitable groups. It is not uncommon for the average parish priest within The Orthodox Church in America to receive between *15 and 20 of these additional appeals* in one month’s time. This proliferation of additional financial appeals is having a direct impact on the annual appeals of our Church, forcing our clergy and faithful to make difficult decisions about whom to assist.

Unfortunately, support for the OCA’s annual appeals is sometimes sacrificed for a different cause, with the excuse of “I supported the Church with the ‘X’ appeal last month.” While this may be the case, it is important to remember that it is the responsibility of every parish to support the annual appeals for the benefit of those who rely on them to continue their work.

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In 2005, approval was given for one-time special appeals by OCMC and IOCC in January and March of 2005. These mailings included the same information and resources that were distributed to the other member Churches of SCOBA along with a letter from His Beatitude encouraging support of their work. With more groups lining up asking for the same access to our parishes, it is imperative that our clergy be directed to support the OCA appeals first, to ensure the success of our internal programs, which benefit our communities and faithful.

Plans for the Future

The plans for the future work of the Special Appeals Coordinator are dependent upon an increase in the number of parishes that support the OCA appeals. If only an additional 200 parishes supported each appeal, the appeals would exceed the goals set by the Holy Synod and be able to help even more missions, seminarians, and individuals in need. Attempts to encourage voluntary or planned giving are hampered by the work - and thus the drain on time and energy - required to remind and encourage parishes to increase awareness of the annual appeals.

In order for long-term development and planned giving to take place, the foundation of parish and individual support must be strengthened. With so many parishes and clergy ignoring the mandate to help those in need, the work of the Church will be curtailed, limiting our ability to help everyone who approaches the Church asking for assistance.

While some parishes support the appeals to the best of their abilities, others do not, and the number of parishes that simply do not support the appeals at all remains alarmingly high. I believe it is easy to see why the OCA is unable to provide more assistance to those who rely on the annual appeals. As the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, our commitment to planting and nurturing new churches and missions throughout your dioceses, providing scholarships for your seminarians, and caring for those in need depends on every priest, deacon, and lay person making voluntary financial contributions above and beyond the assessments.

In an effort to increase support for the OCA's special appeals, ongoing projects include additional statistical research, the possible development of alternative means of solicitation for financial support from parishes, and additional information and resources made available on the OCA web site. It is also hoped that in time, we can focus on developing a greater awareness of the OCA Endowment funds that exist to benefit the Church and future generations, and increase financial support through planned giving.

Accountability

The special appeals are developed under the direct oversight of Fr. Robert S. Kondratich, OCA Chancellor, who reviews and refines all materials before they are presented to His Beatitude for his approval. Their guidance and support has helped us achieve an increase of support for each of the annual appeals during the past triennium.

OCA Endowments

- ◆ The *Theological Education Endowment* provides grants to seminarians with exemplary capabilities to pursue further studies.
- ◆ The *Mission Endowment* provides financial support to missions and/or mission areas for outreach and growth.
- ◆ The *General Purpose Endowment* provides support for the programs or materials of the Church Ministries and the normal operation of the Central Church Administration.
- ◆ The *Clergy Care Endowment* provides support to retired clergy needing health care coverage beyond Medicare.
- ◆ The *Charity Endowment* provides support for domestic and international charitable endeavors.
- ◆ The *Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards Endowment* provides additional annual support for the OCA Church Ministries.

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The Orthodox Church in America Special Appeals (Mission, Seminary, Charity)

Year to Date Comparison / 2002 - 2004

MISSION APPEALS	2004		Change in		2003		Change in		2002		Change in	
	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt
1. (10) Donations of \$1-99	906	\$25,720.68	-79	-\$1,033.67	985	\$26,754.35	-7	-\$1,180.65	992	\$27,935.00	-159	-\$3,722.22
2. (11) Donations of \$100-499	234	\$31,685.00	-13	\$912.00	247	\$30,773.00	44	\$5,068.00	203	\$25,705.00	-41	-\$4,950.00
3. (12) Donations of \$500-999	11	\$5,825.00	-2	-\$1,175.00	13	\$7,000.00	4	\$2,300.00	9	\$4,700.00	-4	-\$1,600.00
4. (13) Donations of \$1000 +	5	\$5,000.00	1	\$1,500.00	4	\$3,500.00	1	-\$1,500.00	3	\$5,000.00	0	\$0.00
5. (14) Donations from Organizations	2	\$200.00	-1	-\$500.00	3	\$700.00	-2	-\$150.00	5	\$850.00	-1	-\$225.00
6. (15) Donations from Parishes	153	\$40,075.74	3	\$3,821.91	150	\$36,253.83	31	\$5,009.53	119	\$31,244.30	-23	-\$10,852.94
7. (16) Donations for Special Alaska Appeal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-29	-\$3,653.00
8. (17) Donations for Special Mexico Appeal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-6	-\$900.00
9. (20) Donations from Canada	3	\$113.76	2	\$111.96	1	\$21.80	-3	-\$252.32	4	\$274.12	2	\$219.12
TOTALS	1314	\$108,640.18	-89	\$3,637.20	1403	\$105,002.98	68	\$9,294.56	1335	\$95,708.42	-261	-\$25,684.04
SEMINARY APPEALS	2004		Change in		2003		Change in		2002		Change in	
	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt
1. (10) Donations of \$1-99	724	\$20,101.00	-35	-\$1,412.46	759	\$21,513.46	-42	-\$961.54	801	\$22,475.00	-106	-\$2,899.00
2. (11) Donations of \$100-499	178	\$23,685.00	-24	-\$285.00	202	\$23,970.00	40	\$2,970.00	162	\$21,000.00	-34	-\$3,220.00
3. (12) Donations of \$500-999	5	\$2,500.00	-3	-\$1,600.00	8	\$4,100.00	4	\$2,100.00	4	\$2,000.00	-2	-\$1,000.00
4. (13) Donations of \$1000 +	2	\$2,000.00	-1	-\$1,000.00	3	\$13,000.00	-2	\$7,000.00	5	\$6,000.00	1	-\$2,500.00
5. (14) Donations from Organizations	1	\$1,000.00	-3	\$200.00	4	\$800.00	3	\$680.00	1	\$120.00	0	\$20.00
6. (15) Donations from Parishes	128	\$34,869.52	-1	\$5,544.62	129	\$29,324.90	23	\$40.68	106	\$29,284.22	-6	-\$782.54
7. (20) Donations from Canada	0	\$0.00	-2	-\$49.44	2	\$49.44	0	\$21.06	2	\$28.38	2	\$28.38
TOTALS	1038	\$84,155.52	-69	-\$8,602.28	1107	\$92,757.80	26	\$11,850.20	1081	\$80,907.60	-145	-\$10,353.16
CHARITY APPEALS	2004		Change in		2003		Change in		2002		Change in	
	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt	# of Transactions	Amt raised	Trans.	Amt
1. (10) Donations of \$1-99	971	\$27,441.91	-104	-\$2,640.91	1075	\$30,082.82	-20	-\$652.90	1115	\$30,735.72	-121	-\$3,906.66
2. (11) Donations of \$100-499	241	\$32,407.00	-13	-\$3,603.00	254	\$36,010.00	40	\$3,655.00	234	\$32,355.00	-38	-\$2,517.88
3. (12) Donations of \$500-999	12	\$6,125.00	1	\$625.00	11	\$5,500.00	1	\$475.00	10	\$5,025.00	-2	-\$275.00
4. (13) Donations of \$1000 +	8	\$9,000.00	4	\$2,000.00	4	\$7,000.00	-1	-\$3,000.00	5	\$10,000.00	-2	\$600.00
5. (14) Donations from Organizations	3	\$250.00	-1	-\$150.00	4	\$400.00	-1	-\$1,640.00	5	\$2,040.00	-5	-\$285.00
6. (15) Donations from Parishes	129	\$40,432.02	4	\$3,703.84	125	\$36,728.18	0	\$3,620.33	125	\$33,107.85	-2	-\$1,491.63
7. (16) Christmas Stocking Project Funds	630	\$83,075.48	55	\$8,035.49	575	\$75,039.99	-3	\$6,427.73	578	\$68,612.26	20	\$6,023.92
8. (17) 9/11 Emergency Disaster Relief	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9. (18) Basian Relief	512	\$101,683.73	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10. (19) Florida Hurricane Relief	162	\$36,476.62	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
11. (20) Donations from Canada	1	\$200.00	0	\$123.47	1	\$76.53	0	\$13.72	1	\$62.81	-2	-\$37.19
TOTALS	2689	\$337,091.76	620	\$146,254.24	2049	\$190,837.52	-24	\$8,898.88	2073	\$181,938.64	-736	-\$289,850.38