MISSION: Possible!

The work that began with St. Herman in 1794 continues today!
The impact of a Church Planting Grant is far reaching!

Here’s how your support helps to make a mission possible!

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

Reflecting upon the life of Saint Herman of Alaska, we observe how impressive his accomplishments truly were, especially in light of the harsh external conditions under which he labored. Although today we live in a world far different from his and possess many technologies and resources that are designed specifically to assist us, we also face our own challenges and distractions in witnessing to the Orthodox Faith.

Despite the unique challenges we face at the beginning of this century, I truly believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding our willingness to continue the work of Saint Herman and our efforts in the proclamation of the Gospel to all peoples throughout North America. When I see the joyful commitment to Christ and His Holy Church in the older established parishes and in the dozens of new parish communities being planted across North America, I know that our efforts are not in vain.

I remain greatly encouraged by the dedication of so many of our clergy and faithful to the work of evangelization. This commitment was highlighted at the 14th All-American Council, held last July in Toronto, where one of the best-received, most-supported and discussed pillars of the Council was evangelization, reflecting how committed our Church is to this ongoing work of announcing the fullness of the Gospel to the peoples of North America.

As sharers in the Church’s mission, we ask Saint Herman to intercede for us and to continue to bless our evangelic labors which take place, as they do, in so many ways. I encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to experience the richness and fullness of Orthodox Christianity. Welcome guests into your community as you would welcome Christ Himself. Reach out to those in need, especially to those who have nowhere else to turn in adversity. Willingly share your faith with any and all who will listen.

In addition to these simple forms of evangelization comes the opportunity and responsibility to provide financial assistance and support to the work of the Church through the annual Mission Appeal. This year, the proceeds from this annual appeal will benefit the five mission communities that have been designated as recipients of Church Planting Grants. These five mission communities, listed within this brochure, will be assisted in their first days as Orthodox Christian communities by your generous response to the 2006 Mission Appeal. Many other newly established missions are also in need of such support. Should the response to this year’s appeal be as generous as is hoped, a sixth mission will also be designated as a participant in the Church Planting Grant program. Please be aware, however, that it is only through your generosity that the Church can provide the necessary financial support to strengthen and expand such efforts.

In the midst of today’s society and the opposition and obstacles with which it confronts us, our efforts in proclaiming the Gospel may sometimes appear to be hindered. However, we cannot allow ourselves to become discouraged. Instead, if we remember how the Lord helped Saint Herman overcome innumerable obstacles as he worked to bring the Gospel to the native peoples of Alaska, we can trust that He will also bless us as we continue the legacy of evangelization which has been entrusted to us.

Thanking you in advance for your gift to the annual Mission Appeal, I remain

With love in Christ,

+HERMAN
Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

“...If someone would have told me three years ago that we’d be where we are today, I’d have found it very hard to believe. When we received the Church Planting Grant, Father James was able to become a full-time priest, but it was still a huge leap of faith - or so it seemed at the time. The financial welfare of Father James and his family was a major concern for me. However, the OCA was there with a Planting Grant which has been an enormous help.”

Judy LaPlante, member of St. John of Kronstadt Church, Lincoln, NE
Established in 2002 as an English-language mission to Victoria, BC, on its final year as a Grant recipient, the mission has a bookstore and library.

A choir is now established and growing; there are now enough children for a church school.

Founded in 2002, on its final year as a Grant recipient, the mission has grown 60% over the past two years.

There are formal plans for the construction of a permanent church structure on 17 acres of property.

“Life in the mission field always seemed to be a struggle, and we would not have been able to enjoy the blessing of a full-time priest without the OCA Church Planting Grant Program.”

Ron Stovall, Treasurer of St. Herman of Alaska Mission
Port Townsend, WA

“By receiving the gift of a Church Planting Grant, Holy Ascension was boosted from a ‘how will we get by?’ existence into the life of a full parish. Now we can focus on ‘being the Church’ rather than ‘will we ever be a church?’”

Chuck Bates, Parish Council President of Holy Ascension Mission
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Founded in 2002, on its second year as a Grant recipient, the mission offers regular education classes for members and seekers.

A developer has offered to donate the land if the mission can raise the balance of construction and building funds by February 2, 2006.
The Church Planting Grant makes the impossible possible! Grant funds, combined with a matching amount pledged by a mission, provide a significant amount of funding for a mission priest.

Faithful in Planting Grant missions are called to greater stewardship. A mission struggling to “make ends meet” can be distracted from fulfilling the mandate to proclaim the Gospel because it can be preoccupied with “catching up” or “making do.”

Experience has shown that Planting Grant missions mature into thriving parishes in a matter of a few years. The “start-up expenses” for planting a new mission are incredible, especially if the community hopes to engage a resident priest. Missions receiving Planting Grants are able to “transition” to full parish status precisely because they are able to devote more time to essential ministry. Over the years, it’s been amazing to watch granted missions grow and mature!

Since receiving the gift of autocephaly in 1970, The Orthodox Church in America has taken the lead in planting and nurturing new communities across this vast continent, bringing the Gospel of Truth to all who would receive it, and welcoming thousands to the Orthodox Christian faith.

Our mission efforts cannot be limited to the work of our mission communities. Every parish and community of The Orthodox Church in America is called to continue the zealous missionary work initiated by Saint Herman and the other North American Saints: to care for others, to share the faith, and to build up the Body of Christ. When Our Lord charged the Apostles to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” He charged the faithful of every generation including our own to do likewise!

Help us raise $120,000 during this year’s Mission Appeal!

For more information, contact us!