

Odoiporikon

Orthodox Mission in the East

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PATRIARCHAL FOUNDATION
OF ORTHODOX MISSION IN THE FAR EAST
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The Purpose of the Orthodox Mission in Our Days.

What Is the Meaning of Mission in the Contemporary World?

The purpose of the Orthodox mission is to spread the message of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, to the whole creation. This purpose remains constant, always current, unfailing and contemporary, as it comprises its center and heart.

The mission's place of action is in every part of God's creation, according to «The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all who dwell therein» (Ps 24:1), every part of the earth where the joyful message of the Resurrection and the Kingdom has not yet reached. The first and Great Missionary is our Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, who leaves the heavenly Father and comes to earth, 'and when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son' (Gal 4:4-7). Obviously, this action is the first movement in the history of missionary work.

Therefore, our Lord Himself is the Great and First Missionary, since He does not come of His own will, but is sent by the Father: «God has sent forth His Son». In this way, he is a model for the modern missionary who desires to offer the testimony of Christ to the Gentiles. Thus, he must minister in the missionary field with the blessing and permission of the Church and of the bishop who has the pastoral responsibility for the exercise of the missionary activity of an ecclesiastical province. Often there is a danger that such an

action, if it is outside the ecclesiastical context, while beginning with the best of intentions, may lose the meaning of the sacred calling and mission and end up in self-promotion and activism. If the Lord himself did not move of his own will, how can he who desires by name and work to 'make disciples of the Gentiles' do so rightfully?

The Lord «went about all the cities and towns, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom» (Mt. 9:35). ..Thus, our Lord points out the missionary journeys as one of the methods of practicing missionary work. Christ and the Apostles went from town to town and from village to village. This is what our missionaries do today, going from place to place, following in their footsteps. We who are observing missionary activities from behind the scenes most of the time, admire our missionaries who are consumed in the front line. In communicating with His Eminence Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand, we are amazed at the eagerness of his struggle. One day he is in New Zealand and the needs of the Holy Metropolis and the next day he is traveling on a mission to the islands of Fiji and from there to the rest of the islands of the Polynesian complex. Reflecting on the way but also on the effort, the difficulty even in our time with modern means for all these long and strenuous, if not exhausting,



journeys, we are reminded of the Lord with the disciples and apostles.

On these journeys, the Lord preached and taught about the coming of the Kingdom of God. This testimony of the Church's eschatological message is still given today during the missionary journeys carried out under the pastoral responsibility of the dioceses that carry out missionary work throughout the world. These journeys are not, nor are they meant to be, leisure trips, as some may have in mind. Missionary journeys involve unexpected difficulties and immeasurable risks. During missionary journeys, liturgical worship gatherings take place in which the bishop and his delegated clergy as well as lay faithful are responsible for the work of preaching and teaching. In addition, catechetical assemblies take place in which either

the bishop himself or competent catechists teach the Church's message of the Kingdom of Heaven to the indigenous faithful, if and when they have been baptized, or to those awaiting to be baptized. Sometimes the bishop will be accompanied by a missionary team, just as the Holy Apostles accompanied Christ on his various journeys.

Therefore, we conclude that even today, after so many centuries, missionary work has an essential meaning as it is a testimony of Christ. Modern missionaries walk in His footsteps and follow the traces He left in His passage here on earth to the ends of the world.

Anthony L. Mpafaloukos, Dr. of Mission and Director of the Press and Public Relations Office of the Holy Metropolis of New Zealand

Lecture on the war in Ukraine

In the main Hall of the Missionary Center of the Orthodox Church in Seoul, a lecture titled “Ukraine Now” was held on Friday, June 30, during which journalist KIM Young-Mi presented events and experiences from her journalistic activity in war-torn Ukraine.

The special and very interesting aspect of the well-known journalist’s speech is that she presented the war in Ukraine only from a humanitarian and not a political point of view. The testimony of her experience, living for a long time in the place of war operations, and the description of horrible crimes of the war, which she saw and experienced sensitized the listeners so that they would not remain indifferent to this tragic story.

The event was closed by Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea and Exarch of Japan, who, after conveying the paternal blessings of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, he emphasized the need for us all to realize that the war in Ukraine, but also any aggressive war



anywhere on earth, is actually a “civil” war because brothers are killed among themselves since all the people of the earth have God as our common Father. Whoever shoots any fellow human being, who is made “in the image” of God, shoots Christ himself. Finally, he said that we must condemn the war publicly, as our Ecumenical Patriarch did from the first day of the war and to continue our help to the victims of the war.





The iconography of the Holy Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in the City of Joenju

From July 17 to August 9 2023, the team of hagiographers, who came from Greece along with the volunteer assistants from Korea, Taiwan and America, under the general supervision and guidance of the well-known professor of byzantine hagiography Mr. Sozos Giannoudis, worked feverishly for the iconographic illustration of the dome and the niche of the Holy Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju city.

With God's help and the blessing of the Virgin Mary, the planned project was completed with great success. This miraculous result is certainly due to the excellent cooperation of the forty-member team of iconographers and their assistants, but also to all members of the Parish who worked with zeal and self-denial for the preparation of the daily meals and nourishments, as well as doing the shopping of food items and many other technical tasks.

Upon the completion of this sacred project, Metropolitan Ambrosios thanked everyone wholeheartedly for their sacrificial love and dedication. He also extended special thanks to the head of the parish,

Fr. Hilarion Jeong, his presbytera Despina, and all the members of the community.

Every day, a variety of problems arose, which had to be dealt with urgency. The devil, who, as the late Metropolitan Sotirios used to tell us, «attacks with more ferocity when he sees a God-given work being done, because it will spoil his evil plans», caused many serious problems of illness and accidents, from the beginning to the end of the project.

Yet, despite of the difficulties, the work was completed successfully with God's help and the protection of the Holy Theotokos, since **«he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world»** (1 John, 4:4). Thus, after the removal of both scaffolds, the images of the Pantocrator, of the Virgin Mary, as well as the Prophets, the Righteous, the Apostles and the Hierarchs were revealed. And behold! The holy church was transformed into «heaven»! As a result, every time we entered the holy temple we could also exclaim with the hymnographer of our Church : **«Standing in the temple of your glory, we feel as though we are standing in heaven»!** Glory be to God for all things!

Valuable lesson in Korea about overcoming death

The death of a fellow human being, and especially a sudden one, rarely can have as many missionary dimensions and impact as the death of a faithful Greek young man had in Korea.

The group of iconographers from Greece with their Greek, Korean and Taiwanese assistants, forty in number, were in the newly built church of the Dormition of the Virgin in the city of Jeonju. Being like a blessed beehive, some of them were up on the high scaffolding, drawing or painting, while others were on the first floor of the church working on various auxiliary tasks. Suddenly the sad news came over the phone: the twenty one year old student X., brother of one of the members of the volunteer iconographers, had died in a car accident! The parents of the deceased, devastated, did not have the courage to announce the tragic event to their other child who was so far away in Korea. They called the Bishop and entrusted him with this difficult task. With admirable composure, the mother tried at this difficult time to put her words in order while the father was content to say: "Our child is now an angel in Heaven!"

After the end of the conversation, the Bishop discreetly informed all the members of the mission, one by one, about the tragic event, and told them that shortly after a Memorial Service would be held for the repose of the soul of X. He asked them to pray so that he himself would

find a suitable way to speak to the brother of the deceased. The moments were tough. Everyone was shocked. There was a quiet sadness.

The meeting with N. took place inside the chapel of the church, where the baptistery is located. When N., the brother of the deceased, heard the sad news, he spontaneously crossed himself and said: "Glory be to you, O Lord. The only thing that concerns me is that if my brother was ready for Heaven!"

Everyone was waiting outside the baptistery of the holy church for the Memorial. The Service began with restrained sobs. The brother of the deceased young man in Greece was in the psalter singing the funeral hymns with other members of the iconographers. During the prayer "May his memory be eternal", everyone knelt down, following the Korean tradition of honoring the deceased. At the end, the hymn "Christ is Risen" was sung three times, thus spreading the hope of the Resurrection. In a few consoling words, which the Bishop uttered, he emphasised that faith in the resurrection of the dead is the only fact that can truly be comforting. Then everyone, one after the other, expressed their condolences to N. for the rest of his brother's soul. Surprisingly, Koreans, who do not easily express their feelings with words and gestures, outdid themselves by hugging N. and expressing their support through tears.



After the end of the Memorial Service, we heard N. saying: “Now, after the Memorial Service I feel peace in my heart. That is what I needed!” The spiritual uplifting of everyone’s heart was completed when we learned from Greece that X., the day before his tragic death, had gone to Confession and had expressed to his grandmother his true joy for his participation in the Sacrament of Confession.

Among the forty-member group of iconographers there were several Korean Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians who participated in the project. To everyone, the late X.’s death as well as the way it was faced by his brother N., served as a great teacher of the Orthodox ethos. What the Orthodox Koreans had theoretically been taught during their Catechism lessons about overcoming death in the light of Christ’s Resurrection, they saw it applied in practice. And for the heterodox

Koreans and Taiwanese it worked as a dynamic testimony of the Orthodox faith and life.

The daily Service of the Small Paraklesis (Intercessory Prayer) to the Most Holy Theotokos sung as a preparation for the upcoming great feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, also had a magical effect on the souls of all of us and taught us the abolition of death and decay, through the death of Christ: “From death and corruption He has saved my nature, held by death and corruption; for unto death He Himself has surrendered; for which reason, O Virgin, please intercede with Him Who is your Lord and Son, from the enemies’ evils deliver me.”

May the memory of our late brother X. be eternal, and may the Leader of life and death bestow upon his loved ones the strength and consolation from above.

Athanasia Kontogiannakopoulos



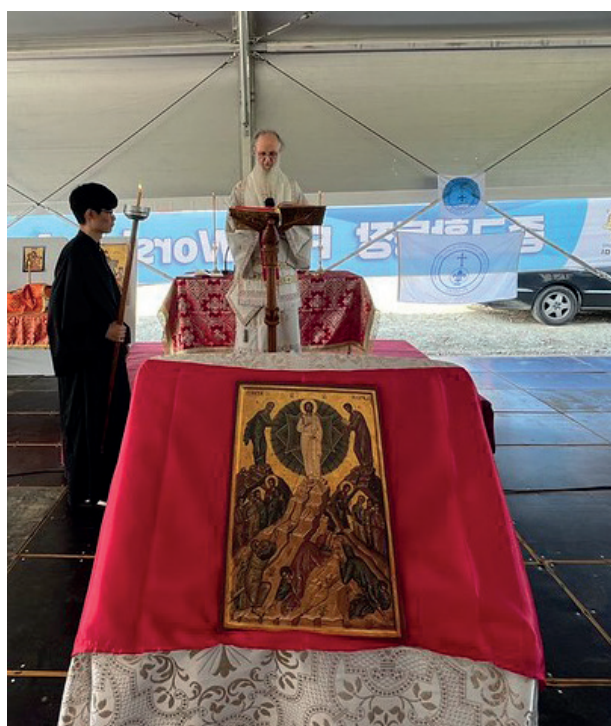
The Divine Liturgy at the 25th World Scout Jamboree

The 25th World Scout Jamboree was held in the city of Saemangeum, Korea during the first ten days of August 2023, which was attended by about forty thousand scouts from 123 countries. A large group of Orthodox Scouts from many countries also participated in it. His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew sent a significant Patriarchal Message to the International Link of Orthodox Christian Scouts (**DESMOS**), which was read

out during the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 6 August.

The Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, as the official local Church of the Korean peninsula under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, participated with its officials in the activities at the Religious Activity Center and specifically in the pavilion of the Union of Orthodox Scouts **DESMOS**, in order to inform the scouts about the Orthodox Church in the Far East. The Divine Liturgy was also held on the occasion of the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Saviour (6/8), in which more than two hundred scouts from twenty different countries participated.

Finally, on Sunday 13 August, a group of about 90 Scouts of Greek nationality attended church services at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Seoul. After the Divine Liturgy, the Metropolitan of Korea spoke briefly about the history of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea and the importance of the missionary work being carried out by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Far East. Finally, the Parish members offered to everyone present a Korean treat with refreshments.



Baptismal Divine Liturgy on «the Pascha of the Summer» in Seoul

On Sunday, August 27, 2023, Father Romanos Kavchak performed the Baptism of fifteen Slavic speakers in the baptistry of the holy church of Saint Maximos the Greek in Seoul. After the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation and while singing the hymn: “Those who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ”, they came in procession to the cathedral of St. Nicholas, where the Divine Liturgy was in progress, so that the neophytes could participate in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Before the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, the prayers of Ablution and the Tonsure were read. The Metropolitan welcomed and congratulated the newly illumined and, on behalf of the clergy and the faithful of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea wished them good health of soul and body, and that they may live



in the Orthodox Church with faith and love until their last breath.

During the distribution of the Antidoron, the neophytes, wearing white garments (χιτών) and holding lit candles, stood on the Soleas of the church and they congratulated them in person and wished them a blessed life in Christio.



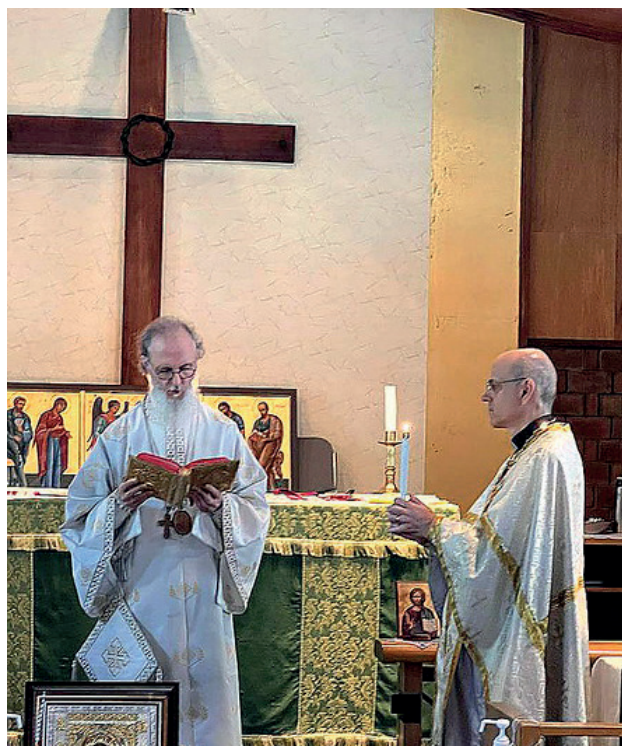
The Divine Liturgy in Tokyo Japan

On Sunday, September 3, 2023, the Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios performed the Divine Liturgy in Tokyo with Father Paul Koroluk. In his sermon, the Metropolitan said the following:

Today's apostolic reading marks the end of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. At the beginning of the passage, in just a few words, it is as if Paul is summarizing everything he wrote throughout his letter. He tells us: "Awake! Stand firm in the faith! Be brave and strong! May all your actions be inspired by love." Then he closes his letter with greetings. But before he finishes, he takes the writing feather in his hand and writes his last words with his own hand: "Whoever does not love the Lord Jesus Christ let him be separated from the body of the Church. Maran atha- The Lord is coming."

In these significant words, Paul describes what is the greatest sin, that whoever commits it is excommunicated and has no place in the Church of Christ.

The Holy Bible teaches us that "the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt. 22:37-38). Failure to observe this God-given commandment is the greatest sin. Why not lov-



ing Christ is the greatest sin? For two reasons:

First, because not loving Christ is the greatest corruption of the soul. When a person does you a small favor, you love and thank him. If e.g. a doctor cures you of some disease, you love him for life. And Christ who loves you with the highest love, you do not love him? Christ loves us not with words, but with the sacrifice of Himself. That is why Christ's love is "red" because it's a crucified love.

Secondly, not loving Christ is the greatest sin, because Christ is the most beloved Person. Can you imagine if someone shows you a real diamond that sparkles in one hand and in the other shows you a fake stone that shines, and you choose the fake stone instead of the diamond? Christ is the Diamond. It is the precious pearl, worth selling everything to get

it (see Mt. 13:45-46). Worldly love is like shining stones. No matter how hard you search, you will not find another person more perfect than Christ. No matter how hard you search, you will not find another face more beautiful than Christ. Therefore, since Christ is the most perfect, the wisest, the holiest, the most beautiful Person, then the first love of our hearts must belong to Christ.

Unfortunately, love for Christ is a rare thing in our time. Other small, earthly, cheap, fake loves have taken the place of love for Christ. But we must not appear ungrateful. Our hearts were not made to beat for others. Every beat of our hearts should be for Christ. The first love, the first love of our hearts must be Christ. Because to Christ belongs all glory, honor, and worship, always, now and forever and ever. Amen.

Retreat at the Parish of the Apostle Paul in Incheon

On Sunday, September 10, 2023, a Retreat was held at the Parish of the Apostle Paul in Incheon. The Retreat took place after the Divine Liturgy and mainly young people participated.

The priest of the Parish, Rev. Father Daniel Na Chang-gyu introduced the topic “Cooperation of God and Man”. The topics “Pilgrimage to Mount Athos” and “The Confession of my Orthodox Faith” were also presented.

Everyone was pleased with the development of the topics, but also with the opportunity of spiritual communication and fellowship that the members of the Parish had with each other, and wished to have more similar meetings in the future.



An unforgettable pilgrimage to the new Orthodox church in the city of Jeonju

The weekend of September 9 and 10 was very special for more than 20 Slavic-speaking parishioners of the church of St. Maximos the Greek in Seoul, who made a pilgrimage to the newly built church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju.

The trip began with a prayer at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul. The Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios blessed all the pilgrims before their departure.

After arriving in Jeonju, the pilgrims visited the National Museum of Korea located in the Hanok Village. While there, they had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the history and culture of the city of Jeonju.

Later they arrived at the church of the Dormition of the Theotokos where everyone was impressed by the beauty of

the church and its wonderful iconography. This was followed by dinner at the Community Center. Afterward, everyone gathered in the church for the Service of Small Compline and the Prayers before Holy Communion. The beauty of the church at night and the overwhelming Services filled the pilgrims' hearts with heavenly feelings.

In the morning, many of the pilgrims woke up early to admire the sunrise and the unusually beautiful view of the church, enveloped in the rays of the morning sun.

The Sunday Liturgy was presided over by the Dean of the church, Fr. Hilarion Jeong, assisted by Fr. Roman Kavchak as co-officiant. In his sermon during the Divine Liturgy, Father Roman analyzed the importance of the church for Orthodox

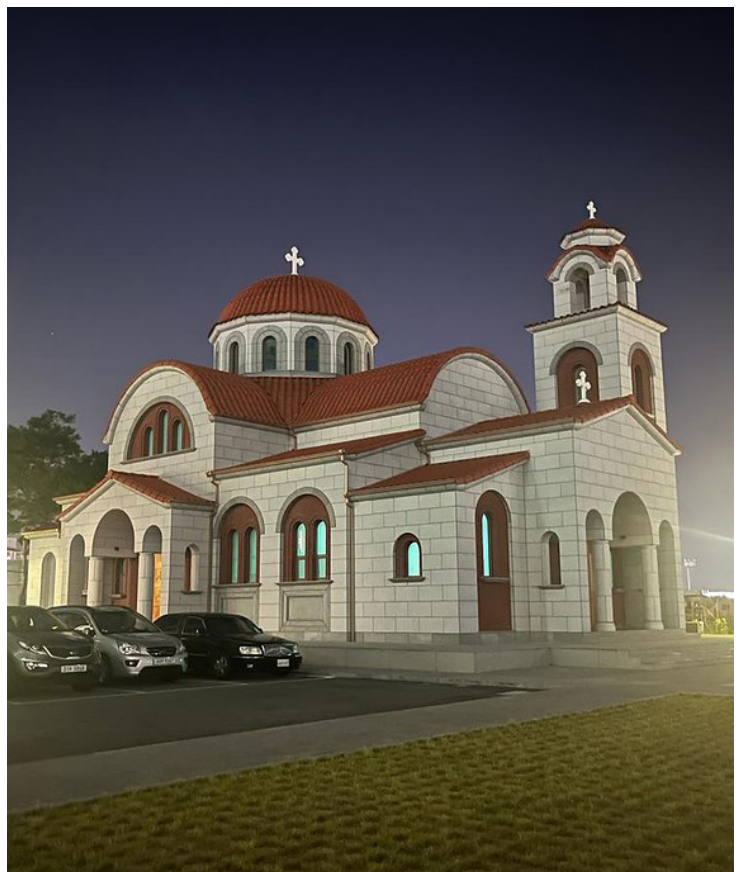




believers and pointed out the spiritual benefits of their pilgrimage.

After the Divine Liturgy, all the faithful of the parish of Jeonju and the visitors from Seoul sat down for the common meal of love, during which they exchanged impressions from their trip and shared spiritual experiences. The visitors expressed their gratitude to Father Hilarion and Presbytera Despina, as well as to all the parishioners for their heartfelt hospitality.

This pilgrimage left a deep impression on the hearts of the parishioners of the holy church of Saint Maximos the Greek in Seoul and helped them strengthen their faith and spiritual unity.



A wedding unlike any other

Two American youths aged 25 and 26, Alexander Thomas Uman and Anna Josephine Gallegos came from America to have their wedding ceremony in the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea.

The Sacrament of their Marriage was performed on Sunday, September 24, 2023, following the Divine Liturgy and the Sunday Agape Meal in the cathedral church of St. Nicholas, Seoul, by the Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios assisted by the Dean of the church, Fr. Antonios Lim. Instead of a sermon, an excerpt of a Sermon of St. John Chrysostom from his commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians of the Apostle Paul was read, advising the newlyweds about married life and raising children.

Many members of the Korean Orthodox Youth Association “Syndesmos” of the Parish of St. Nicholas participated in the Sacrament, praying together, and trying to be close to the newlyweds at this sacred time of their lives. At the simple reception that followed in the Cathedral Hall, they met with the newlyweds and expressed their congratulations and love.

This was a wedding with the emphasis on the essential element, which is none other than the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage bestowing God’s blessing on the life of the newlyweds and not on the secondary, which unfortunately, most of the time, overlaps the essence of things. That is why it was truly a wedding different from any other.





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