*Works of The Order in Action!*

**Department of Mission and Evangelism**

In 1987 our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP established the Department of Missions and Evangelism with the commission to bring America home to the Faith of Peter and Paul. More than ever, this commission given not only to the leaders of the Evangelical Orthodox Church, but to every Orthodox Christian living in North America, rings even truer today with an even more urgent calling.

Without the necessary money, however, such visions often go unrealized. The Order of St. Ignatius has been an integral part of funding this vision for over 25 years. Under the chairmanship of Fr. Peter E. Gillquist of blessed memory, and the spiritual advice of Bishop ANTOUN, the Department of Missions and Evangelism has been instrumental in raising up and receiving over 100 church communities into our beloved Archdiocese. We cannot say that these churches have been started only by the clergy, but also by the laity, whose willingness to enter into new dimensions of service through the Order of St. Ignatius, have resulted in providing the necessary funding to meet the challenges to make such efforts bear fruit.

With the move of His Grace, Bishop ANTOUN from Englewood, New Jersey to Florida, continuing as the Bishop of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast, the newly consecrated Bishop NICHOLAS was charged early in 2012 with the oversight of the Department of Missions and Evangelism, and a very experienced, well-known, and long-time member of the department, Fr. Michael Keiser is now serving as our new Department Chairman. In addition, Metropolitan PHILIP has appointed Fr. Kenneth DeVoie to the Department as a full-time missionary priest. Fr. Kenneth has significant experience in “church planting” and the establishment of new church communities, and his expertise will certainly benefit the missionary efforts of our Archdiocese.

Recently, I was asked, “How has the direction of the Department changed with the new chairman?” My response – “I don’t think it has, but our operations have changed.”

The direction is the same; it is the command from the Lord Himself: “Go ye thereforeand make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matt. 28:19-20

The operations have changed, however. Fr. George Kevorkian is administrating the Department’s budget from the Archdiocese offices, as well as coordinating a monthly conference call of all the department members. These monthly calls have increased our efficiency, our accountability, and help us to operate as a missionary team.

We all feel the rapid changes taking place in our society today; social, economic, political and religious. More and more people are moving out into small town and rural areas, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to assemble a sufficient number of tithing families to support a full-time priest, even in our cities and suburbs. Yet, we still need to minister to and care for the spiritual needs of the faithful residing in areas of our various deaneries where no organized parish or mission exists, and explore the possibilities for establishing parishes or missions in these areas.

We desire to reach anyone who will listen, and enter into meaningful conversation with inquirers, preaching and teaching the theology, morality, and worship of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. We need to reintroduce Post-Christian America to the One True God; to that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all.

We must go out and lift our neighbors from a meaningless sub-human existence to a vision of what it means to be truly human, leading them out of the moral corruption of libertinism, into true liberty and freedom in Christ. And finally, we will continue to deliver to others, that which we have received from the Lord, from His apostles, from His Church, our Mother: that is the worship of the Holy Trinity.

Without the generous support of the Order of St. Ignatius, the efforts of the Department of Missions and Evangelism would be severely diminished. The Order annually contributes over $100,000 for the work of the Department of Missions and Evangelism. These monies help to put three full-time missionaries in the field to explore new mission opportunities, serve existing missions, and help them to achieve full parish status. To date, 108 new missions have been established and 55 have achieved full parish status. Every dollar given in support of this Archdiocesan ministry brings us that much closer to fulfilling our Metropolitan’s imperative to bring America home to the Faith of Peter and Paul.

With sincere gratitude,

V. Rev. John Finley

Full-time Missionary Priest