



## A private donation to FFA Youth Programs



Members of ROCOR Youth group at last year's pilgrimage to Moscow

The generosity of a private donor has allowed the Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia to finance two summer youth events, organized

by the Synodal Youth Committee. The participants represent all ROCOR dioceses.

The summer program includes:

- A pilgrimage to Kursk together with a Russian youth group;
- Visits to monasteries, churches and venerating relics; interviews with His Holiness Kyrill, the Patriarch of Moscow and the Whole of Russia; with the director Nikita Mikhalkov as well as local and state government representatives;
- A missionary trip to Zavrzae village (Kostroma region) together with a Russian youth group;
- Restoring two XVIIIth century churches; spiritual talks by priests of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad; a pilgrimage to the churches of Moscow and Kostroma; concerts, contests, etc.

For information on the trips please contact Archpriest Andrei Sommer by

## +Metropolitan Hilarion Hosts an Intimate Paschal Reception



+Metropolitan Hilarion, FFA staff and their guests

An intimate Paschal reception was held for the friends of the Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia at the Synod of Bishops in Manhattan. The reception was hosted by His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York. Several illustrious representatives of the local Russian community were in attendance:

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Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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Peter Tcherepnine and his spouse; Dr George Anastassov and his spouse; Elena Malashenko and Peter Derby. FFA President Vladimir Galitzine, Executive Director Protopriest Victor Potapov and Chairman of the Synodal Youth Committee Protopriest Andrei Sommer described the work and goals of the Fund.

At the end of the reception, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion asked the guests to support the Fund for Assistance, whose main goal is to serve the needs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

## FFA supports ROCOR mission in Haiti



Bishop Michael of Geneva of Geneva with members of ROCOR Mission in Haiti

The Haiti aid program was a response to the dire need of our Haitian brothers and sisters suffering from the aftereffects of three devastating hurricanes last August.

Your generosity empowered the Fund for Assistance to ROCOR to send over \$19,000 to the Russian Orthodox Mission in Haiti.

Unfortunately, more troubles followed the hurricanes. The economic situation in Haiti remains critical, and, according to Fr Gregoire Legoute, one of the two Russian Orthodox priests in Haiti, the government does not provide social care; the people have to

rely on charitable and religious organizations, including the ROC mission, which ministers to the sick and suffering, comforts the depressed, and provides care and education to children in parish schools.

There are about 2,000 Russian Orthodox Christians in Haiti, most all of them indigenous. The number constantly increases, owing to the tireless missionary efforts of the island's two ROC priests, Fr Jean Chenier-Dumais, and Fr Gregoire Legoute. Every week the two priests travel great distances by public transport between 5 parishes and 2 chapels located in different cities on the island.

According to Fr Daniel McKenzie, the mission's administrator, Fr. Jean is compelled to travel north to his parishes, often spending hours on the back of motorcycle taxis holding the things needed for the services in Cap Haitien (he had fallen from these motorcycles already three times). Great distances, bad roads and a lack of cars for the priests make travel by far the mission's greatest challenge and vehicles for the priests – their greatest need.

Their second greatest need is the acquisition and sufficient rent of church buildings. Our Haitian brothers and sisters already know what it feels like to lose a church.

After the Reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2007, the former Haitian Mission Administrator, Fr. Gregory Williams went into schism taking over the church property, including a school and a church building, built mostly with donations from the faithful of the Russian Church Abroad. Now hundreds of faithful gather outside a small rented room converted to a chapel.

**The Fund for Assistance to ROCOR is looking for ten parishes to sponsor our Haitian mission by providing them with only \$200 a month.**

This small sum will at least guarantee that our Orthodox brothers and sisters in Haiti don't have to worry about losing their church buildings.

*We ask you to help our brothers and sisters in Christ and to further the missionary work of our Church in Haiti!*

**Read on our website**

[www.fundforassistance.org](http://www.fundforassistance.org):

- Fr. Daniel McKenzie's full account of his trip to Haiti
- Interview with +Metropolitan Hilarion and Fr. Gregoire Legoute

## FFA allots \$3,000 in aid to a priest-student



Rev. Demetrios Harper with wife Marina

His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion recently approached the Fund for Assistance with a request to assist a young priest in his efforts to obtain a Ph.D. in Theology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Fr. Demetrios Harper was granted \$3,000.

Fr. Demetrios and his wife Marina are converts to the Eastern Orthodox Church. They were raised as Protestants and found the Church in their early twenties and late teens respectively. They have a 3 y. o. daughter Emilia. According to Fr Demetrios, he had felt called to the priesthood since his

conversion and after receiving his Bachelor's degree from a secular university, applied and was accepted into the Master's program at the Faculty of Theology in Thessaloniki. To date, Fr Demetrios has completed all the requirements toward a Masters in Dogmatic Theology, with the exception of his thesis defense and is preparing to continue his education with the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion.

While studying in Greece, Fr Demetrios will be serving and receiving a stipend from the Greek Orthodox Church. After his return he will resume his duties in ROCOR as pastor and hopefully, professor of Theology.

In order to be granted a salary in Greece, Fr Demetrios was obliged to submit documents to the department of External Church Affairs in Athens to prove him a member of a canonical Church.

The process took several months due to administrative changes at the Moscow Patriarchate and the Harper family was left without income.

They were unable to pay their rent in Greece or make their car payments consequently incurring a debt of over \$7,000. Upon receiving aid from FFA, Fr Demetrios wrote:

“With the money that has been provided, we will be able to pay off a portion of our debt and continue our endeavor in Greece.

Thank you for your generosity”.

## **FFA, Western American Diocese launched joint venture to aid swine flu-stricken monastery in Mexico**

Following the outbreak of swine flu in Mexico the Fund for Assistance received a desperate letter from the Abbot of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery in Mexico City, Fr. Nektarios.

“We have no money; few people come to Church, everybody is afraid to get swine flu. People are even afraid to kiss the icons or a hand! Dozens are calling the monastery all day asking for our prayers and guidance, they are so scared, they can sense the fragility of life. Please pray for us, so God has mercy on our sins.”

Upon the government’s order to shut down all “non-essential” businesses, the monastery was forced to temporarily close its bakery and coffee shop, its main source of income, and cancel all church services, excepting those for the brethren.

According to Fr. Nektarios, the monastery was unable to pay their bills, electricity, credit cards, phone, water; there was no gas, and their car was at the repair shop after 3 weeks. In order to make some money, they were even obliged to sell some of their antique furniture.

“These past two weeks have been very difficult for everyone,” wrote Fr. Nektarios in an email, “By your prayers and

with this help may we be able to make our lives easier.”

In response to the urgent need of our brethren in Mexico the Fund for Assistance and the Western American Diocese launched a joint action to support the monastery and the faithful. Advertisements were placed on the websites of the Synod, FFA and Western American Diocese, and pleas sent out to parishes.

As a result of this joint action \$13,122 were collected for the Holy Trinity Monastery. Of this \$7,715 were sent by the Fund for Assistance.

In the words of the abbot Fr. Nektarios, “since your help arrives at the most critical time for our Community and Mission, when we are facing the financial consequences of the three-week quarantine, we wish to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you who have contributed in any way to make this assistance available to us.

May our Resurrected Lord reward your gifts of love, fellowship and generosity, with many Gifts from Above. Thank you for all your prayers, expressions of solidarity, and moral support.”

## **FFA Welcomes Back Treasurer**



A. Kulesha with wife Irina

The Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia welcomes back the fund’s former treasurer – Alexander Kulesha, who had provided expert service to FFA

for 13 years before retiring in 2007.

Mr. Kulesha holds a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from City College of New York and a Master’s degree in Business from Fairleigh Dickinson University. He is an accomplished engineer and executive with over 35 years of extensive experience in the non-profit sector that includes serving as:

- vice president and chair for the activities committee for Otrada, Inc. a non-profit social organization for promotion of Russian culture;
- as administrator of the Preparatory Committee of the 1000<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Baptism of Russia;
- as treasurer of the Synod of Bishops Bible Fund; and as treasurer of the Orthodox Palestine Society, U.S.A., Inc., where he continues to serve.

Mr. Kulesha has two sons and five granddaughters and resides in NY with his wife Irina.

## Holy Fathers on Charity

**St. Philaret of Moscow:** «charity toward people brings the powerful and real blessing of the Lord, often by wonderful and unexpected means»

**St. John of Kronstadt:** “The receiver of your donation serves as a pledge of mercy for you from God”

## Our Mission

The mission of the Fund for Assistance is to support the initiatives of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, whose main purpose and aim is to propagate the Holy Orthodox faith, the moral-spiritual education of youth and the care for Church members, support of clergy, and maintenance of its churches, monasteries, and holy places through financial assistance.

**The grants provided, including those described in this newsletter, could not have been achieved without donor support. Please help us to continue our good work by completing the attached form or going online to [www.fundforassistance.org](http://www.fundforassistance.org)**

## FFA Pledge

***Your Money –Your Choice: Donations are allocated to the goal specifically chosen by the donor.***

We're on the Web! More information on our website: [www.fundforassistance.org](http://www.fundforassistance.org)



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