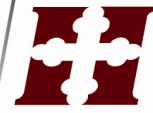


The Hellenic College Holy Cross CROSSWORD



November 7, 2011

Brookline, Massachusetts

MISSIONS WEEK

November 14-19

Summer Trip to Albania Much More than a Mission Trip

Father Steve Mathewes

Our ten-day mission trip in early June was, in fact, much more than a mission trip. First of all, it was a class offered by Holy Cross, and led by the ten-year veteran missionary to Albania, Fr. Luke Veronis. The class focused on the missiology of Archbishop Anastasios, and his incredible work, and built into it was this mission trip. But the trip had a third element, beyond pedagogical and missiological: it was also spiritual. In other words, it was a field trip, a mission trip, and a pilgrimage all rolled into one.

We had the tremendous opportunity to study firsthand the thriving Church; visit the many churches and church-run schools, ministries and organizations; and meet with Archbishop Anastasios, other hierarchs, priests, church leaders and people who lived through the communist era. We got to spend time with the faithful, lead small group discussions with the diocesan youth and bible studies with the college students, and take the adorable children of the Home of Hope Orphanage for a day at the beach. And we were additionally blessed to attend several Liturgies with His Eminence, a full vigil at St. John Vladimir monastery, visit important sites of Christian history, and take a hike through the southern countryside visiting centuries-old monasteries with Metropolitan John (of Korça).

But anyone who has been on a mission trip knows that merely listing the activities does nothing to convey the spirit of the experience. I came back changed, and I do not say that flippantly. The decision to go on a short-term mission trip should not be made lightly or for the wrong reasons (e.g. to get a kind of spiritual steroid shot). But the fact is that going on a mission trip strips away the many layers of apathy and self-involvement until there is no barrier between you and the loving and revelatory touch of your Creator.

HCHC Group Visits Hogar Orphanage in Guatemala City

Marcella Xyloportas

Sitting in our last meeting Thursday evening, with the Real Break Guatemala trip coming to a close, we realized how hard it would be to say Goodbye. We were lucky to have known each other before the trip, happy to have helped paint the dorms, fix the lawnmower, and meet the residents of the peaceful orphanage but we did not know how we would leave these children we bonded with so greatly. The Hogar Rafael Ayau had somehow become our home in the few days spent there, and although we had solace in the fact that we would be welcomed back at any time, we knew we would be returning to a much different life in the states.

The most memorable moments however were the simplest ones. Nothing will compare to sitting next to Gloria a fifteen year old who knew more about life than most adults, holding hands with Miriam a best friend who you shared only the language of love with or being schooled at soccer by Barbara and the girls. We'll never forget laughing with little trouble maker Alexander during meals, helping five year old Emanuel wash the honeycomb off his smiling face and buying little treasures from Sarah at the Hogar book store.

Although we all move in a different way, feeling blessed for how easy we privileged Americans have it, some things will never really feel complete. The kids thanked us over and over, they clapped when we drove away and the tears in our eyes reflected the tears in theirs. Even if Hogar family never knows it, they saved us. We fell in love with sixty five children the day we met them, now we are just trying to figure out life without them.



Far Left-Kenya Missions Team in Lodwar
Left-Alexandria Ritsi in Loupwala, Kenya
Below-Thomas Manuel in Lodwar, Kenya



Spring Break with the Turkana in Lodwar, Kenya

Alexis Campbell

The air was hot, dry, and our bodies were covered in dust. Each of us slowly grew more tired with every step through the blazing desert. The taste of iodized water was no longer a thought as we struggled to keep ourselves hydrated. After the long days, our exhaustion put us quickly to sleep in our sand-filled tents, the stars shining brighter than we'd ever seen. Although the tribal lifestyle sounds rough to those of us who are used to our westernized ways, it was surprisingly an easy adjustment for our team.

The OCMC trip to Kenya was a teaching mission in the land of Turkana with a brief stay in the country's capital of Nairobi. The first three days were spent in the neighboring tribal villages of Loupwala and Nacabosan. Our events included the Divine Liturgy, baptisms, and showing many their first movie *The Jesus Film* in their own Turkana language. Our time in Lodwar was mainly filled with teaching the catechists, those who travel and spread the word of Jesus.

Ten days was all we needed. The constant stench of dirt, body odor, and sweat quickly became a norm as we learned something much more important than any physical conditions: the beauty of God's love shared between all people. In ten days we built some of the strongest relationships we'll ever have. Today when we lay in our beds we remember our brothers and sisters far away as we are sleeping under the same stars.



A MISSIONS CONFERENCE
at
Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek
Orthodox School of Theology



Orthodox Theological Schools/Seminaries in America & Their Role in the Global Missionary Movement

“Orthodox Missions and the Resurrection of the Church of Albania”
Metropolitan John (Pelushi) of Korca
EFOM Missions Lecture - 7:00pm, Thursday, November 17



METROPOLITAN JOHN OF KORCA (Albania) grew up in the only country in the world that closed all churches and mosques and forbade any expression of religion from 1967-1991. Coming from a Bektashi (Islamic) family, he discovered Christianity and was baptized during one of the most dangerous periods in Albania’s communist history. He eventually emigrated to the USA, where he studied at Holy Cross and returned to Albania to serve as Dean of the Resurrection of Christ Theological Academy, and then Metropolitan of Korca.

“Historical Connection of Holy Cross & St. Vladimir Graduates in Missions”
9:30, Friday, November 18



REV. DR. MICHAEL OLEKSA has served as an Orthodox priest in dozens of native Alaskan villages over the past 40 years. He is recognized as an “elder” by the Alaska Federation of Natives, and is a specialist in cross-cultural education. He authored *Orthodox Alaska, Alaskan Missionary Spirituality*, and published a book in collaboration with Alaska School Boards entitled *Another Culture/Another World*



FR. LUKE A. VERONIS is the Director of the Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity at HC/HC, and has served with his family as a former long-term missionary for 12 years in Kenya and Albania. He has led 10 short-term mission teams in various places around the world. He is the author of *Go Forth: Stories of Missions and Resurrection in Albania, Missionaries, Monks and Martyrs: Making Disciples of All Nations* and edited *Lynette’s Hope*.

“From Holy Cross to the World: The Orthodox Christian Mission Center”
11:00, Friday, November 18



FR. MARTIN RITSI is the Executive Director for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) and has served as a long-term missionary, together with his family, in Kenya and Albania for more than 10 years. He has traveled the world over, helping to build up and strengthen the global church through his work and outreach with the OCMC.

“From Atheist Rocker to Faith to Serving the Poor in Sierra Leone”
1:00, Friday, November 18



REV. DR. THEMI ADAMOPOULOU played in the rock band “The Flies,” which toured Australia with the Rolling Stones. His journey took him from existential atheism, back to his Greek Orthodox roots, into the priesthood. A graduate from HC, Harvard, Princeton and Brown, he went on to become a missionary for the past 20 years in Africa, serving in Kenya and now Sierra Leone. The secular media has called him *Australia’s Mother Teresa*, as he serves among the poorest of the poor.

Theological Schools Today and Their Involvement in the Missionary Movement”
2:00, Friday, November 18
Panel Discussion

Breakfast with Presvytera Renee Ritsi
8:30-10:00 AM, Saturday, November 19

Presvytera Renee Ritsi has served in the mission fields of Kenya & Albania for 10 years. She is a mother of two, wife to Fr. Martin Ritsi and is working in the Mission Teams department of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center.

If you are interested in coming please email by November 13
Alexandriapoly@gmail.com



**A Message from the
Ecclesiarch**

Dear Schoolmates,

The semester is moving quickly and many of us perhaps are feeling tired out or overwhelmed with all the schoolwork that we have and the midterms that are approaching us. It is at this busy time of the semester that we must remember to continue attending Chapel services. The services are there to give us strength and to remind us that we are here at Hellenic College/Holy Cross for one reason, to serve Christ. To serve Christ, we must be present and active members of His Church. I ask that we don't look at Chapel as a requirement because it should never be just a requirement for us. Chapel is the one thing on campus that we should all want to participate in for our own benefit and by our own will. When we leave this campus we won't have the opportunity to worship together as a community twice a day. Our lives will become hectic and busy no matter what path we take after graduation, and we will miss the days that we had here. Let's make the attempt to be in chapel as one community to pray and grow together in Christ during our time here.

In His Service I remain,
Stamati Sfikas
Ecclesiarch

Fall Festival Fun

Photos courtesy of Boston Booth

