



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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CHRIST IS RISEN! ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС! ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!
CHÚA KI-TÔ ĐÃ PHỤC SINH KHRISTA AMAFOOFOOKA! ქრისტე აღსდგა!
KRISTUS ER OPPSTANDEN! ΠΙΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΒΤΟΝΦ ΕΒΟΛΙ
그리스도께서 부활하셨네! KRISTUS NOUSI KUOLLEISTA! ЦА CRIOSC AR €IRI!

May 11, 2014	Sunday of the Paralytic	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
May 17	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
May 18	Sunday of the Samaritan Woman	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Holy Equals-to-the Apostles Methodius (885) and Cyril (869), teachers of the Slavs. Hieromartyr Mocius (Mucius), presbyter of Amphipolis in Macedonia (295). Equal-to-the-Apostles Rostislav, Prince of Greater Moravia (870). New Hieromartyr Priest Michael (1920). New Hieromartyr Alexander Archbishop of Kharkov (1940). Venerable Sophronius, Recluse of the Kiev Caves (13 c.). Saint Joseph, Metropolitan of Astrakhan (1671). Saint Nicodemus of Pech, Archbishop of Serbia (Mount Athos) (1325). New Martyrs Dioscorus and Argyrus of Thessalonica (1808). Venerable Comgall, Founder and Abbot of Bangor (ca. 603). Saint Bessarion, Archbishop of Larissa (Greek). Martyr Acacius of Lower Moesia. New Martyr Olympia, Abbess of Mitylene (1235). Blessed Christesia, called Christopher (1771). Saint Theophylact, Bishop of Stavropol and Ekaterinodar (1872). Saint Wiros, missionary Bishop to the Netherlands, in Limberg (710). Saint Cathan of Bute (6 c.). Saint Asaph, Bishop of Llanellwyr, Wales (6 c.). Saint Mayeul, Abbot of Cluny (994). Saint Tudy, Abbot of the Tudy. Saint Comgall, Bishop and founder of Bangor Monastery (601). Saint Bassus.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Bohdan, Sergius, Jacobus, Leonid, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Stanley, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Vincent, Diane, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Rich Long were offered at Liturgy and Moleben last Sunday at the request of Mary Ann Mamrosch.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Richard Mauro, Mary and Craig Williams, and Father Ed Higgins were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Christ is Risen! Prayers for the repose of Helen Bawolak Pelko were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of David Pelko.

Christ is Risen! Prayers for the repose of +Metropolitan LEONTY were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

Christ is Risen! Prayers for the repose of Frank Prawlocki and Michael Rinko Jr were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

WHO ARE THE MAYAN ORTHODOX?

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Mexico – April 2014 Visit website at: <http://www.mayanorthodoxy.com/>

The Mayan Orthodox are a group of several thousand Guatemalans and Mexicans who came into the Orthodox Church in 2010 under the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Mexico. They are called "Mayan" Orthodox because the majority of the converts are descendants of the ancient Mayan groups who lived in Central America long before Europeans arrived. The Mayans might seem like a relic of ancient history, but there are still millions of Mayan people who live in Central America and speak their native, Mayan languages. Now, a huge group of those Mayans have entered the Orthodox Church.

How did they come into the Orthodox Church?

Most of these people were originally Roman Catholics who fell away for various reasons. Some of the people wanted to stay in the Catholic Church but were alienated because of their non-traditional, often charismatic worship practices. Other people came from a different background that was liturgically conservative, and they left because they thought poorly of their bishops or they disagreed with changes in the Catholic Church (e.g., Vatican II). These diverse communities were all united by the late Father Andrés Girón, a former Roman Catholic priest and an active politician. Through his charisma and his leadership in land reform movements, Father Andrés united the diverse communities and brought them into the Orthodox Church in 2010.

Is this group related to the orphanage in Guatemala City?

People from across the world have traveled to the Hogar Rafael Ayau, an Orthodox orphanage in Guatemala City. In terms of its history, the orphanage is not connected with the Mayan communities. The nuns who run the orphanage came into the Orthodox Church through different life events, and they entered into a different church

jurisdiction (Antiochian) than that of the Mayan communities (Greek). There has been some interaction between these two different Orthodox groups: two of the Mayan clergy were ordained at the nuns' monastery by Metropolitan Athenagoras, and at one point some of the orphans from the Hogar lived with Father Andrés Girón. At this point, however, the collaboration has not developed further. Nevertheless, by God's grace and through the leadership of the hierarchs, the two groups could work more closely in the future to create an even stronger movement towards Orthodoxy in Central America.

How many Mayan Orthodox people are there? How many villages and parishes?

People, villages, parishes: all three are hard to quantify in a changing and mostly rural church. In fact, these are hard to quantify in any church in the world, even developed areas like the United States, because methodical population studies are rare, and reported numbers are often merely estimates. This is the case in Guatemala and Mexico, where the reported number of people has fluctuated from one extreme to another. As of 2014, the best estimate from the missionaries involved in the field is 40,000 people who live in about 300 villages. Not every village has a church, so the total number of parishes is around 100. Despite the fluctuation in the numbers, one thing is absolutely clear: this is a very large group. In fact, it is one of the largest mass conversions in the history of Orthodox Christianity. Father Peter Jackson, this massive influx of *thousands* of native people "is probably the greatest ministry challenge facing the Orthodox Church today."

Where are the parishes?

If getting precise numbers is difficult, putting these numbers to a map is just as hard because the knowledge of specific parish locations is not kept in written records. Instead, it is stored in the memory of living people, especially the handful of priests who travel far and wide to visit these far-flung communities. However, this living record of the church is slowly being recorded online. In fact, you now can explore an interactive map of the parishes which is far from complete but is being updated on an ongoing basis. As the map shows, the parishes are concentrated in southwestern Guatemala, spilling over into Southern Mexico.

How many priests and leaders are there?

The number of people is very large, but there are only a tiny handful of priests. For roughly 40,000 people and 100 parishes, there are only *seven* priests available to provide sacraments and spiritual guidance (when Father Andrés still lived, there were eight). Further, these few priests must travel for miles on steep, mountain roads where landslides and thick mud can easily prevent passage. The churches do find additional support from a few hundred catechists who live in the villages as elders and leaders of the communities—as Father John Chakos puts it, these catechists are "the backbone of the Orthodox Church." Nevertheless, these catechists know very little about the church that they have joined, and as laypeople, they cannot fill the tremendous need for more frequent sacraments. More people must be trained, both as priests and as skilled lay leaders, and that training is one of the responsibilities of the missionaries.

Where are the people in the transition to Orthodoxy?

At this point, the priests have received the most training in Orthodox theology and liturgical practice, some of them even traveling abroad to find a more immersive experience of Orthodox worship. At the grass roots level, however, most people do not fully understand the church that they have joined. Nevertheless, almost all of the people identify as part of *la iglesia ortodoxa* (the Orthodox Church), often with a sense of pride and hope because this identity tells them that they "are not alone"—a common refrain among the community leaders. So, overall, the people self-identify as Orthodox and are generally eager to learn, but they are still at the very beginning of a long process of transition.

What does the future hold?

This question is hard to answer because of the transition that is presently occurring. A tremendous shift recently occurred after the death of Father Andrés in 2014; as Father David and Rozanne Rucker observed, the church will take time "to regain an equilibrium after this loss of leadership." As new leaders come to the forefront, it is hard to predict how the communities will react and adapt. There is also pressure on the Mayan Orthodox, who often feel attacked by some members of the Roman Catholic Church and by a large and very assertive splinter group that broke away from the Catholic church and recently joined the Oriental Orthodox Church. It is a critical time for the Mayan Orthodox communities, and the future is in God's hands. Now more than ever, the Mayan Orthodox Church needs the prayers and support of the broader Orthodox Church.

How can I help? First, please pray for the Mayan Orthodox communities. Stand with them before Christ, both in your personal prayers and in your parish community.

Second, support the missionaries in the field. This is the most effective way to channel your financial support for the Mayan Orthodox because their own leaders are pleading for skilled teachers and guides to be sent to assist them. The missionaries are incredibly grateful for anything you offer because, through your support, you are standing *by their side* as partners, co-workers, and members of the team. If you are able, you can have the deepest impact through a commitment to regular, monthly support—rather than a one-time donation—because your monthly commitment enables the missionaries' work to continue into the future, for months and even years to come. Finally, answer your own call to mission work. Whether in the mountains of Guatemala or in the streets of New York, Christ is calling every person in this world to participate in his ministry. Answer your call today by contacting the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC).

Should I come to Guatemala? The communities in Guatemala and Mexico have very specific needs that require missionaries to have advanced theological training and to learn Spanish with complete fluency. Because of these needs, only very few should consider becoming *directly* involved in the field. But every single person can become a member of the team by supporting the missionaries who are working in Guatemala and Mexico. Your ongoing support is invaluable because without you, the missionaries can do nothing.

If you do speak Spanish and have prior theological training, consider the possibility of offering your talents to the Mayan communities. At the same time, please maintain a sense of humility and openness to serving wherever God calls you—Guatemala, another country, or the alleyways of your own neighborhood.

Thank you *so much* for supporting the Mayan Orthodox and the missionaries who serve them!