



Sunday, November 3, 2019

Gospel: St. Luke 8:41-56

Tone 3

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Synaxis of the Holy Unmercenaries / Martyrs Akepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, and Aithalas the Deacon, of Persia

**NOVEMBER Bulletin Sponsor: Fr. Andrew
In memory of his mother Dorothy**

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, November 3

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy /
Social / Woman's Club Meeting

Monday, November 4

6:30 pm: Orthodoxy 101 Class

Tuesday, November 5 (Election Day)

10:00 am: Deanery meeting in Maple Heights

Wednesday, November 6

6:00 pm: Revitalization Meeting in Marblehead

Thursday, November 7

6:30 pm: Great Vespers for St Michael

Friday, November 8

10:00 am: Liturgy @ St Michael's in Broadview
Heights

Saturday, November 9

4:00 pm: Great Vespers

Sunday, November 10

9:05 am: Hours followed by D.L. Social / Change
Altar Linens / Choir Rehearsal

BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125th Anniversary is coming!

Fund Purpose: To collect funds to pay for the restoration, repair and beautification of the building and parish room. This will avoid using general funds which are earmarked for budgetary items.

Please consider contributing generously to the
Building/Restoration Fund.

110 E Main Street, Marblehead, OH 43440
www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org



VIGILS- OCTOBER 27

Basil Glovinsky (2) In loving memory of friends
Mary Lou Ziebert and Mary Pepa

Laura Kovach (4) Safe travel for family,
Birthday blessings Kate and Rachel, For health
of Joe, Joe, Julia, Dana, Lisa, Mark, Steve and
John, Safe travel for Tina and Tony

Sandy Martin (2) In loving memory of my dad,
Special intentions

Jim Mazur(2) health of family and friends

Darlene, Nick & Gabe Mazurik (1) special
intentions

Janice Timko (1) God's Blessings, Good health
and healing for son Philip(Andy). "Mnohaya
Leta!"

Twarek (8) In loving memory of mom (birthday
10/28), Health and recovery of Darlene, Health
and recovery of Chuck Wiedenhoft, Safe travel
for Tina and Tony, Health and recovery of Steve
Turinsky and John McDonald, Health of Nancy,
Judy, Liz, Christine, MaryAnn and Bob, Joe,
Sonya, Julia, Diane, Stella, Ron, Becky, Jake,
Helen, special intentions, special intentions

CANDLE / BULLETIN SPONSORS FOR NOVEMBER

Bulletin: (\$50) Fr. Andrew: In memory of his
mother Dorothy on 15th Anniversary of repose

Chandelier: (\$50) Elchisco Family: In loving
memory of our brother, George Michael

Altar Candles: (\$50) Basil: In loving memory of
sister, Marian

Candles on the tomb: (\$25) Diane in loving
memory of Aunt Marion and Uncle Norm

Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (\$25) Tammy in
memory of her dad, William Rentz

Rectory 419-798-4591 / Cell 570-212-8747
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ATTENDANCE - SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

Sunday September 29: 33 Total (22 members; 2 non-members reg; 3 children; 6 guests; 21 communicants; 7 people for Vespers)

Monday, September 30: 10 people for Vespers

Tuesday, October 1: 9 attended Liturgy

Sunday, October 6: 30 total (22 members; 2 non-member reg.; 2 children; 4 guests; 20 Communicants; 11 attended vespers)

Wednesday, October 9: 10 attended Lit. for Feast of St. Tikhon

Sunday, October 13: 30 total (21 members; 1 non reg member; 5 children; 3 guest; 23 Communicants Vespers)

Sunday, October 20: 23 total (18 members; 1 non-reg.; 3 children; 1 guest; 18 communicants; 11 attended Vespers)

Sunday, October 27: 22 total (16 members; 1 non reg member; 5 guests; 15 communicants; 10 attended Vespers)

MONTHLY TITHING ONLY FOR OCTOBER

Goal Pledged per month: \$4,100

Sunday, October 6: \$1,021

Sunday, October 13: \$983

Sunday, October 20: \$368

Sunday, October 27: \$930

TOTAL FOR MONTH: \$3,302

NOVEMBER

Cleaners Readers Social

3 Open	Natalie	<i>Open</i>
10 Natalie	Tim	<i>Open</i>
17 Ed & Irene	Ron	<i>Open</i>
24 Christi	Wayne	<i>Open</i>

PRAY FOR OUR CATECHUMENS

Tim Heffernan Rachael Adamcio
 Luke Welch Lydia Welch
 Tristen Welch

Possible Catechumans:

Loreen Welch Cheyenne Welch

May God & the Holy Spirit guide them in their journey in the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox way of Life.

OTHER WEEKLY INCOME

Sunday, October 6: \$43 Candles; \$110 in Vigils; \$50 Bulletin; \$32 Special Collection St Vladimir Seminary

Sunday, October 13: \$23 Candles; \$125 Extra Candle Intentions; \$50 Chandelier; \$85 Vigils; \$325 Special Collection St Vladimir Seminary; \$100 food pantry; \$100 Restoration

Sunday, October 20: \$27 candles; \$60 Vigils; \$50 Bulletin; \$68 Special Collection

Sunday, October 27: \$19 candles; \$80 Vigils; \$100 restoration

MONTHLY TOTAL FOR OTHER INCOME

Candles: \$112
 Extra Candles: \$125
 Vigils: \$335
 Bulletin: \$50
 Chandelier: \$50
 Special Collection: (St Vlad.) \$725
 Food Pantry: \$100
 Restoration: \$200

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

November 3: Police Officer Killed in Houston ; Police officer Brian killed in NY
November 24: Catherine Beat
December 1: 3 soldiers killed in training in GA
December: 8: Serge Mihaly Jr

PRAYER LIST Updated 10-24

Clergy:

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius
His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman
John Duranko (*Father's home pastor*)
James Gleason (*Father's Spiritual Father*)
Moses Barry
Joseph Gibson
Gregory Grivna
Emilian Hutnyan
Josef Von Klarr
Vladimir Lecko
Myron Manzuk
Christopher Phillips
Peter Tutko
Deacon Paul Mitchell
Deacon Mark Sauskojus
Sub-deacon Wylie Meath

Matushkii:

Pani Patricia Duranko
Melania Adamcio
Virginia Lecko
Snezana Ruzic
Sonya Tutko
Victoria Kopistiansky

Parishioners / & their Family:

John Beadle (*Elcishko*)
MaryAnn Cook (*Cousin to Twarek's*)
John Richard Elchisco
Ruthe Flewelling
Debbie Garnek (*Roddie's sister*)
Michael Glovinsky (*Basil's nephew*)
Ernest Gresh (*Basil's nephew*)
Shirley Gresh (*Wife of Ernest*)
Aldin Griffith (*Soski*)
Julia Guzy
Joseph Habegger (*Laura brother-in-law*)
Alice Jackson (*Mazurik*)
William Jappsen (*Diane T.*)
Michael Kouznetsov (*Mary Hiser's son*)
Kristen (*Cassell's daughter*)
David LaValle (*Fr.'s cousin*)
Helen Lis
Walter Litzie (*Fr.'s cousin*)
Greg Mazur
Jim Mazur
Judy Mazurik (*Paul Mazurik's*)

Baby Stella Miller
Katelyn Pipenur (*Niece of Jean*)
Earl Rindfleisch
Helen Jean Rofkar (*Elchisco*)
Joe Rose
Margaret Rose
Steven Schirtzinger (*Soski*)
Christy Schutt (*Joe's sister*)
Peter Truta (*Jean H's cousin*)
Diane Tryon
Greg Tryon
Christine Twarek
Bob Whitham (*Fr's cousin*)
Katie and her newborn Bodhi
(*Cassell's daughter-in-law*)

Other Requests:

Alexia
George Bicheler
Dick Biro (*Natalie's friend*)
Anna Burch (*Wayne's friend*)
Michael Chemorov (*Cassell*)
Mary Ann Cook (*Twarek*)
Bob Cook (*Twarek*)
Ben Franklin (*Laura friend*)
Theodore Geletka
(*St. Michael Broadview Heights' choir director*)
Brad George (*Christi's friend*)
Donald Gresh (*Basil*)
Elliot Joy (*Police chief's son*)
Scott Kluding (*Twarek*)
Tommy Leonchik (*Fr's friend*)
Jake Lipstraw (*Twarek*)
Anna Maiani (*Friend of Wayne*)
John McDonald (*Twarek*)
Pauline Meath (*Fr's*)
Charlie Nowak (*Avery's*)
Debbie Pribanic (*Golob*)
Beth Reinhard (*Diane friend*)
Elvis Reyes (*Fr's friend*)
Sandy Scafaria (*friend of Jean*)
Scott Smith (*Sammy friend*)
Matthew Sterling (*Tyron*)
Janice Timko
Philip (Andy) Timko
Steve Turinsky (*Twarek*)
Chuck Wiedenhoft (*Twarek*)
Rachel (*Darlene M.*)

Mat. Carley & her newborn-
born Anna Alexandra
(*Cathedral in Chicago*)
Elizabeth McDonald & her
unborn Baby (*Fr's friend*)
Kristina and her unborn baby
(*Fr. Friend*)

Military:

Craig Cassell
Nathan Brown

Captives:

Metropolitan Paul
(*Orthodox Archdiocese of
Aleppo*)
Archbishop John
(*Syriac Archdiocese of
Aleppo*)

The UN & IOCC humanitar-
ian aid workers in & around
Syria; Those suffering perse-
cution in Iraq, Syria, Israel,
Egypt, Ukraine and through-
out the world

*NOTE: Please let Fr. Andrew
know when someone needs to
go on or come off the list.*

For Your Prayers

Julia Guzy (96 yrs old)
1601 Church Rd
Marblehead, OH 43440

Please remember her & Susan
(her daughter) in your prayers.
Send a card of greeting.

Eternal Security

By Fr. Lawrence Farley

The first knock-down drag-out theological scrap I ever had was in high school and it was over the doctrine of Eternal Security. I was not keen to have the scrap because the person I was contending with was a spectacularly pretty girl to whom I was greatly attracted, but I knew that truth trumped hormones. Not by much, mind you, but enough for me to defend what I thought was the truth and argue fiercely and long.

High school was a long time ago, and I don't remember all the back and forth of the debate, but I do remember her saying that the very term "eternal life" argued for the doctrine of Eternal Security: if one had eternal life and then lost it, then it couldn't very well have been eternal, could it? Too bad I didn't know Greek back then, or I would've replied that the term *aionios* (eternal) refers primarily to the quality of the life in Christ, and only secondarily to its endless duration. If the main idea had been endlessness, the Greek term *aidios* would have been more appropriate. But Greek would have to wait until college.

The doctrine of Eternal Security sometimes is known by the tag "once saved, always saved". The main idea is that salvation by its very nature changes a person so much that apostasy becomes an existential impossibility. But, one does ask, what then about the cases of people who had been saved (i.e. who "said the Sinner's Prayer" and "asked Jesus into their heart") and then subsequently fell away and stopped believing in Christ or acting like a Christian? Replies come in two forms, one wrong and the other crazy. The former argues that such a person could not have been a "real" Christian in the first place and that there was something fundamentally flawed about their supposed experience of salvation. The latter insists that the apostate and unrepentant sinner will still be saved on the Last Day even if he had committed and persisted in grievous sins such as murder or adultery. He would, however, "lose his reward". The former reply is a brilliant example of circular reasoning, and so it can never be crudely proven wrong. It does however mean that no real existential and subjective assurance is possible, for presumably the lapsed apostate at one time felt as sure that he had been eternally

and securely saved as anyone else. The latter reply is not only wrong, but dangerous and demonic, for gives to those in danger of damnation a false sense of security. Where do Evangelicals get this idea of Eternal Security? Not from the Bible, but from Calvin, and in its earlier version it went by the term "the Perseverance of the Saints". It formed part of the larger and more comprehensive Reformed doctrines of Man, the Fall, and the nature of grace and salvation. Students of Mr. Calvin will recognize it as part of the famous TULIP acronym, which stands for the doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints. The idea is that man is so fallen and incapable of even beginning to begin to repent that God has to do it all. Before time began, God chose (or elected) certain individuals to be saved, and certain other individuals to be damned, the former to the praise of His grace, and the latter to the praise of His justice. Those elected to be saved were irresistibly drawn by the Spirit to repent and exercise faith in Christ, whose death on the Cross not only paid the price for salvation but also accomplished it (thus Christ died only for the elect). Having been irresistibly drawn to faith in Christ, they were irresistibly kept in that faith, and so could not fall away. The technical term for this understanding of divine grace is "monergism", and the idea is that God's energy alone is the only effecting energy involved (hence the "mono"). Man's free will contributes precisely nothing; he repents and believes because God wills it and does it all. To be fair, the Reformed do not conceive of man as an automaton, repenting and believing automatically like a machine with no decision required from himself. A good TULIP preacher will still tell his audience to repent and believe. But he will say that if the sinner repents and believes it is only because he had been previously elected and was now being irresistibly drawn.

Many Evangelicals who do not buy the full Reformed package and who would balk at the notion that Christ died only for the elect still cling to the doctrine of Eternal Security, not realizing it is part of a larger and coherent system of thought. But the doctrine only makes sense if one accepts this total Reformed package. I do not, of course, but I can still see how each one of the elements in the TULIP system implies all of the others. Saying one cannot fall away because God irresistibly drew one to Christ in the first place to fulfill an unconditional election may be wrong, but at least it makes consistent sense as part of a system. Saying that one cannot fall away because the experience of salvation changes **Con't Pg 6**

NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS

ANNIVERSARY	BIRTHDAY	BIRTHDAY
11-13-2012: The Most Blessed Tikhon (Elected as Primate) 14- Fr. Matthew Moriak priestly ordination 11-15-1980: Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit <p style="text-align: center;">NAMESDAY</p> 11-6: Bishop Paul of Chicago 11-6: Retired Bishop Varlaam 11-25: Retired Bishop Lazar of Ottawa	1- Fr John Zdinak 7-Philip Sokolov 11- Amanda Kovach 16- Valerie Schutt 16- Madelyn 17- Kim Sorrentino 17- Cole Heffernan 17- Roddie Mazurik	18- Angie Kukay 19- Fr. Andrew Groom 19- Kristen Cassell 23- Cheyanne Welch 23- Joe Samilenko 28- Darryl Whitham 30- Kristen Basala

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

NOVEMBER REPOSED

1-Peter Felenchak (1974)	11- Dorothy Bartek (2005)	23- George Michael Elchisco (2016)
2- Donald Sennich (1994)	11- Protodeacon Dennis Lucak (2018)	26- Janet Elchisko (2018)
3- Marian Glovinsky (2001)	11- Matushka Helen Lucak (2018)	28- Anna Grabonsky (1972)
5- Margaret Pietropolo (2009)	18- Archpriest George Timko (2000)	29-Alexander Mazur (2003)
6- Joseph Guzy (1974)	Former Pastor	Michael Guzy (1927)
6- William Rentz (2018)	19- Evelyn Biecheler (2002)	Mary Lou Hobson (2015)
8- Ann G Stretchberry (2003)	19- Fr. John Dolhy (2006)	Mary Hritsko (1948)
8- Anne Catherine Glovinsky (2004)	21- Ann S. Ratica (1991)	Anna Holodnak (1951)
9- Ann Golob	21- FR. Joseph Mihaly (1975)	John Danchisen (1951)
	22- Joann Carender	

Metropolitan Tikhon hosts Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk at OCA Chancery

On October 24, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, to the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America for a working meeting.

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Bishop Paul's Travel Schedule

November 1st to the 3rd, Holy Trinity, Overland Park, KS

St. Tikhon's Seminary, Waymart, PA, November 8th to 11th

- *Student visitation*

Holy Synod Fall Session, Syosset, NY, November 11th to 15th

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL, November 16th to 17th

Holy Trinity/St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, St. Paul, MINN, November 21st to 24th

- *Ordinations of Luke Freeman, Craig Jarrell, and Sub Deacon Dan Bassett to the Diaconate*

Fr. Lawrence Con't

one internally makes no sense, mostly because experience teaches us that it is not so.

Of course, the Scriptures teach us that as well. The New Testament is stuffed to overflowing with warnings not to apostasize, which it wouldn't unless apostasy was really possible. I do not warn my grandchildren about the dangers of walking on the ceiling, because walking on the ceiling is not possible for them, despite their Spider-man pyjamas. We only warn about dangers that are real—like apostasy. Judas Iscariot is one example that comes to mind: he certainly fell away to the point of damnation (see John 17:12, Mark 14:21), and he certainly was once saved (Matthew 19:27-28, Acts 1:17). If one of the Twelve could fall away, then anyone can. One could write a book warning of the possibility of apostasy. And come to think of it, someone did—we know the book as *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

I suspect that the doctrine of Eternal Security is the Evangelical's unbiblical and clumsy attempt to meet a real pastoral need—that of assuring the trembling penitent soul that all will be well. I often think that some forms of Evangelicalism have a view of God in which God's love cannot really be trusted. It is felt that He is angry and eager to damn, keen to insist on justice and to keep out of heaven as many people as He possibly can. This is not said in so many words, of course, but it still functions emotionally as their view of God. Given this, one fears to lose salvation if one commits a sin, or takes a sideways step, or is lazy in devotions or church-going or Bible-reading.

One hears of people being haunted by the fear that perhaps they have lost their salvation, that on Monday morning they were saved, but by Saturday evening they were not sure, because they had a bad week. But one cannot lose one's salvation like one loses one's car keys. Salvation does not gradually evaporate like morning dew. One can drift away over time, of course, but this drift involves making decisions. One *decides* to forego prayer and to stay away from church; one *decides* to drift. I suspect that the notion of Eternal Security was meant to function as a cure for the classic disease of scruples. If one does not trust God's

love and imagines that a deficit of devout feeling involves a loss of salvation, then Eternal Security serves to reassure that trembling soul that it needn't fear such a loss of feeling. It overshoots itself, of course. It is possible to lose one's salvation, but it takes more than simply having a bad week or feeling less enthusiastic about spiritual things than one did when first converted.

The trembling soul should not be given the false medicine of Eternal Security, but the true medicine of the Eucharist. Salvation is not just a single experience; it is also an ongoing journey. On that journey one continually returns to God for renewal, forgiveness, and cleansing. Penitent reception of the Eucharist assures us that we will be saved if we continue along the faithful Eucharistic path. It is as the Eucharistic prayer itself says: those who partake receive purification of soul, the remission of sins, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of the Kingdom of Heaven and boldness towards God. Standing every week at the Chalice, we are eternally secure.

Metropolitan Tikhon Con't

His Beatitude received Metropolitan Hilarion in the Chancery's Saint Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, together with Igumen Nicodemus Balyasnikov and Priest Mark Rashkov, clergy of Saint Nicholas Patriarchal Cathedral in New York City. Metropolitan Hilarion conveyed greetings of His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill, and presented His Beatitude with a gift of an enkolpion.

During their meeting His Beatitude and Metropolitan Hilarion discussed a wide range of topics, including the plans for the 25th anniversary celebration of Saint Catherine Church in Moscow as the Orthodox Church in America's representation church to the Moscow Patriarchate, and the celebration of the 50th anniversary in 2020 marking the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska, and the granting of autocephaly.

His Beatitude was joined in the meetings by Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, and Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs.

At the conclusion of the morning meeting His Beatitude and Archpriest Alexander Rentel met privately with Metropolitan Hilarion to discuss the current situation of world Orthodoxy.

Hieromartyrs Akepsimas, Bishop in Persia, Presbyter Joseph, and Deacon Aithalas

Commemorated on [November 3](#)

Martyrs Akepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter and Aethalas the Deacon of Persia were leaders of the Christian Church in the Persian city of Naesson. His flock devotedly loved their hierarch for his ascetic life and tireless pastoral work.

The emperor Sapor ordered his men to seek out and kill Christian clergy. Saint Akepsimas also was arrested, even though he was already an eighty-year-old man. They took him to the city of Arbela, where he came before the judge Ardarkh, a pagan priest of the sun god. The holy Elder refused to offer sacrifice to the Persian gods. For this he was fiercely beaten and thrown into prison, where on the following day the seventy-year-old priest Joseph and the deacon Aethalas were severely beaten and thrown into jail with him. For three years the saints were held in confinement, and suffered from hunger and thirst. Emperor Sapor came to the temple of the god of fire, located not far from Arbela, and wanted to take a look at the three holy martyrs. Exhausted and covered with festering wounds, the saints were brought before the emperor. When he asked them to worship the pagan gods they firmly refused, confessing their faith in Christ instead.

The holy bishop was beheaded, but the presbyter and deacon were taken into the city to be stoned. The execution of the presbyter Joseph was prolonged for several hours. A guard was placed near the place of execution, so that Christians would not take the body of the holy martyr. On the fourth night a strong windstorm raged near the city, lightning killed the guard, the wind tossed stones about, and the body of Saint Joseph disappeared.

Deacon Aethalas was taken to the village of Patrias, where he was stoned. Christians secretly buried his body. A tree grew on the saint's grave, and its fruit brought healings.



Embracing Sanctity of Life? If so, why do we...

If we are going to embrace a Sanctity of Life view, can we:

- Affirm that life begins at conception, which means saying no to abortion?
- Embrace and support policies that call for the proper care of families and their children who are here illegally until their status is addressed?
- Advocate for appropriate measures in our schools to keep children safe, that don't involve arming teachers with guns?
- Support reasonable gun control laws that take guns out of the hands of people that shouldn't have them?
- Encourage state governments that are pro-life to provide necessary support programs for young mothers who decide to have their babies instead of aborting them?
- Call for an end to capital punishment?
- Support measures to provide homes for refugees who wish to enter into our country after reasonable vetting?
- Call for an end to euthanasia and the inappropriate ending of a life of an elderly person?
- Embrace the idea that the suffering of an elderly person can be transformed into a joyful lifting up of a cross that needs to be carried for one's salvation?
- Support the idea of dying a good death as one's life comes to an end (i.e. "completing the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance").

If so, why do we then go on to:

- Say that some of the above statements are rooted in ideology and politics and have nothing to do with the Church?
- Address differing sides on this issue with hate and intolerance?
- Complain about the hypocrisy of others while we ignore the hypocrisy in ourselves?
- Say that the Church's teachings are more consistent with being a conservative or a liberal, neither of which is true?
- Not realize that all of the statements under "If we are going...?" are pro-life statements? It is not just about abortion.

What does this all have to do with family life? I wrote these things because as parents you have to help your children as they grow older to navigate these difficult issues our society is facing today. I want to encourage you to be as wholistic as you can in helping your children understand and live by a true Sanctity of Life ethic, which the Orthodox Church teaches; to help your children understand that the Church may tolerate certain practices because they are the result of living in a fallen world. But the Church being the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the Church Militant, always points us to a higher calling, a calling that is not of this world.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you, The unworthy +Paul
Rectory 419-798-4591 / Cell 570-212-8747 info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

International Orthodox Christian Charities Launches Campaign for Children’s Programs in Syria

Dream Centers offer Children, Families Safe Spaces, Support Overcoming Trauma

[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) [IOCC] is launching a new fundraising campaign, aiming to raise \$250,000 for programming that supports children and families who have survived trauma and tragedy in Syria.

Children are among the millions affected by the conflict in Syria, including many displaced in their own country. Whether through exposure to violence or the loss of a home, family member, and stable daily life, children are especially susceptible to mental distress and uncertainty about the future. Working with Church partner the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development, IOCC has created safe spaces called Dream Centers across Syria to help address these needs.

Dream Centers are safe spaces for play, learning, and psychosocial support that help children (and their caregivers) deal with trauma and difficult experiences. Programming prioritizes unaccompanied children, those separated from caregivers, and orphans. Specialists work to help children become more resilient to trauma, and to emotionally reconnect with family and community through positive interactions and learning.

Four centers in various locations (urban and rural) have so far served thousands. Children ages 4 to 18 take part in three-month courses of twice-weekly sessions and interactive activities like sports, theater, games, and art. The sessions aim to improve children’s learning, memory, focus, and creative thinking, as well as to foster healthy emotional expression, communication, and responsibility. Children also gain body-boundary awareness and learn ways to protect themselves against harassment.

Parents, too, find support at the Dream Centers through workshops in topics from nutrition to helping children communicate, protecting them from

abuse and violence, and addressing behavioral disorders.

“I’m so grateful for all the support my son received in the Dream Center,” said one mother, whose eight-year-old struggled to concentrate and connect with peers when he first enrolled. Both mother and child gained skills to help them address the tragedy they’ve experienced in healthful, positive ways.

This is the Dream Centers’ goal, and additional funding will allow this crucial programming to reach even more families and children in need.

IOCC has been working in Syria since 2002, serving both Syrians in need and Iraqi refugees. Responding to the more recent crisis, IOCC has worked throughout the Middle East and Europe to meet humanitarian needs. Since 2012, IOCC programs have served more than 3 million people in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Armenia, Serbia, and Greece.

To support IOCC’s Dream Centers in Syria, [please contact IOCC online](#) or by phone (877.803.4622).

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is the humanitarian and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Bishops of the United States of America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has provided more than \$692 million in humanitarian relief and sustainable development programs in over 60 countries worldwide. Today, IOCC applies its expertise in humanitarian response to natural and manmade crises in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, offering assistance based solely on need. Learn more at iocc.org and follow @IOCCRelief on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

