

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Fund for Assistance to the
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
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The mission of the Fund for Assistance is to support the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, specifically, the moral-spiritual education of youth, aid to its clergy and distribution of emergency relief to its missions.

When we couldn't do it on our own – You changed everything

They were overjoyed when their second child was born. As with many clergy families, however, supporting their children when there is not enough for necessities, was hard.

See how donations like yours brought relief to this young family.



I am married to a wonderful man, who has dedicated his whole life and talents to the service of our Church: Fr. Protodeacon Paul serves at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral full time, which keeps him busy, and also has been making a modest living for our small family of four by painting icons.

Similarly to many other clergy families, I, a registered nurse by profession, became our family's main provider. This never bothered me. I love that my husband chose to dedicate himself to God and his Church.

But there are seasons in life when you just can't do it on your own.

Your kindness supports clergy families like the Drozdowskis when they need help the most.

With the downturn of the economy, icon commissions became less frequent. We could no longer afford medical insurance for our family, unless I opted to return to work full-time and leave both our son and our newborn daughter in daycare. The thought of that broke my heart, besides making me wonder if we could manage this additional expense. Fr. Paul has spent a long time looking for other work, but has so far not found anything suitable for our situation.

If you are a parent, you know how scary that is.

The sheer responsibility of parenthood can be overwhelming, but especially, when you don't have enough for necessities and you have a toddler and a newborn.

I was so scared. Being a new mother again was such a blessing, but it came with additional stress of being afraid for our baby. Kids get sick. As it is, Kyril has asthma, as well as a serious peanut allergy. How are we going to cope if anything happened?

But then we applied to the Fund for Assistance and they provided us with a small sum that would allow us to help carry on for a month or two.

I cannot express the relief we felt when we received the news.

It wasn't just about the money. We knew someone really cared. And we will never forget it. If you have ever given to the FFA, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness. Your support matters to real people like us. You have changed our life for the better. May God bless you!

- Elizabeth Drozdowski



“To serve, not to be served” –

is the motto of the annual youth trip to restore the Tikhvin monastery
- *An interview with Archpriest Alexis Duncan*

«If we do not pay attention to our young people today, there will be no Church tomorrow,» warns archpriest Alexis Duncan, rector of the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Albany, NY. Thanks to your support in 2015, Fr. Alexis was able to take a group of young people on a life-changing trip to a dilapidated monastery in Russia. These trips are called “Project Tikhvin”: Each year a group of young people spend two weeks helping with the restoration of the Vvedensky convent in Tikhvin. They live more than simply, attend services, and immerse themselves in what Fr. Alexis terms “Orthodoxy Lived.”



FFA: What is the purpose of Project Tikhvin?

Fr. A: Here in America we have a serious problem: thousands of people are experiencing Orthodoxy through books. They may not have an Orthodox background or upbringing. They are not surrounded with Orthodox family and peers. **When they go on a trip like this, they start to understand the faith in a more organic way.** Orthodoxy cannot exist in a

vacuum; it has to be surrounded by a culture that it gave birth to. If you don't understand the culture, you don't understand the faith.



With your help, ROCOR youth are praying and working for our Church

FFA: How different is this project from other similar “youth trips”?

Fr. A: Often people from the West go about Russia in air-conditioned buses and stay in fancy hotels. We don't go to symposiums, or lectures, or stay in hotels. We go to villages where they have never seen an American sometimes. We are quite a novelty. We sing the choir, participate in church services and make friends with Orthodox people there. We want

to serve, not to *be* served. Despite the difficult living conditions, the fact that we can help restore a monastery gives great joy to our youth.



We live in the monastery, which is so poor, that its buildings would be condemned by U.S. standards. There is electricity, but that's about it. There is running (cold) water in a tap in the courtyard and the kitchen. There are no showers, no sewage system. We cook our own food: kasha, rice, potatoes, and maybe tomatoes - if we can get them - nothing luxurious. It's not a trip to have fun with your stomach, it's pretty rugged. We live like this not simply to save money. We need to do that so that we live like normal people in rural Russia.

Our young people get a perspective that they wouldn't get from any other source. You can read a book about village life, but when you are able to immerse yourself in that life, you are experiencing what other Orthodox peoples are living through. They will carry that experience with them for years. **These trips reveal to them Orthodoxy lived.**

FFA: What changes have you seen in young people after a trip?

Fr. A: They have wonderful remembrances, develop friendships; many keep in touch through email, church events, etc. A couple of them have gotten married. Their common history of these trips will be passed on to their children. Each and every one of these kinds of events goes to developing them as a person. They are no longer one-dimensional, there are many facets to their life. The more facets you



have the more you can contribute to the Church. So this is very valuable. I have seen that young people have become more dedicated to the Church. They enjoy the services more. So I know that these trips have been important to them. Just the other day a young man told me that going to the spring to carry water was one of the really important moments of his life. That intangible vignette of such a simple thing is lasting. These experiences give them more than just knowledge: they receive the foundations of wisdom. And as we leave the last day, the local faithful wave us goodbye with tears in their eyes. That is more powerful than any sermon!



And for all of this we can thank the kind donors who gave us the means to change so many lives. Thank you!

You asked: Why does FFA send me mail?

From time to time some of you ask why FFA sends you mail. Are the letters and newsletters worth the expense? Do they really help the suffering in our Church? Answers below.

Why we send mail:

To Raise Funds for our Church's most vulnerable members. We do not have an endowment, and do not qualify for grants as a religious organization. But more and more people need our help every year.

To show what it's like. Whenever our newsletters are circulated, negative assumptions around clergy poverty are challenged, difficulties of Orthodox youth are shared, plight of ROCOR missions in poor countries are spread.

To show accountability: our newsletters are the most effective ways to show you – even when you are not able to give – to directly show what your donations accomplish.



2015 Financial Report

REVENUE	
TOTAL INCOME	\$360 550,69
Unrestricted Donations	154 878,19
Appeals - General, Calendar, Pasha, Emergency Relief, Thanksgiving, Giving Tuesday, St. Herman's, Newsletters & for the Needy	135 070,28
Individual Donations, Wills & Estates	19 807,91
Clergy Welfare Fund - Includes several appeals made for specific clergyman's needs	113 136,02
Haiti - HOFR Donations	43 650,00
Haiti Mission & Haiti School Donations	14 277,30
Needy in Ukraine	8 175,99
Mexican Monastery	7 211,82
Other Donations - Uganda, Education & Seminaries, Youth Ministry, REM, Costa Rica, Holy Land, Chile, Pakistan, Holy Trinity Monastery, Pastoral School, Synodal Church, Hermitage of Holy Cross, Novo-Diveevo	13 804,91
Loan Repayments	5 200,00
Foreign Check Exchange	216,46
FINANCIAL STATUS	
Income (Loss)*	\$(31 655,57)
Balance from 2014	391 570,67
Stopped Checks	5 559,83
Interest	\$1 323,64
AMOUNT FORWARD TO 1/1/16	\$366 798,57
In Checking Account	\$66 402,94
Money Market Accounts	304 043,63
Outstanding Checks	(3 648,00)
ON DEPOSIT AS OF 12/31/15	\$366 798,57

NOTE: All specifically designated donations are given to the designated causes, sometimes done in the next fiscal year.

*(LOSS) indicates that the funds from the 2014 balance were used.

BENEVOLENT DISBURSEMENTS & EXPENSES	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$392 206,26
Benevolent Disbursements	264 881,51
Clergy Welfare Fund - Includes disbursements to several clergyman from appeals for their needs	122 688,32
Haiti - HOFR Program	39 650,00
Mexican Monastery - Funds received in 2014 were disbursed \$3,000.00 per month in 2015	36 000,00
Youth Ministry - Primarily unrestricted donations were used for Youth Ministry needs	31 500,00
Education & Seminaries - Primarily unrestricted donations were used for these needs	12 376,13
Haiti Mission	9 525,03
Needy in Ukraine	5 642,03
Other Needs - Mid West Diocese, Women's Conference & Chile	7 500,00
Fundraising Appeals Expenses	52 772,23
Insurance	4 033,00
Office Expenses	28 545,87
Petty Cash	367,35
Wages includes wages, taxes & payroll fees	39 537,27
Foreign check Exchange	112,84
Returned Checks	100,00
Bank Fees & Adjustments	1 856,19
2015 INCOME (LOSS)*	\$(31 655,57)

None of these projects would have been possible without your help!

Thank you