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First Virtual Mission Teams to Nigeria and Nyeri, Kenya!



“I am still reflecting on this virtual mission trip to Nigeria!” remarks team member Anna Kurian. “It was such a lovely experience. I will definitely be thinking about all of them for a long while. How beautiful to see people who are living their faith halfway across the world.”

Nigeria and Nyeri, Kenya, both received their first virtual OCMC mission teams recently! In Nigeria, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexander invited a mission team to participate in their annual event celebrating Orthodox women, on the eve of the Annunciation. In Kenya, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mount Kenya invited a team to help strengthen local youth leaders in a virtual seminar. Both events proved to be immensely beneficial and fruitful for all involved!

Forty-five Nigerian women from the Nigerian Church’s Orthodox Women Organization (OWO) participated in sessions like “The Theotokos as a Role Model,” “Imitating Women Saints,” and “Empowering Women in the Church.” The team for Nigeria included Melissa Sarris Strange of St. Augustine, FL, Anna Kurian of Elburn, IL, and Presbytera Brittany Kearns of Bahrain.
The OWO is a wonderful group that supports the general work of evangelizing and growing their parish. It has gathered resources to erect fences around their church, construct a water reservoir, build a nursery and primary school, and build the church itself. They’re presently assisting with the construction of a secondary school as well. The group is incredibly active, and it was beautiful for them to connect with our team members and support one another from across the world.

The team for Kenya led presentations on “How Orthodox Christianity gives us Hope, Peace, and Joy,” “The Shocking Things Christ Did When He Lived on the

Earth," "The Relationship Between Orthodox Christians and Non-Orthodox," and "The Prevailing Situation of the Pandemic and How Orthodox Christians Can Adapt their Private Prayers and Deepen Our Relationship with Christ." The team consisted of Steven Georges of Princeton, NJ, Sarah and Mark Mandeville of Virginia Beach, VA, Aphrodite "Faye" Peponis of Chicago, IL, and Subdeacon Athanasios (Kurt) Sherry of Wichita, KS.

"What a blessing to be with you all!" exclaimed Kenya team member Aphrodite Peponis. Other members shared their hopes to "see you in person in the future" with the Kenyan youth leaders. Kenyan youth leader Ruth reflects, "I was happy to learn about iconography and the use of icons in our prayers. I was also happy to learn more about our faith in relation to other Christian denominations."

His Grace Bishop Neofitos and His Eminence Metropolitan Alexander both extended their deep gratitude to the OCMC mission team members. Bishop Neofitos concluded the event in Kenya by sharing, "We share common struggles, but the reality is to focus on the power of God, and through Christ, we shall overcome."

OCMC Virtual Mission Teams continue to impact lives even though the coronavirus pandemic has hampered in-person teams. Please click here for upcoming virtual mission team opportunities.

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