10/05/2021

Metropolis of Chicago Announces a New Parish Advancement Initiative



Metropolis of Chicago establishes Mustard Seed Fund to assist parish growth over the long-term

Fund provides parishes with seed grants to advance future growth, extending successful model established during COVID-19 into new areas of unmet need.

LOMBARD, ILLINOIS — May 6, 2021 — Inspired by the impact of the COVID-19 Parish Relief Fund established during the pandemic, the Metropolis of Chicago announced today the establishment of a new parish advancement initiative – the Mustard Seed Fund – to help drive parish growth through evangelism, welcoming, and outreach.

The Mustard Seed Fund seeks to replicate the successful model of the COVID-19 Parish Relief Fund, which raised more than $250,000 for financial assistance to parishes facing economic hardship caused by the pandemic.

To support its objectives and development, the Metropolis of Chicago will seed the new fund with an initial distribution of $25,000 and will launch and sustain a grassroots fundraising campaign to raise additional donations.

“At a crucial moment last year, when our collective future was uncertain because of the pandemic, we witnessed the grace of God and the faith of a community when the people of the Metropolis gave freely and purposefully to support parishes in financial distress,” said His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael. “As we celebrate Bright Week, that same spirit we saw throughout last year – grace in the present and faith in the future – will be fundamental to help revitalize and grow our

parishes over the long-term.”

Grants distributed by the Mustard Seed Fund are intended to test and scale promising new ministries and programs that inspire and motivate a new generation of Orthodox Christians to participate in the Church. Based on the Metropolis’ strategic plan and as reported in its Annual Impact Report, evangelism, welcoming, and outreach represent high-potential areas of unmet need and opportunity for the future growth of the Church in the Midwest.

As with the COVID-19 Parish Relief Fund, grants will be awarded after applications are reviewed by a special committee of the Metropolis. One hundred percent of the monies donated to the Mustard Seed Fund will fund the grants awarded to parishes. The Metropolis will provide updates on monies collected and distributed, and the Fund will be included in the annual independent audit of the Metropolis’ financial statements.

“Some of the best, most creative ideas to engage the faithful and our neighbors in the broader community originate from the parishes in our Holy Metropolis. The Mustard Seed Fund, in part, exists to encourage a sense of creativity, imagine a vibrant future, and take concerted steps to reach and engage disengaged and non-practicing Orthodox Christians, faith-seekers, and friends of the Church,” said His Eminence.

Mustard Seed grants will be open to all Metropolis of Chicago clergy and stewards seeking to develop and implement new or existing parish-level initiatives that advance evangelism, welcoming, and outreach. The deadline for grant applications for calendar year 2022 is December, 1 2021. Application details will be made available this summer.

For more information or to make a gift to the Mustard Seed Fund today, visit www.chicago.goarch.org/mustard-seed.

chicago.goarch.org