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COLORADO PARISH EVANGELIZES AT COUNTY FAIR



El Paso County in Colorado has been holding its annual fair for well over 100 years now. While attendees likely have their favorite traditional attractions, a new “attraction” this year caught the eye of many.

For the first time, St. Mary’s Holy Dormition Church in Calhan had “a real mission presence” at the fair, with help from Fr. Anthony Karbo and Holy Theophany Church in Colorado Springs’ mobile chapel.

While the parish used to sell hamburgers as a fundraiser, this cannot suffice in today’s climate, the faithful decided.

“We live in a time where anti-theism is alive and well, even in a small farming community. Sexual deviancy, corporate consumption, affirmation of made-up identities, worship of self, and the like all are seen as a ‘good and moral’ way of living,” church rector Fr. Stephen Osburn writes in a report published by the Diocese of the West of the Orthodox Church in America.

For example, a female student graduated as a “man” from the local high school this year, Fr. Stephen notes, and students were told they couldn’t graduate if they

didn't encourage this girl's confusion.



So the parish decided to offer an Orthodox presence at its local county fair, visited by 50,000 people every year, by setting up the mobile chapel and giving everyone a chance to light a candle, spend some time in prayer, and listen to Orthodox chants. "We handled out many brochures, had wonderful, fruitful conversations throughout the week (including conversations with a former abortion doctor turned pro-life advocate … a couple where one was a 'trans-man,' a number of atheists and agnostics, a few Mormons … and many Catholics and Protestants," Fr. Stephen highlights.

The parish even won the award for "Best Use of Space," and the fair organizers insisted that they return next year.

The report concludes reflecting upon the weeks' "results":

So did we make a difference? Who knows? Only God and time can tell. However, like the Parable of the Sower, we sowed the seed of Orthodoxy indiscriminately. We shared our faith in a world obsessed with the contrary. We gave them a little taste of who we were. We encouraged them to pray, spoke with them, cried with them, gave them something real. We didn't just tell them "Come and see our parish"… We were there to share Orthodoxy. To be the Church. To give them something real and authentic. Most importantly, present them with Jesus Christ so they could see that in this broken world, there was hope, repentance, and communion with God. This mobile chapel was just the first step and a small taste of our faith in our

community. Lord willing, it will grow and we will see those seeds blossom into many and all rejoicing in the Kingdom of God.

Holy Theophany’s mobile chapel made its public debut at the 2017 Memorial Day fair in Colorado Springs.

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