



Annapolis College Ministry

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*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that
I have commanded you..."
(St. Matthew 28:19-20).*

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1: Some of the incoming Plebes at USNA

Completing 10 Years of Ministry at the U.S. Naval Academy and St. John's College

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to Him forever! ACM is getting ready for our eleventh year of ministry to begin this Fall semester. In our swiftly-changing culture with its evolving and increasingly relativistic morality, ACM continues to offer the students at St. John's and the midshipmen at the USNA a life-line, connecting them to the timeless and unchanging truth of Christ, the fullness of the life in Him found in His holy Orthodox Church.

The pressures from secularism, relativism, and pluralism, are affecting those in the Church who don't understand the dangers that the "new morality" and relativism pose for today's college students, most of whom are far more influenced by their peers and the desire to "fit in" than they are by the Church. For this reason, ACM offers students and midshipmen the opportunity not only to "stay connected" with the Church but to *grow in their faith in Christ*, to wrestle with applying the life in Christ to their daily lives, and to address the many challenges they face as they grapple with our culture and the godlessness that surrounds them.

New Study Findings by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North America

A new study just released by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops stresses these points:

Similarly to their non-Orthodox peers, they (Orthodox students) are naturally tempted to experiment with and to pick and choose among myriads (of) religious spiritual options offered on the vast American cultural market. And this explains the well known fact that the time in college is a period when many young Orthodox people cease their church participation. Indeed, being taken away from the home parish communities, focusing on academic studies, meeting new friends, engaging in new activities, and most importantly being surrounded 24/7 mainly by non-Orthodox persons, many Orthodox students simply drift away from the Church. In this regard, the need for efficient and engaging Orthodox campus ministry (i.e. OCF) is difficult to overestimate as it is an important way to keep Orthodox college students in the bosom of the Church.

I've personally seen these findings born out many times over in my ten years of ministry. Those who don't prioritize their life in Christ, *which is a great challenge given the scenario described above*, find it harder and harder to pray, to go to church or to participate in ACM-OCF activities. The more isolated Orthodox Christians become from other Orthodox, the harder it is for them not only to "stay connected" with Christ and the Church but just to keep their faith in Christ *at all*.

Ninth Year of Plebe Summer Ministry at USNA

This summer marks our ninth year in ministry to the Orthodox plebes, the incoming class of freshmen, through their 'boot camp' experience at the Naval Academy. I'm with the plebes every Friday evening



2: Applying the Orthodox Faith with this year's Plebes at USNA

for two hours to pray with them, enjoy a time of fellowship and teaching, and encourage them to bring Christ into this intense time of formation to ground their identity, purpose, and drive in Him who is Life, Jesus Christ.

The plebes are also provided the opportunity for Orthodox worship on Sundays at the Naval Academy until they are allowed off the Yard at the end of Plebe Summer. **With your support**, we'll also be at the Academy for the Feasts of the Lord's Transfiguration and the Holy Dormition of the Theotokos to offer the plebes the opportunity to participate in these important Feasts of the Church year.

Ministry to Students in Moldova

I was asked by OCMC to lead a one-week mission trip to the Republic of Moldova (located between Romania and Ukraine) this Paschal season. I was blessed to serve as the first Orthodox priest from OCMC sent to Moldova. Our team had three venues in which to speak to large groups of Moldovan teens about the vital difference Christ and His Church can make in their lives. We encouraged the youth

to apply the Orthodox Faith to the many challenges and pressures they face. We fielded many questions on topics like secularism, sexuality, homosexuality, American culture, Orthodoxy in America, suicide, drugs, and many other important topics. The trip was paid for by OCMC and was an important opportunity to engage and strengthen the faith of the youth in Europe's poorest country.



3: Sharing the Orthodox Christian Faith, Q & A with students in Moldova



4 Another Opportunity to Strengthen the Faith of Students in Moldova

Help us Keep ACM a Full-Time Ministry in Annapolis

Your support means I can continue to make myself available to the students and midshipmen in the course of the week during the academic year for services, Bible studies, catechesis, and pastoral counseling, to minister to the plebes at the USNA Friday evenings during the summer, and on Feast days like the Transfiguration and Dormition when they fall on weekdays.

I ask you to join with us to strengthen your commitment to the future leaders of our Church and our society by **helping keep this ministry on these two venerable and historic campuses**. Your prayers and support for this ministry are a vital, active participation and sharing in its fruit. ACM has already been here to minister to half a generation of college students in this intense and important time of formation. **Help us keep it here for another ten years!**

Important Financial Update on the Ministry

While we still are blessed to have a strong base of support, that base has shrunk over the past several years. Since 2012, our average monthly support has decreased by more than \$1000 a month. At the same time, I have a growing family to support: My wife, Krissy, daughter Ana (4), Iacob (3), Mihai (1). We also just found out we are expecting again next January. Your faithful and/or increased support is a tremendous encouragement and provision to us and we strive to stay in full-time ministry. **We thank God for sharing in this ministry!**

New: Commemoration List Opportunity

We give thanks to God for your participation in this ministry. I invite you to return the commemoration list with those whom you'd like to see commemorated at the altar at our fledgling Mission, Holy Archangels. The Mission came out of ACM to give the students and midshipmen an opportunity to worship at church locally and participate more readily in the Sacramental life of the Church. It will be my joy to pray for those dear to you.

In Christ love and prayers,

Fr. Robert+

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