

Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage



Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes



BUILDING HOPE 365



SUMMER NEWSLETTER // 2018

»»» Our Mission «««

Project Mexico performs works of mercy and helps others do works of mercy in the name of Jesus Christ, transcending cultural barriers by building homes for the poor in Mexico and by providing a home for orphaned boys through St. Innocent Orphanage.

»»» Our Values «««

Acts of Mercy, Excellence, Education, Love & Compassion, Mission Work, Strategic Partnerships, and Witness.

»»» Our Thanks «««

Thank you to the newest members of our Faithful Friends monthly giving program! Enjoy your Komboskini!

SHARING HOPE

Tell us your stories!

We'll share your stories of hope and mercy with our Project Mexico Community.

Send Stories and Photos to:
buildinghope@projectmexico.org

Or Tag us on Social:



THIS SUMMER WE ARE CELEBRATING THIRTY years of building homes for the poor in Mexico. With over 14,000 alumni volunteers, our mission has truly grown and flourished in heart and intent. We continue to engage and foster relationships with other Orthodox ministries throughout North America (inclusive of Canada and Mexico) to create synergies, cooperative programs, and combine our efforts to develop youth into future leaders within Orthodoxy and the community at large. We allow you to put the Gospel in Action in a real and concrete way in our diaconal ministry of caring for our neighbor.

We have identified the core of our three missions for our future: developing home building, growing our orphanage, and increasing the impact of our volunteers while here and when they return to their home communities. In this light, we are launching BuildingHope365 to enable volunteers to continue the mission in their home communities and remain connected to us and one another all year around.

Faithfully Yours,

Dn. Demetrios, James P. Andrews, Executive Director
jp@projectmexico.org | (303) 807-7772



30 Years - THE BEGINNING

by Father Nicholas L. Andruchow

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE history of Project Mexico we can see the message of hope shouting out at us. Hope in that we are not alone. Hope in what the future brings. Hope in the fact that God is active in the world. Since 1995, I have been involved with the Orthodox community in Tijuana, Mexico. Ten of those years have been as a full-time missionary living in-country. I have spent at least one week annually in the field either building homes for the needy families or ministering to the young boys who have been orphaned. The impact I have witnessed is layered and expansive. The Lord works through our humility and out of weakness God creates miracles. God has used Project Mexico to do great things and it is obvious that the Lord is not finished yet. Through the power of God these 30 years are just the beginning.

Out of the Compost

Three decades of ministry has brought countless challenges and blessings. In the early years the ministry was nothing but a dream where two inspired Orthodox Christians, Greg and Margaret Yova, persevered to establish a community where Orthodox believers could live the faith while bringing comfort to the afflicted

of Mexico. To maneuver between two countries, two cultures, two languages, two currencies and various economic levels is extremely complex. As St. Paul said, "our battle is not against flesh and blood...but against the spiritual forces of evil" (Eph. 6:12).

In 1994, after building homes for six years, the doors of the St. Innocent Orphanage were opened for the first time. Unfortunately, the hired director never arrived, the donors who planned to cover the mortgage expenses could not fulfill their commitments, and after eight months the Mexican government removed all the boys living on site because the bu-

a new Orphanage Director was hired and brought stability for 17 years to the program. Through tremendous labors, the mortgage was slowly payed off by the donations of hundreds of sacrificial believers.

Today we have a 16-acre ranch, which houses the largest Orthodox cross-cultural missionary movement in the world. The Gospel is being lived and is flourishing by God's grace via Project Mexico. These fruits are the outcome of years of struggle and sacrifice that provided soil for the ministry to grow.

Exponential Growth

In the fast-paced modern world, we see the extreme growth of economies and societies because of better communication and technology. In the past several decades we've seen the world's population, reliance on technology, and consumption increase three-hundred-fold. This type of growth can be

overwhelming but at the same time, it can provide opportunities to capitalize and make the world a better place. This is essentially the message of the Gospel, to make the world a better place. God has come to save the world, to show all creation the path of light and love, to put an end to the curse of sickness, anxiety and death.

Project Mexico is a ministry within the Orthodox Church to bring the message of God's hope to

the faithful and the afflicted. In the past six years our short-term missionary numbers have nearly tripled and the number of families annually who have received a home has more than doubled. The children impacted by the orphanage are experiencing a stability that is unprecedented. The Orthodox faithful living and



Greg & Fr. Nick working on the pig barn, 1996



Greg & Margaret, christening of boys in 1999

The foundation has been provided through sacrifice, prayer and three decades of developing reliable infrastructure



First day of school with boys, 1997

reaucratic demands where too vague in order to comply. Those days were dark and difficult. It nearly resulted in selling the property and focusing solely on the homebuilding ministry.

The tides began to change in 1995 when Project Mexico received the relic of St. Innocent. Shortly afterwards,

ministering in Tijuana has hit record highs. Summer homebuilding interns are at full capacity.

Cautiously we give thanks to God for providing such results. I say cautiously because we need to keep our focus always on the ONE goal of salvation, not on the accounting of people being shuffled through. With all this in mind, we take to heart the Lord's words "...open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35).



LIVING FAITH TOGETHER

This summer, in celebration of our 30 years of homebuilding, we're launching our online community for homebuilding alumni of Project Mexico! We recognize the importance of relationship and community to help us stay engaged and connected to the things that really matter. On BuildingHope365 (projectmexico.360alumni.com) members will share stories, photos and nurture service outreach work inspired during their time. Keep up to date with the latest news and information from the ranch for homebuilding and find or organize local Project Mexico Events in your area. Our goal is to help volunteers remain connected to acts of mercy before, during and after their time building homes for families.

This Summer, volunteers are assigned to a group on our Alumni site along with all other parishes and volunteers from that week. Simply log in to activate your account using your volunteer email or your social media account. You will have your own space to help

Project Mexico has the capacity to not only maintain this growth but to expand it significantly. The foundation has been provided through sacrifice, prayer and three decades of developing reliable infrastructure on our 16-acre ranch. Faithfully we persevere in doing God's will. We pray to God that we are provided with the laborers and resources to continue and to grow the ministry of sharing the Lord's compassion and love for the world.

Project Mexico and the St. Innocent Orphanage has 30 years of blessed history and with the Grace of God we will continue to labor in His Harvest for generations to come eagerly waiting for His glorious return.†

Father Nicholas L. Andruchow,
Priest & Associate Director, fnicholas@projectmexico.org

finalize the last-minute details of your trip and connect with other groups coming out in the same week. You can share your experiences and stories and better yet, the ways in which God is moving you to live your faith in your own community.

Organizing your own event? You can do it right here and share volunteer opportunities with others all over the country. At Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage, we want to keep the momentum going when you return home in your call to service, and all it takes is stepping out with a community behind you. Login to projectmexico.alumni360.com, or email tina@projectmexico.org to sign up today! †

Tina Cooper, *Volunteer & Alumni*
Coordination, tina@projectmexico.org

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

Sgraffito (Italian: [zgraf'fi:to]; plural: sgraffiti; sometimes spelled scraffito) is a technique either of wall decor, produced by applying layers of plaster tinted in

See SCRATCHING on page 4

GET INVOLVED!

SCHOOL BUDDIES

At Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage our approach is customized to fit each of the boys' individual needs to improve health and boost confidence in their life. Providing the best resources for the continued Spiritual, Mental and Physical health of the boys is at the heart of our mission.

With a dynamic staff of dedicated educators, counsellors and cooks, we strive to make the best use of your generous gifts.

Your Support Provides:

- Tuition & Uniforms
- Materials & Books
- Dedicated Educational Staff
- Vocational Education Facilities

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Faithful Friends are the pillars of St. Innocent Orphanage's mission. As a Faithful Friend you will benefit our ministry by providing a stable source of income for the successful operation of the orphanage.

A Faithful Friend Receives:

- Komboskini Knotted Prayer Rope
- Hassle-free giving via automated donations
- Update, increase, or alter your pledge
- Annual donation statements

Can We Count on Your Support Today?

Call us at **619-426-4610**
OR visit [projectmexico.org](http://projectmexico.org/get-involved)
/get-involved

☆ CELEBRATING 30 YEARS! ☆

Project Mexico of the Orthodox Church



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SCHOOL BUDDIES

Support learning opportunities for one of our boys!
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SCRATCHING, from page 3

contrasting colors to a moistened surface, and then scratching to reveal parts of the underlying layer. Sgraffito and sgraffiti come from the Italian word *graffiare* (“to scratch”), ultimately from the Greek *γράφειν* (*gráphein*, “to write”). Similar to *Fresco*, Sgraffito on walls has been used by all civilizations that have used plasters in their building systems.

For the first time in our organizations’ 30-year history, we are offering expert instruction in this ancient art form. Students will learn classic Orthodox

patterns, ornamentation and lettering methods through a hands-on, four-day seminar. Each student will create two, 16 x 16 or 12 x 12 sgraffito tiles and receive skills needed to work and complete a sgraffito wall for the Pavilion at St. Innocent Orphanage.

As part of our Boys Vocational training, they will also receive training in this artform and produce tiles for sale at our tienda store onsite and our tienda online at projectmexico.myshopify.com.

For availability and booking, please contact ilia@projectmexico.org †

ILia Anossov, *Homebuilding & Development*,
ilia@projectmexico.org

REFLECTIONS

Have you ever thought what your life would have been like if you didn’t have parents? If you were a child and no one told you that they love you?

I visited orphanages in Mexico and Syria over 30 years ago when my wife and I were childless. Those were difficult times. Fortunately, we were blessed with God’s love and were able to adopt two boys. Today, they are educated and wonderful men.

At Project Mexico the community becomes the parents of the boys. We share our love with them as Christ teaches us. The fourteen Board members are ultimately responsible for the financial support, management and “Parenting” of the boys of St. Innocent Orphanage and the Project Mexico homebuilding program.

It is a big responsibility that we all take seriously. I know that with all of our donors, homebuilders, staff and the Trustees of Project Mexico, we can continue to grow this ministry with “Love” as the Lord has entrusted us to do.†

Dennis Awad, *Board Member*



GET INVOLVED! Contact 619.426.4610 OR projectmexico.org/get-involved