

Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage



Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes

BLESSINGS ABOUND!

I hope this message finds you all enjoying a season of renewal and spiritual peace. For us, the Nativity season is always so exciting, so joyful and so significant that it is a little sad when we have to transition into the New Year. But here we are, blessed beyond measure by the grace and infinite love of Christ. It is therefore impossible for me to continue without sharing my gratitude for the outpouring of support received from each and every one of you within the Project Mexico family.



The personal notes, cards, prayers and good wishes offered last year for our amazing staff and boys are just one more indication that the Lord is truly pleased by those that joyfully serve others in His Name. But our blessings did not cease there. The overwhelming responses to our School Buddies, Santa's Helpers, Pantry Partners and other support programs have been more than we could have ever hoped for. On top of all of that, our Matching Grant Opportunity was a resounding success right up until 11:59PM on the last day of the year. Thank you all!

Looking ahead, we will faithfully continue to focus on the essentials of selfless service to others. We impatiently look forward to the summer home building season where we will once again be joined with friends, old and new, to change lives through hard work and fellowship. With each home we build, we not only lighten the load of a family in need, but we strengthen each other as iron sharpens iron. At the orphanage, we will continue to evaluate and improve our approach for raising confident and strong young men while keeping Christ's teachings at the center of everything we do. With each day that passes, our boys' potential for success is improved through their increasing sense of self-worth, their ability to choose a dream and the fortitude to pursue it. Perhaps the larger and sometimes understated triumph is that we all contribute to this heavenly miracle together, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thank you for standing by us, year after year! We wish you all a blessed Lenten journey.

Together in Christ,

Ben De La Riva, *Executive Director*

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
- Partnerships
- Witness

OUR THANKS

We reached our \$100,000 Matching Grant. Glory to God! Thank you for helping us achieve our goal. We couldn't have done it without you!



t 619.426.4610 info@projectmexico.org

19 HOMES COMING UP

Thank you to all of our faithful volunteers who have signed up for this summer! Glory to God, our build weeks are more than full and we are looking forward to constructing sturdy houses for 19 beautiful families. We have also been blessed with the opportunity to offer an additional house, during the spring break season, as a group of students from Hellenic College Holy Cross will be joining us.

We are eager to begin another season of spiritual growth and the sprouting of new homes in the local Mexican hills. We are grateful to everyone who will be joining us, whether in person or in prayer. If you haven't yet finalized all the requirements of your trip, please contact Zachariah and Sophia Swanson at homebuilding@projectmexico.org.



Zachariah and Sophia led the San Diego Orthodox Young Adults, who reorganized the orphanage warehouse on a recent Saturday trip.



Paul smiled with glee as he received his Christmas present.

THANK YOU SANTA'S HELPERS

This Nativity Season was full of fellowship, prayer, excitement, fun activities, and God's bountiful blessings! Our celebrations would not have been possible without the overwhelming generosity of our loving and thoughtful Santa's Helpers. All of the staff and boys wish to extend their deepest thanks to every Santa's Helper for not only providing amazing gifts, but also for being an example of sacrificial giving. Here are some highlights from this year's festivities:

- ❖ The staff and boys sang carols together at an elderly nursing home.
- ❖ Gifts were delivered by our boys to children at a local orphanage.
- ❖ The staff and boys served homemade tamales to the homeless living at the border.
- ❖ Holy Nativity Divine Liturgy was followed by a feast of roasted pig and the exciting presentation of gifts to each boy.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

We would like to offer our deepest thanks to The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch for its generous 2014 grant. The Order has been faithfully supporting the work of our ministry for over 20 years and we are extremely grateful to its guiding hierarchs, generous members, and dedicated Board of Directors. May God continue to multiply all the amazing work of The Order, in the Church and the whole world.



Our boys and staff enjoyed a game of Capture the Flag at the park.

TRUE MEANING OF THE NATIVITY

Finding meaning in life seems to be a common goal for most human beings. During the Christmas season, this is often emphasized because of the over-indulgence of consumerism and people's realization of how empty their existence can be if it is focused solely on material



possessions. Here, within the 16 acres of St. Innocent Orphanage, we try to teach our boys to find real meaning in their lives.

For this reason, our focus during the holidays was participating in the sacramental life of the Church and serving the needy. Whether we were feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, or caring for the fatherless, our holiday almsgiving was given purpose through Christ, because He is the reason for our celebration. Christ God physically touched humanity in His flesh through His Birth and this affirms our call to follow Him.

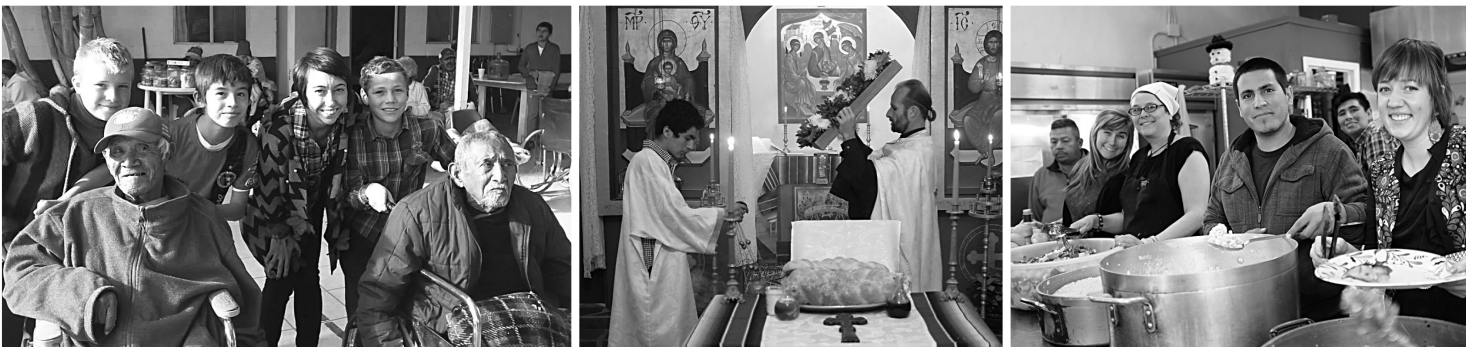
Once we make a relationship with the Divine Creator our highest priority, clarity begins to unfold, as He reminds us that we are created to care for what we have been given (Gen. 2:15). Therefore, our greatest goal is to have a relationship with the Lord and follow His will. This is the primary motivation that led me to be a priest and continues to drive me as I spiritually lead the faithful of St. Innocent Orphanage. One of the boys recently said to me, "Father, if it was not for this orphanage I would be on the streets. I escaped a living hell and now I have a home where I am safe." God gives us meaning and purpose; He calls some to be priests, some to run orphanages, some to be teachers, some to be doctors, but above all, we are called to live in His love. May God be the One we all lean on for the true meaning of life.

In Christ,

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow

TOP NEEDS

- 1. Food for One Month \$2,500** – Help provide meats, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and of course, beans and tortillas for all the delicious meals served in our kitchen!
- 2. Gasoline for One Month \$1,700** – Keeping our vehicles fueled is crucial for getting our boys to and from school, counseling sessions and other activities, as well as supporting the daily operations of the orphanage.
- 3. Electric Bill for Two Months \$1,000** – Your gift will support the continued use of our library, education center, kitchen, living areas and our water system.
- 4. Security Camera Upgrade & Repair \$900** – Help us bring our orphanage security cameras up-to-date with some much needed repairs, to ensure the safety of our staff and boys.



Left: Elias, Angel Brian, Madi and Adrian snap a picture at the nursing home.
Center: Fr. Nicholas and Jorge process the icon of the Nativity during Great Vespers.
Right: Seraphima, Jessica, Leo and Charity serve lunch on Christmas Day.

Project Mexico

of the Orthodox Church



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Irwin *loves* his new shoes...

HELP US BUILD HOPE!



Give a Gift

Become a sustaining member of our ministry by donating on a monthly basis.



Fill Our Pantry

Coordinate a donation drive to collect food and supplies for our growing boys.



Plan a Fundraiser

Organize an event or campaign to help us meet some of our ongoing and top needs.



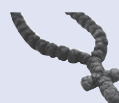
Build a Home

Change the life of a needy family by volunteering on a home building trip in Mexico.



Brighten a Future

Sponsor the costs of educating one of our boys by becoming a School Buddy.



Say a Prayer

Sign up to receive our quarterly emails to pray for all of the petitions of our ministry.

TO GET INVOLVED CONTACT (619) 426-4610 OR INFO@PROJECTMEXICO.ORG