

# Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage



*Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes*

## MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK



This past January marked the beginning of my third year as Executive Director of this amazing ministry, and I am proud to share that our staff, interns and volunteers work tirelessly each year to improve the quality of care that we provide to those we serve. While our work is challenging, it is important to acknowledge that our very ability to

strengthen, sustain and grow this ministry is only possible because of your generous support, love, and prayers and God's boundless grace.

Looking back on 2015, we want to offer our deepest thanks to our extremely generous Matching Grant Opportunity sponsors, whose kindness and trust inspired a multitude of others to give so abundantly in order to meet our goal. Last year also saw a tremendous surge of participation in our sponsorship programs like Pantry Partners, School Buddies and Santa's Helpers. Our shelves were never bare, and the consistent flow of in-kind goods was nearly more than we could handle. And to top it all off, last October, in just three days, over 560 servants of Christ registered to come and build homes for families in need, making 2016 the largest Home Building season in the history of Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage! We give thanks to God for the many triumphs of the past year, as we are truly blessed.

Our mission of service to others brings many blessings, but there are difficulties that we constantly face. In addition to all that we receive by way of food and other in-kind goods, your financial support is still an essential component of our long-term success and sustainability. To ensure that our ministry continues to thrive and grow, I humbly ask that you actively share our mission with those in your life who might find joy and purpose in our work. Your words of support will go a long way in encouraging others to get involved. Only *together* can we accomplish what God has set before us.

Thank you all for your love! We continue to be grateful for your active presence in the life and work of our ministry. Wishing you God's blessings as we begin Great and Holy Lent.

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're excited to report that we reached our \$100,000 Matching Grant goal. We want to thank everyone who generously supported the campaign. Glory to God!



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## THANK YOU ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

We are very blessed to have been awarded a generous \$10,000 grant by The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. This 2015 grant helped to supplement the funding of our boys' education and tutoring program as well as the replacement of our aging orphanage well-pump. We are immensely thankful to The Order for generously partnering with us year after year in our effort to care for the poor and orphaned of Mexico.



Everyone gathered together for a big group photo after Divine Liturgy on Holy Nativity (Christmas morning).



Jorge was very excited to receive the jersey of his favorite soccer player, Zlatan Ibrahimović.

## SANTA'S HELPERS DELIVERED SMILES

What an incredible success this year's Santa's Helpers Program turned out to be! The Nativity season truly reminds us of the greatest gift ever given to the world, and we are grateful to have such devoted supporters eagerly wanting to bring this season to life for our boys.

On behalf of the boys and staff, thank you for being a part of our Santa's Helpers Program through your labors, prayers, and boundless generosity. Your love and commitment allowed our boys to enjoy such a blessed and joyous Christmas that would not have been possible without each one of you who graciously and wholeheartedly supported it. You are all amazing and very much appreciated! Thank you again, and God bless you.

## THANK YOU *Leadership 100*

We are proud to share that Leadership 100 has awarded a generous grant in the amount of \$63,735 to Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage. The grant was awarded to strengthen our Home Building Program, its interns and volunteers, as well as emphasize the importance of our youth as the future of our faith. We are also excited to announce that we, on behalf of Leadership 100, will be awarding 60 Home Building Scholarships to the groups that have already registered for our 2016 Home Building season.

Thanks to Leadership 100, we have been given the opportunity to share our Home Building Program, and we are truly grateful for its trust in our ministry of hope.



The 20<sup>th</sup> house built in 2015, by St. Athanasius, St. Nicholas, and SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Churches.

## THROUGH CHRIST, JOY WINS!

Despite the fact that three months have passed since Christmas, the message of God's coming into the world is still with us. This message is a daily reminder of our call to live in love, hope, and joy. Christ saves us from darkness, anxiety, and ultimately death, and therefore, we are filled



with much joy! Everyone wants to be happy, but sometimes we forget what it means to be joyful and to have peace in our hearts. Unfortunately, material band-aids and possessions do not remedy the pain that results from this forgetfulness. Rather, healing must come from within as we fulfill the truth of our redemption.

For our boys, there are plenty of reasons to feel unhappy. Waking up every morning to the absence of one's own parents can be maddening and overwhelm a person with misery. Nevertheless, this past holiday season, I witnessed these boys overcome the temptation to despair over their victimhood and truly celebrate the fact that God is with us all! These young men have re-interpreted their lives, learning that they are loved despite their difficult pasts.

While this victorious joy manifested in so many different ways, the overflowing abundance of smiles was consistent throughout. Our voices united together dozens of times to sing carols of the season. Our joy overflowed when we prepared hundreds of homemade tamales to feed the needy in Tijuana. Our faces were elated with the excitement of opening presents. All this was put into perspective by the true reason for our joy: God is loving and His love can be felt in the world because He came as a small child to give us eternal life. Let us all continually live in this joy and feel God in our hearts. Here in Tijuana, joy has won, and through the Orthodox Church we have been transformed.

In Christ,

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow

## TOP NEEDS

- 1. Food for One Week: \$500** – Help provide fresh meats, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and tortillas for all the delicious meals served in our kitchen.
- 2. Gasoline for One Week: \$400** – 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. Propane Gas for One Week: \$150** – Your gift will support the continued use of the hot water heaters in our bathrooms and kitchen, as well as our backup generator.
- 4. Vehicle Upkeep for One Week: \$100** – Our 12 vehicle fleet is 10-15 years old and must withstand the rough Mexican roads. Regular repairs and maintenance ensure our fleet stays in safe, working condition.



Left: Charity and Angel Brian share a smile while caroling at a local nursing home. Center: Adrian proudly holds baby, Porphyria Swanson, during Holy Nativity Vespers. Right: Ivancito test-drives one of the new bikes around the orphanage on Christmas Day.

# Project Mexico

## of the Orthodox Church



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## PLEASE HELP US GO GREEN

In an effort to better connect with our supporters and reduce our annual mailing costs, we are asking you to help by 1) Providing your primary email address and 2) Selecting your preference for communication. Visit <http://www.projectmexico.org/contact-us> and click on **Update My Contact Preferences** to help us Go Green! Please call or email our office for more information. Thank you!

## 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](mailto:INFO@PROJECTMEXICO.ORG)