



Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

**A**t Christ's birth, a star appeared in the sky: a bright light, shining forth in the darkness to guide the wise men to their Messiah—and they were “overjoyed.” Likewise, the leaders of St Vladimir's were overjoyed to dedicate their lives to training priests to go forth and shine the Light of Christ for the future of Orthodoxy in America. They wanted the Light to continue to shine, grow, expand, and give life to everyone who experienced it.

**Because of you, and  
alongside you,  
we continue to shine  
the Light of Truth  
into a darkened world.**

Tucked away in the lonely edges of the Catskills Mountains stands a beacon of hospitality and hope: **St Innocent of Alaska Mission.** Appropriately named after St Innocent—missionary, scholar, and linguist—the multi-cultural parish was established to bring the Orthodox Faith to the isolated, rural community of Oneonta, New

York. Though small, we are reminded that darkness can scatter with just a little Light, as Christ told his disciples: “For where two or three are gathered together, there I am among them” (Mt 18.20).

And the Light of St Innocent Mission is reaching far beyond its wooded community, and far beyond its English-speaking limits, just like St Innocent's missionary work in Alaska. The rector, **Fr John Morris (class of 2020)** describes his parish:



Fr John Morris is rector of St Innocent of Alaska Mission, Oneonta, NY.

*“...half cradle Orthodox and half converts. We are somewhat isolated geographically, over an hour from any other Orthodox parishes. We are a strong, but small group in this non-Orthodox area. Being somewhat on my own here, I have had to rely heavily on mentors, and on my pastoral theology classes at St Vladimir's. Father Chad Hatfield's advice on*

*missionary and pastoral work, which can be incredibly challenging, dark, and lonely, has helped me press on.”*



But Fr John's missionary work is not exclusive to Oneonta. Through the help of technology, a catechist from Mexico, and a passion for the Spanish language, Fr John is reaching Spanish-speaking families through online catechism classes. Being a strong Spanish-speaker himself, Fr John understands the difficulty non-English speakers face when visiting Orthodox churches serving the liturgy primarily in English. Not understanding the words around you is a unique darkness, into which Fr John is working to shine the Light of Christ.

**Your generosity is making it possible for  
Orthodoxy to reach once-inaccessible ears  
and hearts seeking Christ.**

*"The class is basically for any catechumen or inquirer who is primarily Spanish-speaking, even bilingual, but more comfortable in Spanish. We're all spread out and meet online. Everyone comes from various backgrounds; some Protestant, some Roman Catholic. Some people meet with their local priest, as well. I am not just translating services, but also translating a catechesis—in real time—to answer their questions. I am also doing short services in Spanish and recording them on YouTube so people can see what the priest is doing in their own language."*

Imagine what could happen if St Vladimir's Seminary could prepare even more leaders like Fr John. Orthodoxy could bloom and grow across the fertile soil which is America, and reach those who have traveled to this country from non-English speaking countries.

**Saint Vladimir's isn't a place where  
seminarians come to sit. Because of you,  
it is a place from which men and women  
of God are sent into the world to point  
a disoriented world back to  
That Which is Eternal.**




Simultaneously, back at St Vladimir's we continue on, with your support, to prepare men and women for such a time as this. **William Vazquez (class of 2023)**—former pro-baseball player and coach—his wife Hannah, and their five children, struggle on in their preparation for ministry.

*"Coming to seminary was a long process! In 2011, I felt that God was asking me to take this step. I was still playing baseball at that point and wasn't sure what to do, but I really wanted to hand my life over to Him as much as I could. My wife Hannah was not ready. Fast forward to 2018, finally, through diligent prayer, we both decided it was time to go."*

**Together, we are compelled to  
pray constantly.**

Since entering seminary, the process of answering God's call continues as William pursues the priesthood.



*"Being here at St Vladimir's, I have learned that I don't know as much as I thought I knew, or as much as I act like I know sometimes, or think I know. And that's very humbling. Learning more about the faith and the boundless knowledge about God, as well as living and learning in community with other men and women who love God and are taking this same journey, has been wonderful. The most valuable thing that I hope to carry out into ministry is the experience of being immersed in a community and in the liturgical life of the Church. I hope to share this with people in the community that I end up serving, to help them understand and acquire more of the mind of the Church."*

**Together, we are compelled to pursue continuously.**

For such a time as this, the world needs pastors, like Fr John Morris, who are missionary-minded, courageous, and compassionate. Leaders, like William Vazquez, who are also committed to being active apologists of the Faith.

Through your faithful support, we've been sending courageous priests and lay leaders willing to follow Jesus into the farthest and darkest places—even in the unlikely dark places closer to home. It is your generosity that is ensuring the future of Orthodoxy, the strength of individual parishes, and the ability to continue to send priests on mission to be catalysts for the Gospel until the whole world hears and knows the Hope that is eternal and the Light that will never grow dim.



Seminarian William Vazquez with wife, Hannah, and their children, Euphemia, Michael, Gabriella, Theodore, and Josiah

**Together, we are compelled to proclaim courageously.**

I ask you to consider what YOU can do for such a time as this. Like all of us at St Vladimir's, I ask you to pray with us constantly, pursue Christ continuously, and proclaim His Truth courageously.

**We need your prayers and commitment to our Faith now, more than ever.**

And for such a time as this, we also need your financial support. Through your generosity, St Vladimir's will continue to prepare men and women to go out into the world and proclaim God's truth to those who are lost in unbelief, who lack Hope, and who are caught up in today's spiraling darkness.

**We need you to give now. Whether it's a one-time gift or a monthly gift, we need you to shine the Light of Hope into a dark and disoriented world.**

We expect continued resistance from the world as it seeks to deter culture from the Truth that is Eternal. Yet, in the midst of every attempt to minimize the Gospel, priests and lay leaders are being equipped to lead a movement of God to bring about the restoration and redemption to all God's people.

**Your gift will send Light into the darkness.**

That's why we need you, right now, to go online, call, or mail in your gift. Every dollar matters, and God will multiply your generosity.



Together, we can stand with the people whom God has called to serve in parishes around the world, train and equip them for a complicated cultural and ministry context, and push back the darkness by showing people the Light. Visit [www.svots.edu/compelled](http://www.svots.edu/compelled), call 914-961-8313 x360, or return your generous gift in the mail. Be sure to give by December 31!

**Your generosity will change people,  
families, and communities forever.**

May God be with you during this time. And may His unwavering Truth compel you to cling to Him and proclaim with joy the birth of "Christ, true God, who, for our salvation, was born in a cave and laid in a manger..."


Compelled to Pray, Pursue, and Proclaim,

**The Very Rev. Dr Chad Hatfield**

President of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

**P.S.** Your generosity has sent generations of priests into the world to be beacons of Christ's Light in a dark and suffering world. But we can't continue to push back the darkness without your generosity. Visit [www.svots.edu/compelled](http://www.svots.edu/compelled), call 914-961-8313 x360, or return your generous gift in the mail. Please make your gift before December 31st.



 Give Now

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