



Lived Theology School

St. Maria of Paris



Do You Have a Year to Take?

Toronto houses a unique Orthodox resource for anyone over the age of 18. The Lived Theology School – **LTS** – under the patronage of St Maria of Paris is a house located in downtown Toronto.

LTS has four pillars the core of its intern program:

- regular study periods
- hands-on practical experience at St John the Compassionate Mission
- living a full liturgical life in the context of a mission parish
- community life between interns

The interns share an adequate, but simple, 7 bedroom house within walking distance of St John the Compassionate Mission.

LTS taps into 23 years of experience trying to live out mission work at St John the Compassionate Mission. All this provides a unique opportunity to really learn what Orthodox mission could look like.

LTS does not replicate any of the otherwise excellent Orthodox learning institutes. Rather, it addresses a most fundamental need of our Orthodox Church today in North America, the need to have places where one can ask hard questions and try to grow into the wisdom needed to do “mission work”. Mission work understood not as a simple “let’s convert them” or “handouts”. Rather, real mission work must engage the Church with the world, especially with people who are lost and suffering and poor.

We need to understand that we can only evangelize in vulnerability and that evangelization is not just a one-way street. We need to learn ways of doing “mission work” that flows out of our theology, our liturgy and of our Orthodox experience of God and salvation. This finally cannot be done simply by reading a book or in academic discussion detached from the reality of the lives of real people and situations.

At the same time we need to have our mission work rooted in a theological understanding and not simple sentimentality. That is why LTS was born: to give an opportunity to “do theology”, live it, pray it and share it.

LTS seeks to address a particular crisis in Orthodoxy in North America. This is a zealous rush to “do mission work” without having much actual experience or theological reflection at its base. Nowhere is this split between Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis more painfully evident in much of our so-called “mission work”.

Our experience is that Orthodox mission work often simply copies existing models from other churches. The question then being: if our theology and liturgy in practice looks no different than the Salvation Army then why bother to have a different theology in the first place? But the other danger we see when “mission work” is the fruit of naïve sentimentalism. This last approach is fundamentally disrespectful of the poor. The last, but not least worrisome, we see is using the poor to feed an Orthodox agenda. Such an approach is fundamentally sinful.

Having listed just a few of the most common misconceptions that are circulating among many well-intentioned Orthodox faithful and institutions it became clear that we need a place of sober reflection and living so that a solid Patristic and realistic understanding of Orthodox mission could grow for this generation.

The aim of the school is not to encourage a replica of St John the Compassionate Mission. Each intern is encouraged to take what they learn and apply it creatively to whatever parish or life circumstances they might find themselves in the future.

LTS, at this time, receives applications throughout the year. If you want to know more please consult the LTS website at www.livedtheologyschool.org or write to us at livedtheologyschool@yahoo.ca

Fr Roberto Ubertino
Executive Director
St John the Compassionate Mission
Toronto