

Mission Tools:

Chinese Missions Dinner Event

Description: This is an easily organized, enjoyable social event, which is spiritually edifying, and which provides concrete support for the efforts of the Chinese Orthodox Translation Project (www.orthodox.cn), supporting the work of the Orthodox Fellowship of All Saints of China (OFASC).

Staff Needed: **Co-ordinator** - Oversees arrangements with sponsoring restaurant, decoration and displays (if any), and deposit and final payment. Arranges for draft flyer to be mailed or distributed through email, posters, etc. *(2-3 volunteer helpers to assist)*

Ticket Co-ordinator - Contact for ticket sales. Prepares books of tickets (if desired), and collects all monies. Oversees forwarding of proceeds to Orthodox Fellowship of All Saints of China.

Guest Speaker - Speaks on topic of Orthodox missions today, the Church in China (historical or present), great missionary saints, or another topic.

Background: This project grew out of a family practice of marking the feast of the New Martyrs of China (June 10/23 or 11/24, depending on local calendars). Each year, we would read the Akathist to the Martyrs of China, then go out for Chinese food to a local restaurant. The event could easily be arranged to mark Chinese New Year.

Overview: Speaking with the restaurant management, they were willing to provide a fixed price Chinese banquet for a group, allowing us to fix a ticket price that would allow proceeds to the OFASC. Most authentic Chinese restaurants charge by the table: we were able to secure tables at \$250 each (seating ten people), charging \$50.00 per person, with a reduced cost for families. Thus, \$25.00 per person was raised for the OFASC projects. Tax receipts for the donation portion can be issues where permitted by law.

Following the serving of the Akathist to the Martyrs of China at a local parish (at 4pm), we made our way to the restaurant for 6pm. Volunteers had prepared a welcome table with a bowl of oranges, an icon of the saints of China, and a red signing silk, typical of Chinese events. Each table was numbered, with assigned seating to avoid confusion. Each plate had a small paper menu listing all the foods. Canned beverages were provided on the tables; other beverages were purchased by the guests.

After the meal, a guest speaker was introduced, then thanked by a parish representative, and given a small gift. Red envelopes - traditional Chinese "money gift" envelopes" - were set out on each table, and at the end of the evening, a

collection was taken up to further support the work of the OFASC. The event was over by 9pm, with clean-up carried out by restaurant staff.

The annual event attracts between 50 and 70 people, and is an excellent means of supporting Orthodox mission work, while drawing together both faithful Orthodox and those who simply want to enjoy such an evening together.

Feedback: These annual dinners are very well received, and provide faithful a chance to invite friends and family. Organizational work is limited, since the main work of meal preparation is done by the restaurant staff. The event is suitable for families, and serves as an appropriate way to celebrate this feast day through prayers, learning, and a common meal, while supporting mission work.

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