

# **Our Journey to Ottawa**

## **By Maria Grountseva**

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Our journey started long before the safety speech on the plane or the hugs and good-byes. With the help of Mother Elena (Fourik), the fathers in our Church and many others, we were able to successfully organize the flight time, our accommodations and an exciting itinerary for our mission at the Archdiocesan Assembly in Ottawa.

From the day we arrived to Ottawa till the last minutes before departure, we were exceedingly lucky with the weather. Mild warmth with a drizzle here and there accompanied our stay throughout the week. The one day with rain pouring from buckets didn't affect our plans. On the contrary, it was a blessing to the greenery of Ottawa which was starting to fade with the previous heat.

Needless to say, the youth program provided many opportunities to get acquainted with Christians of the same age as you are from all over Canada and to even discuss the center topic of the trip: Being a Missionary. As for me, I found it exciting to hear all the views of others, get to know people and to be a part of this fabulous learning experience.

With a musical performance by Father Justin, a pizza night, a BBQ dinner, the evening coffee house, the Marketplace, the snack stops and of course the lime gelato, it is only necessary for me to illuminate on the most important reason of our gathering.

Our beliefs. The matins, the vespers, the closing prayers and of course the liturgies, where most of the clergy of Canada was gathered, were enchanting. In addition to the already bursting program, we got to listen to Fr. Justin preach about being a missionary for our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the youth even got to participate in a little mission for the community! Our goal was to walk nearby the Cathedral which was transformed into a Church, creating a cross. On our way, we were to pick up garbage, and every time we knelt down, to recite the Lords prayer.

It is hard to summarize our trip. The joy and excitement we all doubtlessly felt as we walked around Archbishop Seraphim's residence "Fair Haven", land and house, the chance to talk to priests from all over Canada and even some from the U. S.

Overall, it is a trip to remember and it is only exciting that the next meeting will be held in Victoria, so many more of us will be able to attend.