



Meet Our Newest Team Members!
Introducing Natalie Becerra and Nicholas Abdelahad



Natalie Becerra is OCPM's first Project Manager. She was born into the Greek Orthodox Church in Bakersfield, California, where she lives today. Her lifelong passion for serving others led her to pursue a B.S. in Psychology from Saint Mary's College of California. After graduating, Natalie moved to New York City, where she worked as a Project Manager for a nonprofit that supported people in prison, and she became heavily involved in ministry outreach at her local parish. Her passion for volunteering and service work mixed with her love for serving the church ultimately led her to finding OCPM.

"I first found OCPM when I was looking for ways to take my volunteering to the next level," says Natalie. **"My church had a great monthly outreach program that provided meals to those in need, and I loved being a part of that, but I wanted to do more.** I searched online for 'Orthodox nonprofits' and found a blog post by OCPM. I had never heard of OCPM before, but it instantly felt like an answer to my prayers." Since then, God has made a path for Natalie to become more and more involved with OCPM, beginning as an Advocate, then as a graduate of the first cohort of OCPM's [Certificate Program in Prison Ministry](#), and now as full-time staff.



Among the key projects Natalie is working on is a major initiative to make Orthodox media such as podcasts, e-books, music, and videos more widely available on prison tablets, which have become popular in recent years. OCPM has already partnered with some of the most well-known Orthodox media figures to bring their content to the prison audience.

Additionally, Natalie organized the annual OCPM staff retreat in Denver, where we were hosted by OCPM's Episcopal liaison and spiritual father, Metropolitan Constantine. This important time together combines prayer and essential conversations with fun team outings.

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have an immediate family member who has been to prison or jail?

Orthodox Christian PRISON MINISTRY

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Churches wanting to get more involved with OCPM can look forward to meeting **Nicholas Abdelahad**, OCPM's new Church Programs Manager. Most recently, before coming to OCPM, Nicholas worked in cybersecurity sales. "Like many who eventually find themselves working in the Church, I never set out to pursue a career in ministry," says Abdelahad. "But the more I learned about OCPM, the more I felt not only that the Church Programs role was something I'd find meaningful and fulfilling, but also that I was genuinely well-suited for it."

As Church Programs Manager, Nicholas' role is to educate, facilitate, and implement OCPM's formal Church Programs in parishes across all Orthodox jurisdictions in the U.S. "I love that this position allows me to draw on skills I've developed in my relationship-driven, value-based communication during my years in B2B sales. As we continue to formalize and standardize the programs already in place, I'm excited by the opportunity to develop new content that will give parishes more resources and options as they build sustainable, long-term prison ministry efforts within their communities."

To churches already discerning how God might be calling them to prison ministry, Nicholas says, **"Pray about it. Talk to your priest about it. And then—do it!** There are countless inspirational quotes about how growth only happens outside our comfort zones, and prison ministry is a perfect example of that truth. Let's be honest: most people feel far more comfortable answering Christ's call to feed the hungry by serving at a soup kitchen, or to clothe the naked by donating to a nonprofit. Visiting those in prison—whether through correspondence or in person—often feels much more intimidating. **But when you keep Christ and those incarcerated at the center of your ministry,**" says Nicholas, **"you'll find that not only are you serving others—you're also growing deeper in your own faith and spiritual life."**

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www.theOCPM.org

Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry serves those who are incarcerated and their families, and provides resources, training and support to our ministry partners so that lives are transformed and God is glorified.

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