

Divine Mercy & Philanthropy *(continued)*

These virtues, exercised one day at a time in synergy with God's grace, slowly but surely brought St. Mary of Egypt into union and communion with the God of mercy and love for all humanity.

Brothers, let us be inspired by the lives of these two great saints. It is vital that we share God's mercy and love for all mankind expressed throughout human history in the lives of all the saints and in our lives. I invite you to support IOCC directly and through your influence as priests as a tangible way of accomplishing this participation in the loving and merciful action of God.

Christ is risen!

Rev. Fr. Theodore Dorrance
Director of the Office of Missions and Evangelism
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver

*If you wish to contribute a reflection
to the next Priest to Priest,
please email rloumiotis@iocc.org*



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IOCC EVENTS & PRESENTATIONS

- **April 21: Virginia Beach, VA** - 5K Walk/Run
- **April 22: Boston, MA** - All That Jazz:
A Musical Reception for IOCC
- **April 26: Chicago, IL** - IOCC Grand Banquet
- **May 5-6: Pittsburgh, PA** - TEAM IOCC
at the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend
- **May 19: South Bend, IN** - 5K Walk/Run
- **May 29: Pittsburgh, PA** - Singles Gathering
- **June 2: Pawtucket, RI** - Vespers & Dinner

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PRIEST *to* PRIEST

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR ORTHODOX CLERGY

Spring 2018

Divine Mercy & Philanthropy

God's Great Love Manifest

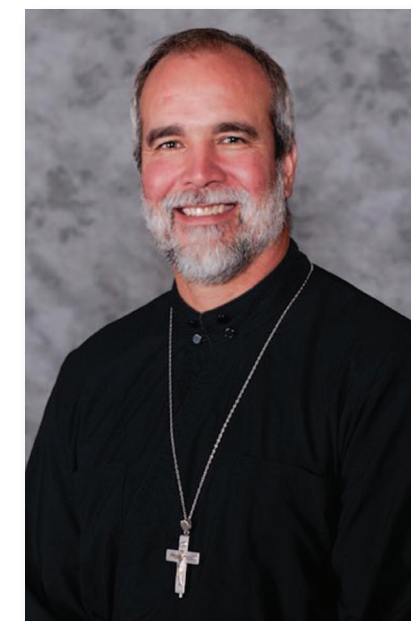
Fr. Theodore Dorrance

As I reflect upon the worldwide ministry of IOCC, two words come to mind: philanthropy and mercy. This is what IOCC offers to those in need around the world, as well as locally in the United States. These words describe two central characteristics of our Triune God. In our Orthodox services we proclaim Him to be a "merciful God Who loves mankind." God is the source of all mercy. Our ability to be merciful is both a reflection of His image in us and through His divine grace. Similarly, God created us out of His love, and His sustaining, redeeming, and sanctifying action upon us is continual proof of His ongoing philanthropy.

This year on the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent, we celebrated the life of the Virgin Mary through the Feast of the Annunciation and the life of St. Mary of Egypt, two women who lived very different lives. On the one hand, the Virgin Mary was as pure as a person could be from her birth. It was her purity, obedience, and courage that set her apart as the means of the incarnation of the Son of God. In contrast, St. Mary of Egypt lived for seventeen years in the most sinful manner possible. Although their beginnings were quite different, they ended their lives in similar states. This is a beautiful and graphic expression of the mercy and philanthropy of God.

For a good portion of St. Mary of Egypt's life, she forgot God, but God never forgot about her. He never stopped acting upon her and inviting her back to Him. When she had her conversion, it was before an icon of the Virgin Mary. One Mary being inspired and helped by another Mary. The Theotokos heard the cries of a desperate and broken woman and went before her Son, "the merciful God who loves mankind." From the moment of this heartfelt prayer, Mary of Egypt received the mercy and love of God. Her repentance was real and immediate, but her sanctification was a slow marathon characterized by the same threefold virtues found in the other Mary, the Theotokos: purity of heart, obedience, and courage.

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