

Our thanks for IOCC Sunday success

IOCC Sunday, designated by SCOBA to be observed by all Orthodox parishes in America on the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving, was a resounding success in 2002, thanks to the support of priests all across the country. IOCC is thankful for the 239 parishes that participated. That's 75 more than in 2001. The increase in participation and contributions illustrate once again the important role that priests play in the humanitarian mission of IOCC.

With each passing year, there is a greater level of awareness among our people about IOCC as their Orthodox humanitarian aid organization and of their approval of the IOCC mission. The work of IOCC is brought to the attention of our Orthodox people by you, their spiritual leaders. We thank each of you for your many and varied efforts and ask you to continue to partner with us as we seek to have our people "respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."

Honors Internship Program expands

IOCC has partnered with the University of Florida to provide three-month internship opportunities for UF graduate and professional school students in one of IOCC's foreign country programs. These internships, funded totally under a grant from Coca Cola Corp., are eligible for academic credit and are in addition to those funded by IOCC.

"The bread in your box belongs to the hungry, the cloak in your closet belongs to the naked, the shoes you do not wear belong to the barefoot, the money in your vault belongs to the destitute." (St. Basil the Great)

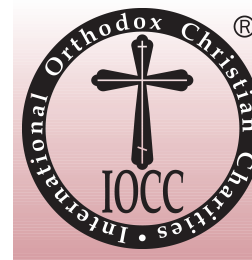
Upcoming IOCC events

The following events are being sponsored during the next few months by local Metropolitan Committees in support of IOCC's work. See details at www.iocc.org about these and other events.

- **Chicago, IL**
Training Workshop, March 22
- **Orange County, CA**
Training Workshop, April 5
- **Atlanta, GA**
Annual 5K run/walk, April 12
- **Atlanta, GA**
Training Workshop, May 10
- **Chicago, IL**
Annual Banquet, May 18
- **Cleveland, OH**
Annual Banquet, June 2

IOCC Board to meet

The IOCC Board of Directors will hold its next biannual meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 6 and 7. Special guests will include His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman, primate of the Orthodox Church in America, and His Grace Bishop Artemije of the Diocese of Raska and Prizren (Kosovo and Metohija).



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST to PRIEST

VOLUME 4, NO.1 SPRING 2003

"Let us pray for peace in the world..."

At every Divine Liturgy and other sacred Services, we lead the people in prayer "for peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the unity of all." The need for prayer, my brothers, is acute in today's world. People in all corners of the earth have taken up arms against each other, and America is poised to engage in a devastating war.

Truly, the devastation of war is far-reaching. Entire nations are destroyed. The infrastructures of cities and villages that took many years to build are obliterated. The economic stability of small villages, towns and entire countries is set asunder. Social institutions of health, education, welfare and child care are reduced to ashes. Beyond the loss of life on the battlefield are the innumerable victims of all ages and social strata whose suffering goes on for many years.

IOCC was established by SCOBA more than 10 years ago to provide the means for an Orthodox Christian response to the needs of war victims, among others. It is with your help, the spiritual leaders of our parishes, that we continually strive to make our people aware of IOCC as their humanitarian aid organization.

Great Lent in the Orthodox Church, which begins this year on March 10, provides uniquely spiritual opportunities to teach our people. Seminars, lectures discussions and other gatherings following Lenten services bring the faithful together to be nurtured with the Word of God. As a member of the IOCC Board of Directors, I appeal to you to use one of these opportunities to bring the message and mission of IOCC to the attention of your parishioners. Contact IOCC headquarters in Baltimore for materials and assistance in putting a presentation together. If you prefer, call and request a speaker, perhaps in cooperation with one or more other Orthodox parishes in your city.

I pray you enjoy a spiritually bountiful Great Lent.

Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

In lieu of gifts...

When Fr. Jordan and Presvytera Marika Brown baptized their daughter Constandina, they requested donations be sent to IOCC in lieu of gifts. Their generosity has helped IOCC provide the basic means of survival for vulnerable families worldwide.

Giving and receiving Christian gifts truly defined the essence of Constandina's baptism. Similarly, other families have asked for contributions to be given to IOCC in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion.

Whether memorial or honorary gifts, donating to IOCC is a truly Orthodox alternative to giving traditional presents. For each donation received, IOCC will send an appropriate acknowledgement card to the designated recipient.

This is a great gift idea for anniversaries, weddings, birthdays, graduations and other important occasions.

Please let your parishioners know that IOCC accepts "in lieu of" gifts online at www.iocc.org or by calling toll-free 877-803-4622.

Highest rating from charity watchdog

For the second consecutive year, IOCC received a four-star rating from the watchdog group Charity Navigator. Receiving four out of four stars is an "exceptional" rating.

The rating is based on a charity's fund-raising efficiency, the percentage of its total budget spent on administrative and fund-raising costs, and the percentage of its budget spent on programs and services. According to Charity Navigator, IOCC spends 95.4 cents of every dollar on program expenses.

"Obviously, we are pleased that IOCC would receive such a high rating based on our financial performance," said IOCC Executive Director Constantine M. Triantafilou. "I believe it shows us to be good stewards of the resources that God has given us to serve those in need."

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR CLERGY OF ALL ORTHODOX CHURCH JURISDICTIONS IN AMERICA

from the Church Relations Committee of the IOCC Board of Directors

Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Chairman, Rev. Irinej Dobrijevic, Very Rev. Michael Ellias
Very Rev. Robert S. Kondratick, Anne Glynn Mackoul, Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

IOCC PROGRAMS COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY

A Q U I C K O V E R V I E W - F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 3

THE FOLLOWING ARE SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM AMONG IOCC'S PROJECTS. PLEASE POST IN YOUR PARISH

Albania

After 50 years of international isolation, the healthcare system in Albania has some weak vital signs. One deficiency is the lack of adequate medical equipment. IOCC recently secured the donation of four bedside vital-signs monitors for its partner, Annunciation Orthodox Clinic in the capital, Tirana, as well as reusable pulse oximetry sensors for use with the monitors. This and other anticipated equipment is part of a larger surgical training program being developed by IOCC and the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

"IOCC gave me a precious gift, for which I am and will be grateful forever," 81-year-old Bozidar said of IOCC's help in returning his family to their pre-war home. A successful Bosnian farmer, Bozidar lost a son during the 1992-1995 war. "Nothing in the world is worth my son's life. I'll give all my property to have him back with us," he said. Along with Bozidar's family, IOCC helped resettle 80 percent of the pre-war inhabitants of the village of Krnjeusa. Since 1999, IOCC and its local partners have facilitated the return of more than 1,600 refugee families to Bosnia.

Ethiopia

Threatened with famine on a massive scale, Ethiopians are in desperate need of learning more effective ways of farming and meeting their long-term food needs. With its partner, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, IOCC has begun small-scale agriculture and income-generation projects at monasteries in north-central Ethiopia. Because monasteries in Ethiopia are part of the communities where they are located, the benefits of such projects are spread to the surrounding population.

Jerusalem/West Bank

In the Holy Land, olives are a major source of food, income and community pride. But in the last two years, Palestinian farmers have had an increasingly difficult time reaching their olive trees for maintenance and harvest purposes. The people of the West Bank village of Beita, with the help of IOCC, decided to build a 1½-mile road to their fields. Now, Beita's olive oil, among the best in the region, stands a better chance of making it to market and improving the local economy.

Lebanon

"The most important meal for a child is breakfast," said Hussein el-Sabeh, principal of Tahwitat el-Ghadir Mixed School, one of 49 schools in Lebanon to participate in IOCC's school lunch program. "Just as a car cannot start without fuel, a child cannot properly learn without a nutritious breakfast. Starting the day with a nutritious, well-balanced meal allows them to concentrate and learn to their full potential." An estimated 12,000 underprivileged children ages 5-11 are participating in the program this year.

Republic of Georgia

"I am very glad to receive the food at school," said Dachi, a 9-year-old Georgian boy who receives a daily school lunch from IOCC. "Once, I felt very lazy to go to school, but then I remembered about the lunch and I changed my mind. Yesterday some pupils in our class were absent and I got two items of food. This made me very happy." Dachi, one of 14,300 Georgian school children being fed by IOCC school lunches this year, said he shares his daily portion with his 4-year-old sister. The program is part of IOCC's strategy to improve food security in this struggling country.

Romania

The Bistrita Youth Center, supported by IOCC since its founding two years ago, has become a cornerstone in the lives of Bistrita's young people. Its goal is to be a self-sufficient organization that can offer long-term programs. With the help of IOCC and the Romanian Orthodox Church, it continues to serve approximately 700 young people a month with a variety of recreational, educational and social activities.

Serbia and Montenegro

"Just to have them measure our blood pressure and bring medication means a lot," said Darinka, 61, who, with her near-deaf husband, Uros, 71, lives in a refugee shelter near Belgrade, Serbia. The Serbian couple, forced to flee their home in Croatia after the outbreak of war in 1991, is part of the largest refugee community in Europe. (An estimated 620,000 people displaced by the 1990s conflicts remain in Serbia.) Unable to return home after the war, the couple was forced to relocate to a refugee center. There, IOCC and a local partner provide medical services to residents. "They are truly good people. If it wasn't for them and this place, I don't know where we would be," Darinka says.

A Serbian girl plants seedlings in a plastic greenhouse provided to her family by IOCC, while IOCC agronomist Dragan Terzic looks on. The plastic greenhouses, distributed with seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, tools and repair kits, enable refugee families awaiting return to their pre-war homes to produce vegetables for food and much-needed income.



United States of America

IOCC's U.S. Program is working to make refugee sponsorship and English language instruction typical features of Orthodox parish life in the United States. The Rev. Aris Metrakos, whose Columbia, S.C., parish successfully sponsored a refugee from Bosnia-Herzegovina, believes this is a social outreach that can be adopted by Orthodox churches. "The mandate of Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger has become a call to action for America's Orthodox Christians," Fr. Aris said.