

A Three-Part Recipe for Great Lent: Prayer — Fasting — Almsgiving

This Great Lent, when the Church calls us to increased Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving, include IOCC in your parish's activities by incorporating some of the suggestions below:

- Pray for people whose lives have been torn apart by natural and man-made disaster AND for the IOCC staff who bring them God's comfort;
- Encourage parishioners to take the money they save by fasting and donate to IOCC or some other worthy local charity;
- Have your parish youth participate in almsgiving by making an IOCC Emergency Kit (contact IOCC for details);
- After the various services, Compline, Presanctified Liturgy, Salutations, Lenten Vespers, etc. conduct educational sessions on Orthodox Philanthropy and the work of IOCC (speakers, a booklet on Orthodox Philanthropy and a DVD on IOCC's work are available)
- Designate monies collected at parish Lenten suppers to go to IOCC and other charities.

Great Lent gives us, once again, the opportunity to practice our Orthodoxy by our Orthopraxy (correct actions)!

Contact IOCC Development Director, Dan Christopoulos (dchristopoulos@iocc.org), with any questions about how to include IOCC in your parish life this Great Lent.

IOCC Upcoming Events

Events are being held throughout the US. More details at www.iocc.org/events.

- **PITTSBURGH, PA**
"A Night in Greece"
(Greek Fires Fundraiser) March 8, 2008
- **CHICAGO, IL**
Annual Banquet, May 2008
- **ATLANTA, GA**
5K Run/Walk, May 10, 2008
- **CLEVELAND, OH**
Annual Banquet, May 18, 2008
- **PITTSBURGH, PA**
Annual Picnic, June 21, 2008

APPOINT AN IOCC PARISH REPRESENTATIVE!

Parish Representatives play a vital role in generating support for IOCC at the parish level in just a few hours per month.

Everything necessary for this job can be provided by IOCC. Send contact information for your parish representative, or questions, to:

Vasi Jankovich
IOCC Outreach Coordinator
vjankovich@iocc.org



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST to PRIEST

VOLUME 9, NO.1 SPRING 2008

"Out of the depths I have cried out to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!" — Psalm 130

Dear Father,



Sophia Clark/IOCC

As the flames raged on around her, Diamando could only cry out to God for help. She watched helplessly as her livelihood literally went up in flames. Like so many of her neighbors she lost her animals, her vineyard, her olive trees, and her home. In a matter

of moments she was plunged to the depths of despair and lifted her voice to the Lord. **God saved her life, and through IOCC God has been helping to restore her livelihood.** When all else is bleak and hopeless the light of Christ banishes the darkness.

The story of Diamando and her loss is only one story among the countless stories of people around the world who are suffering, usually through no fault of their own, and who are given essential assistance by IOCC. While we are too often powerless to prevent people from losing their resources or even family to natural and man-made disasters, with your support we remain steadfast in our commitment to stand in solidarity with those who suffer by bringing to bear God's love and compassion. The cries of despair that resound from the AIDS-ravaged country of Ethiopia, the displaced brothers and sisters in Serbia, the children fearing violence in the Middle East, or from other corners of the globe, do not fall on deaf ears. Our Lord hears their voices and prompts us to take action. In our annual Lenten journey of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we must listen for the voices crying from the depths of darkness, despair and hopelessness, and respond by offering the *light of Christ which illumines all* (Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts).

You can spread that *Light* by participating in IOCC's Volunteer in the Gulf project by leading a team to the Gulf Coast to help rebuild homes for those who lost

theirs to the hurricanes and the devastating aftermath. If you can't go yourself, support your parish sending a team down for one week to help in this collaborative effort with Habitat for Humanity. This is an especially valuable experience for your older youths and young adults. *More details are inside this issue.*

This issue also updates you on IOCC's projects in Greece, Syria, and Ethiopia. In these countries, and fifteen others where IOCC currently is working, your support is a tangible response to those crying out from the depths. Together we offer people like Diamando hope and the promise of a better tomorrow. This Great Lent, with our Lord's prompting, let us personally enter into the depths of our own souls and cry out in response, "We hear your voices of despair and we bring you God's comfort." **May our Lenten journey bring us together in the following of Christ and in service to our neighbor.**

Your Brother in Christ,

(The Very Rev.) Leonid Kishkovsky

YOUR PARISH CAN SUPPORT IOCC

1. Make IOCC a line item on your church budget. Go to www.iocc.org/aboutiocc
2. Invite an IOCC representative to speak to your Church. Contact Dan Christopoulos at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622) or dchristopoulos@iocc.org.
3. Sign up for IOCC's Email Alerts. Go to www.iocc.org/updates.

"Love the poor, and through them you will find mercy." — St. Isaac of Syria



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FATHERS: PLEASE POST THE INSIDE SPREAD IN YOUR CHURCH HALL

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR ORTHODOX CLERGY

from the Church Relations Committee of the IOCC Board of Directors: Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Chairman,
Very Rev. Michael Ellias, Very Rev. Michael Rosco, Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

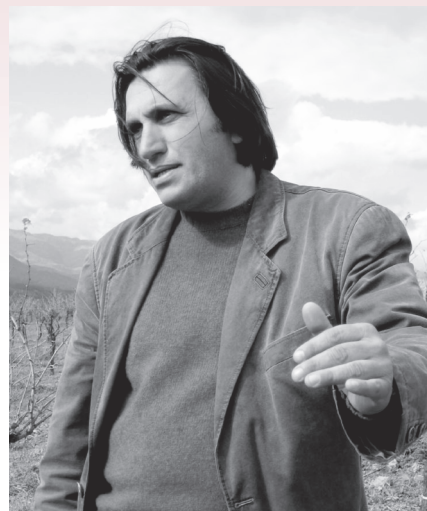
★ U.S.

The US Program of IOCC will continue its recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast in 2008. The Volunteer in the Gulf project will resume sending work groups beginning March 2nd through July 26th. Team sizes range from 10 to 20 volunteers, from throughout the country, and work for a full week alongside the professional staff of Habitat for Humanity. The total cost per team member, including transportation, room, and board is \$300 due one month prior to departure. For more information on this program, contact Pascalis Papouris at ppapouris@iocc.org or toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622) or visit our website at www.iocc.org and click on *Get Involved*.



★ GREECE

IOCC's total relief and recovery program for Greece has exceeded \$500,000 and has included two distributions of feed totaling 610 metric tons and 20 metric tons of forage seed to allow Greek farmers to permanently restore their grasslands. "People are grateful for what they have received thus far," says IOCC Development Director Daniel Christopoulos. "But winter is coming and the need to keep livestock alive is the number one issue for Peloponnese farmers."



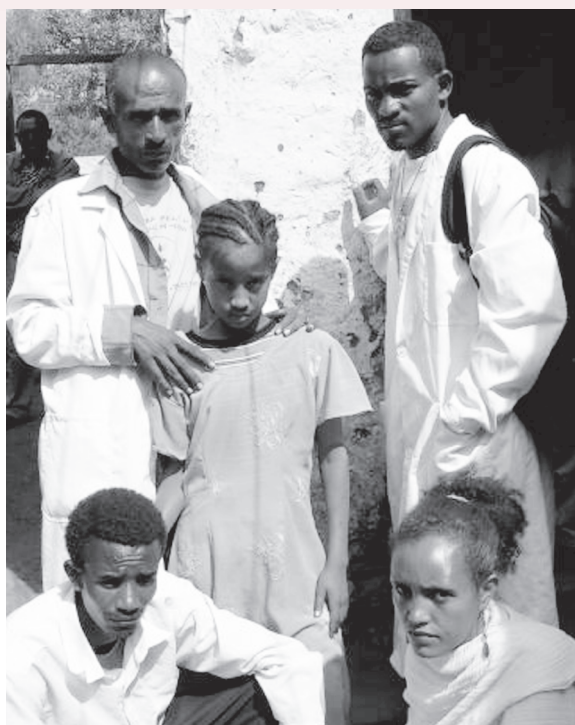
(left) Niko and his siblings founded an "ecological" farm in Leondari, Greece to keep the old-world traditions of their ancestor's alive. But last summer's wild-fires devastated their organic stables and their open range pastures. IOCC's latest distribution of animal feed, over 400 metric tons benefiting 130,000 head of livestock, is helping farmers like Niko maintain their farms and a way of life. (Photo by Sophia Clark/IOCC)



(right) Vasili lost half his livestock and 85 olive trees to last summer's wild fires in Greece, but he is determined to hold on to his family farm in Pelopio. As winter approaches, emergency supplies of animal feed from IOCC will keep his remaining livestock alive. IOCC helped hundreds of farmers like Vasili through a grant by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. (Photo by Sophia Clark/IOCC)

★ ETHIOPIA

Working towards significantly reducing the transmission rate of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia, IOCC was recently awarded a \$7.8 million contract by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to expand its current awareness and prevention training program in Ethiopia through the year 2011. The extension will allow IOCC to expand its current program from 20 to 30 dioceses of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, IOCC's implementing partner, thereby reaching many more Ethiopians with prevention messages. Since 2004, IOCC's HIV/AIDS program in Ethiopia has reached nearly 7 million Ethiopians with prevention training.



★ SYRIA

Iraqi refugee children who have fled the dangers of their homeland still face the danger of a childhood without an education. IOCC has begun a new initiative that will enable refugee children to continue their education in Syria. The \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) will allow 4,100 children, the majority being Iraqi children of Sunni, Shi'a and Christian backgrounds, as well as disadvantaged Syrian students, to enroll in a primary or secondary school for a full school year. Others will receive the vocational training of their choice.



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