

IOCC receives human rights award

Archbishop Tutu, former Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush, Mother Teresa, Archbishop Iakovos, Archbishop Anastasios - giants in our lifetime who are among the past recipients of the prestigious Athenagoras Human Rights Award, bestowed by the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle. Joining them this year as co-recipients of the award are IOCC, the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, and OCMC, the foreign missions body of the Orthodox Church in the United States.

It is significant that IOCC has received such auspicious recognition after only 10 years of existence, due in great part to the support it has received from our Orthodox priests across America. By God's grace and the continued faith of our clergy and laity in the work being done in the name of Orthodox Christians, IOCC will continue to respond to the call of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Opportunity for your college youth

The IOCC Honors Internship Program continues to grow. It's a program that many Orthodox youth may want to consider. Please mention this opportunity to college youth in your parish and encourage them to inquire at www.iocc.org/internships or by requesting a brochure at 1-877-803-4622.

"My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action." (1 John 3:18)

Children's prayer journal

IOCC is developing a children's prayer journal designed to help children pray for and learn about the countries where IOCC works. It will include an activity that children can do to help other children in need.

The journal will feature a different country each month and will be available in time for the new church year. To pre-order, please call toll-free 1-877-803-4622 or send an e-mail to relief@iocc.org.

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/events.

- **CHICAGO, IL**
Annual Banquet, May 18.
- **CLEVELAND, OH**
Annual Banquet, June 2.
- **BOSTON, MA**
Evening of Jazz, October 4.
- **SAN FRANCISCO, CA**
"Remembering Home" Banquet and Silent Auction, November 23.



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST *to* PRIEST

VOLUME 4, NO. 2 SUMMER 2003

"Love one another. . ."

This "New Commandment" of our Lord is the essential message of His glorious Resurrection, the message that permeates His ministry on earth like a golden thread. It was His love that destroyed the power of death and bestowed the gift of salvation upon those who will believe in Him. To believe in Jesus Christ and receive the gift of salvation is to love one another. To bring the people to this realization is the sublime task given to us, the pastors of His Church. It is ours to teach His people that He — the New Adam, the Lord of the "New Creation" — established love for one another as the very criterion for His Eternal Kingdom.

IOCC, beloved brothers in Christ, was established in response to this summons from Jesus Christ to love one another. IOCC is the extended arm of you, the pastors, and the pious Orthodox faithful, who seek to do the will of the Lord. In 10 short years, IOCC has evolved into the medium of the Orthodox Church through which our love for fellow humanity can be actualized.

The war in Iraq will have far-reaching effects on the wider region of the Middle East. Relief and developmental aid of enormous proportions will be needed for the long-suffering population, among who are Orthodox Christians. IOCC, which has had a presence in the region since 1997, is positioning itself to participate effectively in that humanitarian effort. How effective our work will be depends greatly on the response from our people to the appeals we are making for support.

As a fellow priest and member of the IOCC Board of Directors, I encourage you to wholeheartedly convey this message to your flock, our Orthodox faithful. I appeal to you to consider carefully the mailings you receive from IOCC describing the humanitarian response we are prepared to undertake in Iraq and the surrounding region, and to guide your parishioners accordingly.

May the Resurrected Lord fill your hearts with His love, peace and compassion.

Rev. Irinej Dobrijevic

A deserved recognition

On May 18, the Chicago IOCC Metropolitan Committee, at its ninth annual Pan-Orthodox Grand Banquet, will recognize Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos for his significant contribution to the success and progress of IOCC. As general secretary of SCOBA and as ecumenical officer for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, he has been instrumental in promoting the humanitarian mission of IOCC across jurisdictional lines.

Many of the priests from various jurisdictions have known His Grace in various capacities over the last 50 years — as fellow seminarian, co-worker in the work of Syndesmos, the NCC and WCC, OCMC, as fellow priest, and as respected Hierarch on the ecumenical scene. IOCC thanks him for his love and support, and urges all brother priests to offer their appreciation to him at dimitrios@goarch.org.

IOCC work begins in South America

At the request of His Eminence Metropolitan Tarasios of Buenos Aires and South America, IOCC recently completed a needs assessment in Argentina in preparation for a cooperative effort to establish a humanitarian office of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of South America.

His Eminence believes the Orthodox Church has a role to play in the humanitarian work required following the recent economic collapse in Argentina and the devastating hunger and poverty that has resulted.

As the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, IOCC will work closely with Metropolitan Tarasios to establish a humanitarian office and to build its capacity to first provide basic relief aid (food and medicines), and then to help people gain employment and self-sufficiency in a revitalized economy. IOCC staff members currently are in Argentina to work with His Eminence and to coordinate with Orthodox hierarchs of the Russian, Antiochian and Serbian Churches.

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

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IOCC'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MAY 2003 — PLEASE POST IN YOUR PARISH

Two decades of war and more than a decade of international sanctions have created a humanitarian crisis for Iraq's children and families, including its 740,000 Christians.

According to UNICEF, nearly one in four Iraqi children between 6 and 12 do not attend school. Nearly 1 million children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. Preventable illnesses such as diarrhea account for 70 percent of child deaths.

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, is responding to this humanitarian emergency with life-sustaining assistance for some of Iraq's most vulnerable citizens — children, the elderly, the chronically ill, the disabled — regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

IOCC's response to the Iraq crisis is part of its ongoing mission in the Middle East to bring new hope and opportunity to people suffering from war, poverty and disease.

"True Christian philanthropy is expressed through giving of compassion for the needs of others and expecting nothing in return," said Fr. Michael Pappas, pastor of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church in Stockton, Calif. "By giving through an agency whose affiliate church is indigenous to the population, Christians can faithfully help to meet the

pressing needs of a suffering people in the very way Jesus prescribed."

Working from Amman, Jordan, IOCC senior staff are coordinating the distribution of emergency food and medicines in Iraq with the Middle East Council of Churches and Action by Churches Together.

Among the items likely to be distributed are family food parcels, first-aid kits, stoves and cooking utensils, tents and mattresses, hygiene parcels, and water pumps. Such assistance will meet some of the most pressing needs in Iraq — hunger, malnutrition, lack of clean drinking water and transmission of diseases.



The boundaries depicted do not imply official endorsement by International Orthodox Christian Charities.



photo courtesy of Chris Maddaloni

It also is the best way to respond to the call of Jesus to serve the neighbor, said Fr. William Christ, pastor of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Tulsa, Okla. "We should let our behavior speak for us rather than words," he said.

In addition to providing emergency relief in Iraq, IOCC and its church partners hope to contribute to long-term peace and stability in post-war Iraq, said IOCC Chief Operating Officer David Holdridge. "Our challenge is to enable churches to reach out to their neighbors and work with them in delivering assistance to all within their reach," he said.

In response to the current crisis, IOCC is appealing for \$1 million to provide emergency relief, life-saving medicines and medical supplies to suffering people in the Middle East.

IOCC's parent body, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, is encouraging all Orthodox Christians to support IOCC's efforts in Iraq through prayer and giving.

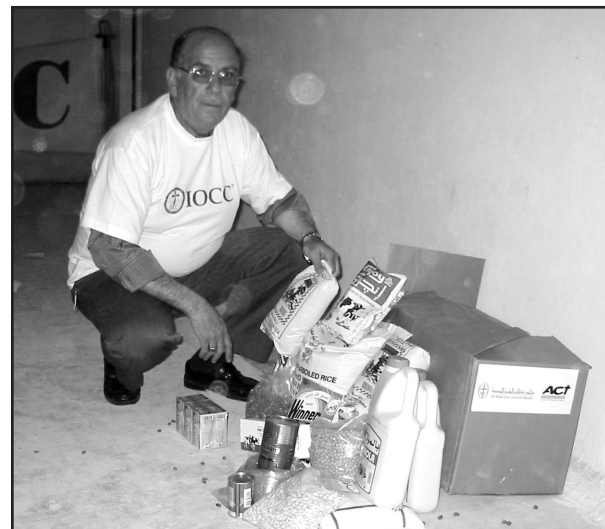
IOCC has worked in the Middle East since 1997 and currently has programs in the Holy Land and Lebanon. Since 1992, IOCC has distributed more than \$160 million in relief and development assistance in 21 countries.

How You Can Make A Difference

During this time of need, you can make a difference by praying for peace and making a donation to IOCC. Please remember:

- \$10 Can buy a first-aid kit.
- \$30 Can provide a personal hygiene pack.
- \$50 Can purchase a food parcel for a family in need.
- \$100 Can purchase emergency relief items.
- \$500 Can provide emergency medical supplies.

To help in providing relief, make a gift on-line at www.iocc.org/iraq, call IOCC's donation hotline toll-free at 1-877-803-4622, or mail a check or money order to: IOCC, "Middle East Crisis," P.O. Box 630225, Baltimore, Md. 21263-0225.



IOCC-Jordan Liaison Officer George Batstone prepares one of the many food parcels that IOCC and its partners will distribute in Iraq in the coming months.

