

Forewarned Is Forearmed!

July 1, 2006

Dear Father,

This is your never-to-be-forgotten visitor from last year, Katrina, writing. As I peeked at my calendar I couldn't help but be reminded to send you a short note about my younger brothers and sisters. They will be born any day now and no doubt have the intention of coming across the Atlantic for a short, but memorable, visit sometime this summer or fall.

I really wish I could tell you just when and where this visit will occur but my family is as unpredictable as they are destructive.

After the rather cool and unprepared reception I received last September, I can only hope, and strongly encourage you to more thoughtfully and seriously prepare for their visit to your parish.

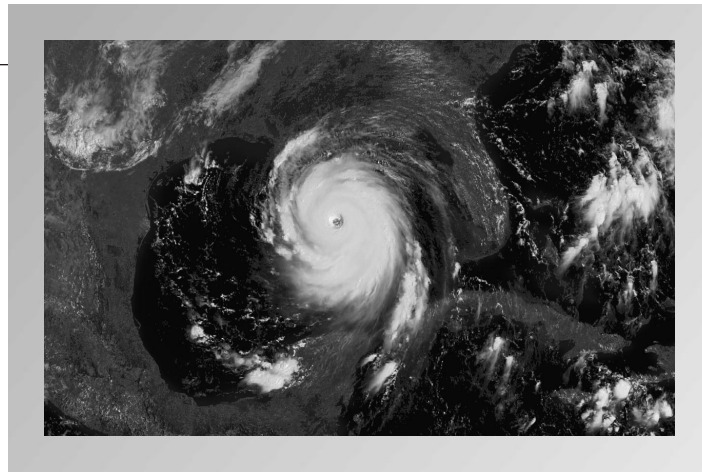
Well, the visiting season rapidly approaches so I hope this little note provides a sobering reminder of my unprecedented Gulf Coast arrival.

Thankfully, so much more information is available about my family visits to those who care to look for it. The kind folks at IOCC would be happy to help you make this year's visits much easier to handle. Forewarned is forearmed! I'm sure you have already set a great example of personal preparation for your parishioners ... Isn't that right?

Only the worst visitor so far,
"Katrina"

"Don't neglect your brother in distress while you decorate His house.
Your brother is more truly His temple than any Church building."

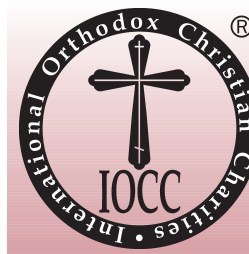
— St. John Chrysostom On Matthew: Homily 50



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INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST to PRIEST

SPECIAL EDITION • JULY 2006

This special edition of Priest to Priest recounts the valiant efforts of our clergy during the devastation brought about by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma beginning in August of 2005. Their efforts, combined with an unprecedented pan-Orthodox response, prompted IOCC to deliver goods and services valued at approximately \$4 million to thousands of people in the Gulf Coast region of our country. It is a testament to what can be accomplished when we come together as one Orthodox people in responding to our Lord's call in Matthew 25 to care for the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and stranger. As a continuation of our efforts here in the United States, we are also pleased to provide the special IOCC Emergency Preparedness Kit

inserted in this edition of Priest to Priest. Please take the time to read and follow its suggestions as well as post it in your parishes. It is our hope that the responsiveness of our clergy to last year's devastating hurricanes will encourage all of us to prepare for future emergencies and make us more likely to offer our services in helping IOCC respond to our Lord's call in this critical work.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director

Call To Action: Father Luke Palumbis

A call to action is fundamental in the Gospel message, however, often times we become short-sighted in our understanding of what may constitute "action." Last year, I was given the opportunity to assist IOCC during hurricane season. With the blessing of Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, I was one priest among many from our Metropolis who responded to relieve the suffering of those affected by the hurricanes. We assisted in this effort in various ways, including; organization of goods, fund raising efforts, and supplying priests to serve in the area of pastoral care. I was able to serve by helping organize multiple priests and their travel to the Gulf Coast. This administrative action was one piece of the mechanism which bore fruit though the IOCC response.

Administrative action is never completed. Whether put to use during the event it points to, or in the form of planning and organization both before and after events — administrative action can be of the utmost importance in emergency situations. All parishes are encouraged to either begin or strengthen our administrative response to the prospect of emergency situations, whether they are local, domestic, or international!

A set of simple planning sessions and a network within your parish will allow a more effective response to an emergency that may affect either your local area, or our brothers and sisters in another geographic area.

What your parish response may be is up to your community and should be prayerfully discerned, however, let us prepare so that whatever that response may be, it will be efficient and effective.

Creating an emergency response network at the local level is paramount in importance; perhaps these networks could develop into regional response networks so that we may have the greatest impact on future emergency situations. All are encouraged to work in conjunction with your Metropolis or Diocese in this effort.

Father Luke Palumbis

Member, IOCC Emergency Response Network



Former NBA Basketball star and IOCC Supporter Vlade Divac arrives in Houston delivering supplies from California. Receiving him is Fr. John Salem, Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Houston, Texas and IOCC Hurricane Response leader Frank Carlin.

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. Robert S. Kondratick, Very Rev. Michael Rosco, Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

Responding To The Call: Above and Beyond

SPECIAL EDITION • JULY 2006

Reflection by Deacon Dan Gray



I was just getting settled into the new school year as a first-year administrator at our Eagle River, Alaska parish Orthodox Christian school when I get a call from IOCC Board Member Lee Kapetenakis. We had met just a month earlier in Kampala, Uganda while my wife and I were there on a two week medical mission. I had hoped to hear from him again and find out more about IOCC

in the future, but I had school days on my mind for now.

Sure, I had been following the nasty advance of hurricane Katrina toward the gulf coast like most everyone else. My wife is from Metairie and we have lots of family in the area, including my 20-year old daughter. As the nastiest storm on record smashed into the New Orleans area we received calls from family telling us where they were hoping to flee. What I could not have imagined, however, was the vast number of people who would be attempting to ride out this unprecedented storm.

Just a few days after Katrina snuck in the back door to New Orleans, Lee phoned me to see what I could tell him about the availability and use of helicopters after the storm subsided. My Navy background as a helicopter pilot made this a natural place for me to try and help.

What I didn't expect was another phone call just a few days later in which Lee challenged me to become a part of the IOCC emergency response team. Wow, that set me back on my heels.

Once I came to grips with the enormity of the mission and the quick response that IOCC was making I became both frightened and excited at the prospect of providing direct support to the survivors and local church families in the area around New Orleans. I quickly conferred with my wife, asked for a blessing from my pastor and hastily left Alaska with one thing in mind - doing whatever I could to help!

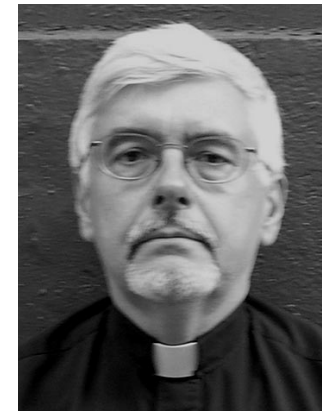
The next five weeks were filled with opportunities to do everything from serving as a deacon in the temporary house-church for the Metairie Orthodox parish (I am a deacon), to calming the nerves, in Spanish, of a Mexican migrant laborer about to get a tetanus shot so that the demolition work he was engaged in might not cause him to become a victim rather than a worker. I worked directly with parish leadership and with lower 9th Ward survivors who had lost everything. Working with the IOCC team to bring Christ's love to everyone we met was one of the most challenging and rewarding things I have ever done - and that includes my 20-year career as a Naval officer and pilot!

Will I go again? Absolutely. Am I ready? Not like I need to be. Will God provide what's missing? I believe He will. Till then, I am a school administrator again just trying to neatly tie up another year for our Preschool through 6th graders. But I am keeping a "weather eye" out as well for the next storm, and the next opportunity to serve. I look forward to working with IOCC and whoever else answers the call. Maybe you?

Responding To The Call: Above and Beyond

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A Parish Disaster Preparation Note: Post-Katrina by Rev. David Kossey



Parishes prepare for disasters in order to reduce the damages they might otherwise suffer. For example, a prearranged location to substitute-serve Divine Liturgies promotes post-disaster worship when one's own church becomes damaged. Similarly, prearranging the post-hurricane tarping of a church roof breach mitigates further

harm from storms. Obviously, such pre-disaster planning lessens the disaster's effects.

Less expected was Mobile, Alabama's Annunciation parishioners' willingness to help neighboring towns. Post-Katrina, they delivered supplies into hard-hit coastal Mobile suburbs.

But it seems their effective and energetic relief efforts weren't limited to Katrina victims. The Ascension parishioners were not only driving relief supplies to the nearby coast, but were also prepared to assist IOCC's delivery of relief. And help us they did! — Room and board for us Networkers, Jeeps (!), office space, secretary, warehousing, drivers and shoppers. IOCC sent us Networkers down to the Gulf Coast, where Annunciation Church members told us, "... Been there. Doing that. We will help you, and we'll do lots more, together."

IOCC's aid to Katrina's Alabama and Mississippi coast victims emerged from Annunciation Church's pre-disaster planning. These worthy parishioners prepared to mitigate a storm's effect on their church — and, God bless them — on their communities. By working their plan they generously helped IOCC to serve these neighbors as well. IOCC's good work on their coast was instigated and sustained by these fine parishioners, who prepared to mitigate a hurricane's devastation, then worked both their own plan, and then critically assisted IOCC's Emergency Response Networkers. Together, we obtained and delivered hundreds of thousands of dollars in relief supplies to coastal Alabama and Mississippi.

In preparing to help themselves and their neighbors weather a storm, Annunciation Church helped a multitude to endure Katrina's devastation.

Hurricane Katrina Reflection: Rev. Peter Michael Preble



Last summer, when I was asked by IOCC to head off to Louisiana for Katrina relief work, personal emergency preparedness was the last thing on my mind, and church preparedness was not even on my radar. One of the things that this experience taught me was that our church communities need to be prepared. Most of us will

never experience the total devastation that those on the Gulf Coast did but we still need to prepare ourselves, our families, and our communities. In the event of an emergency, it's important to have contact numbers for the parish council members as well as all of the members of your parish. It is crucial to have a head count of people, their locations and whether they need assistance. Establishing a phone tree can alert parishioners of an emergency, or give parishioners the ability to let their community know they are safe.

Priests instinctively put the needs of their community above their own. Establish a good emergency plan for your family and include this as part of your parish's overall emergency plan. If you and your family are safe, you can then focus on providing care and support to your community. Good emergency planning is essential so that you do not also become a casualty.

IOCC U.S. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES

In this issue, we've included a special pull-out Emergency Preparedness Poster that you can display in your parish.

The poster outlines four steps that everyone should take to help provide for the safety and security of ourselves and our loved ones in the time of an emergency.

For more information, visit us online at www.iocc.org/emergency.



In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Frs. Angelo Pappas (above left) and Peter Preble (above right) provided emergency relief services alongside NYPD volunteers.