

Training Workshops for Volunteers

One-day training workshops for IOCC Metropolitan Committees are being scheduled for different regions of the country. These gatherings are being held in place of national meetings of Metropolitan Committee representatives that were held in the past. All existing Metropolitan Committees, made up of representatives from the Orthodox parishes in a metropolitan or regional area, are being notified of the workshop details. If your parish is participating in a Metropolitan Committee, please encourage your parish representative to attend. If your parish isn't already involved, feel free to send a representative to the meeting for your region. Contact Ivan Bojanic, Metropolitan Committee Coordinator, at Ibojanic@iocc.org, or toll free at 877-803-4622 for details.

Christmas Bulletin Artwork Enclosed

Share the message of peace with your parishioners this Advent by using the enclosed bulletin artwork in support of IOCC's Christmas appeal. These announcements can be photocopied directly into your Sunday bulletins, monthly newsletters or other parish publications. The artwork has been provided in three (3) sizes to meet your various space requirements. An electronic version of this artwork is available online at http://www.iocc.org/news_frameset.html

IOCC Sunday - Nov. 24, 2002

The SCOBA Hierarchs recently issued an encyclical designating the Sunday before Thanksgiving as "IOCC Sunday" and encouraging support among parishes. The encyclical was mailed along with bulletin artwork in support of IOCC's Thanksgiving Appeal. Please consider conveying this Thanksgiving message to your parishioners on Sunday, Nov. 24. Your parish's monetary contribution this Advent is greatly appreciated.

A Special Request

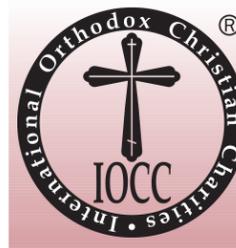
Over the years, Priest-to-Priest has been an effective way for IOCC to maintain contact with Orthodox priests across the country. Even so, IOCC would like to have a more regular stream of communications with Orthodox priests and parishes. We want to know how IOCC factors into your own communication efforts. Were you able to use an IOCC ad slick in your church bulletin? In a monthly newsletter? Did you mention IOCC in a recent homily? Was an IOCC speaker, video or publication part of a parish education program? If so, we'd like to know about it. Feel free to send us (by e-mail, fax or regular mail) samples of ways your parish has mentioned IOCC or used IOCC materials. Please e-mail them to Communications Associate Stephen Huba at shuba@iocc.org. The fax number is (410) 243-9824.

IOCC Adds New Services for Donors

In response to requests from our donors, IOCC now offers monthly credit card or automatic debits from a bank account. You can help thousands in need without leaving your home through automatic monthly gifts. No more writing checks, filling out coupons or searching for a stamp.

Donating unwanted used cars, trucks, trailers, boats and RVs is another popular way of giving to help those near and far served by IOCC. In cooperation with www.donateacar.com, IOCC now accepts donations of your used vehicles almost anywhere in the United States.

For more information on the monthly donor program or to donate your used vehicle to IOCC, please call IOCC toll-free (877) 803 4622 or visit our website for more details at www.iocc.org/giving_frameset.html.



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST to PRIEST

VOLUME 3, NO.4 WINTER 2002

Teaching the Incarnation Message

We Orthodox priests in America around this time of year begin thinking about how to fill the hearts and minds of our people with the message of the Birth of Christ. In the midst of a commercialized and secularized "Yuletide season" of our religiously pluralistic society, this is a daunting challenge.

We know that the Incarnation of God, that divine event in man's history through which "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," was the fulfillment of God's promise to send salvation to those who will believe in Him. The only true and essential Christmas gift — the gift of eternal life in Christ — is a free gift. This because the salvation of the souls of all those who believe in the Lord was achieved on the Cross by Him Who was born of a Woman in Bethlehem of Judea. We also know that the crowning message of Christ's ministry is love, without which we fail to accept the gift of salvation (Matt. 25:31-46). Love is the message with which He sent out the Apostles and upon which the pillars of His Church stand to this day.

This, then, is the message of God Incarnate, the message of Christmas. To manifest our faith in Christ as Savior of our eternal souls by living His commandment of love. To reach out with love and touch the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves. To pray that the Lord "give us our daily bread," that we might feed those without bread. To share the glory and joy of the Birth of Jesus with those whose lives are desolate and joyless. May we, the Orthodox priests in America, be inspired to bring this message of Christ's saving love to the hearts and minds of our people during this holy and blessed period of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Consider, dear fathers, the mission of IOCC "to respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ, to minister to those who are suffering and are in need throughout the world, sharing with them God's gifts of food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope."

Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky

Cooperative Effort in Southeast Asia

IOCC and the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia have begun a joint effort to establish a fully functioning Office of Philanthropy for the Metropolitanate.

The office, building on the cooperation that exists in places such as Calcutta, India, will coordinate Orthodox humanitarian programs in Southeast Asia. The effort, which has the blessing of Metropolitan Nikitas of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, will increase the humanitarian witness of Orthodox Christianity in Southeast Asia. The Church there currently is involved in humanitarian projects in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Christopher Ebe, an International Studies graduate from Fordham University, will lead the effort as the Church's humanitarian assistance officer. Born in the US, Ebe interned with the United Nations in New York in 1998 and has worked in the economics field in New York and Hong Kong. He will be joined in the near future by the Rev. Gabriel Rehatta, a native of Jakarta, Indonesia, who is currently an Honors Intern with IOCC. A graduate of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Holy Cross School of Theology, Fr. Gabriel will serve the Office of Philanthropy in the area of program management.

Wherever it works, IOCC seeks to support and enable the humanitarian outreach of the area's Orthodox Church. IOCC will work closely with the new Office of Philanthropy of the Metropolitanate to help build its institutional capacity for managing humanitarian aid projects for some of the most vulnerable communities in that part of the world.

Fr. John Kaloudis Joins IOCC Staff

Fr. John Kaloudis, a parish priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese for 23 years, has joined the staff of IOCC as development officer. His responsibilities will include visiting Orthodox Christian parishes around the country and meeting with current and prospective benefactors of IOCC's humanitarian mission. "We are pleased that Fr. John is joining Development Officer Dan Christopoulos in this capacity and look forward to his close work with parishes and donors," said Mark Hodde, IOCC director of development.

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

"Our love should not be just words and talk." (1 John 3:18)

IOCC PROGRAMS COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY

A QUICK OVERVIEW - NOVEMBER 2002

The following are selected highlights from among IOCC's projects. Please post in your parish.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina took its toll not only on human life but also on the livestock in this highly agrarian society. As a result, returning farmers and their families are struggling to make their farms productive once again. Through a new project, IOCC is working to revive the livestock sector in northern Bosnia by providing farmers with dairy cows, milking machines and training, and by building the capacity of a local farmer's association. Supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the project also will benefit surrounding communities that rely on the dairy industry for employment, food security and nutrition.

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The posters say "One less worry!" and show a happy refugee family, with a truck loaded with their belongings, preparing to return home to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The family is one of hundreds that IOCC has helped return to their pre-war homes since 1999. And the number of permanent returns continues to increase. So far this year, IOCC and Koordinacija ("Coordination"), a coalition of refugee associations, have transported 622 families (compared to 415 families in 2001) from temporary shelters in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to their pre-war homes in Bosnia. With continued support from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, IOCC hopes to assist 340 returning families next year.

Greece

Twelve-year-old Maria came to Greece with her parents and brothers from Turkey earlier this year, but it wasn't for vacation. Refugees, they traveled for days in the hold of a rotten ship which was finally rescued by Greek authorities in the Ionian Sea. Today, Maria and her family are settled in Athens. She and her brothers are getting an education at a school supported by IOCC and run by a partner for refugee, migrant and street children. Maria is one of thousands of refugee children in Greece that IOCC is trying to help.

Jerusalem/West Bank

On Oct. 3, IOCC and six other international relief agencies participated in a humanitarian convoy to the city of Nablus (population: 115,000), which had been under curfew for more than 100 days. With donations from the seven organizations, the convoy delivered 1,500 blankets, 300 health kits, 300 school supply kits, medical supplies and medicine for two large hospitals, and 2,700 family food parcels. The food was purchased locally to help the local economy. In the following weeks, IOCC delivered an additional 128 food parcels to families living in the Old City of Nablus. The ongoing emergency relief effort complements a long-term, rural development project being implemented by IOCC and dozens of local partners in the West Bank.

Lebanon

Noor and Noora have their work cut out for them this year. The cartoon brother and sister characters are part of an IOCC campaign to teach Lebanese children healthy eating, fitness and hygiene habits. Noor and Noora make learning fun while helping children realize the importance of eating right. They are part of the education component of IOCC's school lunch program in Lebanon, which was extended for another year by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Children ages 5-11 from an estimated 65 schools will participate in the program in the 2002-2003 school year. Last year, the program served nutritious lunches to 22,000 children in Greater Beirut, south Lebanon and the Akkar district in north Lebanon.

Republic of Georgia

For the second consecutive year, IOCC will implement a school lunch program in the Republic of Georgia. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently approved an extension of IOCC's school lunch program in the capital city of Tbilisi and parts of southern and western Georgia. The project will enable IOCC to feed an estimated 14,000 children during the 2002-2003 school year. The program also trains teachers, gives children school supplies and teaches students about health and nutrition.

Romania

In partnership with child welfare officials in Mehedinti County, IOCC and the Romanian Orthodox Church have opened a day care center as part of a larger program to prevent child abandonment among at-risk families. The center is situated among the Roma community in the village of Pungghina, which has a high rate of child abandonment. There, IOCC seeks to reduce the number of such cases by opening the day care center, assisting Roma families with childcare skills and creating support networks of volunteers and mentors. So far, the project staff has identified 22 at-risk families, who will receive counseling and other support services.

United States of America

Branko, a Bosnian war refugee, came to the United States hoping to make a better life for himself. With the help of IOCC's U.S. Program, Lutheran Family Services and Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Columbia, S.C., he was able to resettle in his new country and start learning English. Branko, who suffered a semi-crippling back injury, is currently awaiting a medical evaluation that will determine what kind of work he can do. Branko's case is one example of how IOCC's U.S. Program is trying to make refugee sponsorship and English language instruction typical features of Orthodox parish life in the United States.

