

Christmas bulletin artwork enclosed

Share the message of peace with your parishioners this Advent by using the enclosed bulletin artwork. 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 www.iocc.org/art.

IOCC Sunday - Nov. 23, 2003

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. 23. Or print and distribute the IOCC in Brief sheet, available for download at www.iocc.org/art.

Your parish's monetary contribution this Advent will help people in need:

- **IN IRAQ**, IOCC is moving forward with post-war reconstruction efforts, refugee assistance and school repair programs in Baghdad.
- **IN THE HOLY LAND**, IOCC has helped bring job opportunities and critically needed income to more than 4,000 residents in 24 isolated villages.
- **IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**, IOCC has distributed thousands of winter blankets to orphanages, hospitals and homeless shelters.

New resources for IOCC volunteers

Volunteers, working individually and in coordination with Metropolitan Committees, have been serving as liaisons to their parishes virtually since the founding of IOCC. Now IOCC is making it easier for parish-based volunteers to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable people.

Through a special monthly list serve, volunteers will receive an e-mail with suggestions for how they can increase awareness of IOCC in their parishes — all in about one hour a month. To sign up for the IOCC volunteer list serve, please visit www.iocc.org/volunteer and fill out the form.

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should take care to be leaders in good works." *Titus 3:8*

Opportunity for your college youth

The IOCC Honors Internship Program continues to grow, and it's one that Orthodox youth may want to consider. IOCC is currently accepting applications for the internship program. Interns usually spend three months working with one of IOCC's country programs. 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. The deadline for applications is Nov. 30.

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 about these and other events.

- **DETROIT, MI**
Luncheon at St. Lazarus Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, with IOCC Development Officer Dan Christopoulos, 1 p.m. Nov. 23
- **YORK, PA**
Annual Dinner at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, with IOCC Church Liaison Alexis Troubetzkoy, Nov. 23
- **SAN FRANCISCO, CA**
"Remembering Home" Banquet and Silent Auction, with special guest His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, 6 p.m. Nov. 23 (5 p.m. reception)
- **LOS ANGELES, CA**
Annual Dinner at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Dec. 7

A tax-deduction for you... A hot meal for him.
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INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRIEST to PRIEST

VOLUME 4, NO. 4 WINTER 2003

"Immanuel ... 'God with us.'"

In his highly acclaimed book "The Orthodox Church," Bishop Kallistos (Timothy) Ware writes, "The Incarnation is an act of God's philanthropia, of His loving-kindness towards humankind." So it is during the Nativity fast that we contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation, of God's act of supreme love in the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. This act of love — manifested not only in the manger but also on the cross — has been the model for Orthodox philanthropy since the time of the Byzantine empire.

The social implications of the Incarnation are sweeping and far-reaching. For just as God the Father gave all in the giving of His Son, so too, we as Christians are called to give all in service to others. God's love for us was not abstract, but "took flesh" in the person of Jesus Christ. So too, our love for others is evidenced by concrete actions of compassion and service. IOCC, your humanitarian aid agency, is inspired and motivated by this Christian understanding of philanthropy.

What does this philanthropy look like? Its chief example is the person of Jesus Christ, who, though he was God, identified with the world's poor and commanded his followers to do the same. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these ..., you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Thus, Orthodox philanthropy is about seeing Christ in the neighbor. It is about treating the poor as equals, without regard to class, race, ethnicity or wealth. In the gospel, there are no such distinctions, for in the gospel, we are all poor.

One could even say that in Orthodox philanthropy there is no separation between benefactor and beneficiary. We are all beneficiaries of God's love, and we are all responsible for each other. This is the ethic that informs the humanitarian mission of IOCC.

As we prepare for the feast of Our Lord's Nativity, let us recommit ourselves to supporting the philanthropic work of IOCC, for this work is not peripheral to the Church's teaching about the Incarnation. Philanthropy is the project of all Christians because all Christians are called to be vehicles of God's love — the love that He demonstrated 2,000 years ago in the birth of His Son.

Very Rev. Robert S. Kondratick
Very Rev. Robert S. Kondratick

Prayer journal helps fill need

There is a hunger for children's resources among Orthodox Christians in the United States, as evidenced by the overwhelming response to IOCC's first-ever children's prayer journal. Twenty-five thousand copies of the prayer journal were printed, and all of them have been distributed.

Why did IOCC develop the prayer journal? To be an educational and spiritual tool — a way to engage children in the humanitarian mission of IOCC. As an agency of the Orthodox Church, IOCC understands that Orthodox philanthropy cannot be separated from Orthodox spirituality.

IOCC expects to issue a new prayer journal every year, starting in August 2004. To pre-order a copy of next year's journal and to receive updates on the work of IOCC throughout the year, please fill out the form at www.iocc.org/journal. In the meantime, you can still participate by following along with the monthly online supplement to the prayer journal at www.iocc.org/kids.

At this time, IOCC does not plan to reprint the 2003 journal or make it available in an electronic format.

IOCC expands Ethiopia operations



Ethiopia, a land known for its natural beauty, its monasteries and its droughts, is once again suffering from a food crisis — an estimated 12.5 million people are in urgent need of food aid. Working to prevent such crises from happening again is what IOCC's presence in Ethiopia is all about. IOCC began small-scale, monastery-based agriculture projects in Ethiopia in 2001.

Now, IOCC is expanding its work with local partners, implementing agricultural, community development and vocational training projects with funding from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These projects will help create jobs and improve the infrastructure in 10 small cities and rural areas in northern Ethiopia. IOCC staff members are in Ethiopia to make long-term plans and build the crisis-response capacity of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

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, Rev. Nicholas C. Triantafilou

Children Helping Children

IOCC RESPONDS AROUND THE WORLD

Lana, a 10-year-old girl from the Republic of Georgia, has to sell bread at the local market to earn money for her family. Stefan lives in a refugee shelter in Belgrade, Serbia. "My room used to be full of toys," he said of his life before war. With your help, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) promotes the well-being of needy children like Lana and Stefan with programs of nutrition, vocational training and education. Through IOCC, children are helping children around the world. Here are some ways that Orthodox young people can advance the mission of IOCC, the humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, as the new year approaches.

School Kits

Chances are, most of the children in your parish don't have to worry about having enough school supplies. Here's an opportunity for them to help less fortunate children in other countries do well in school. By assembling school kits, they can provide basic school supplies — pencils, notebooks, scissors — to children who otherwise would not have them. Already, 18,000 school kits sent by children in the United States have been distributed by IOCC to underserved children in Lebanon and the Republic of Georgia.

This makes an excellent service project for youth groups, church school classes and families.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, one girl told IOCC staff that she was able to afford only one colored marker at a time. "The day IOCC distributed a backpack full of school supplies to her and her classmates, she couldn't believe she was getting a whole pack of markers," said former IOCC intern Jalane Lohkamp. "For this girl, IOCC had given a rainbow of colors."



For more information, please visit www.iocc.org/kits



"Souper Bowl of Caring"

Feb. 1, 2004, is not only Super Bowl Sunday — it's also "Souper Bowl" Sunday. Each year, thousands of Orthodox young people raise money for charities such as IOCC and collect canned goods for local food pantries through the "Souper Bowl of Caring." The game plan calls for young people to receive donations in large soup pots at their church exits after the Divine Liturgy. As parishioners leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday, they are invited to give a monetary and canned-good donation.

The young people, with the guidance of their youth leader or parish priest, can help locally by giving the food items to a food pantry or soup kitchen, and globally by supporting a charity such as IOCC.



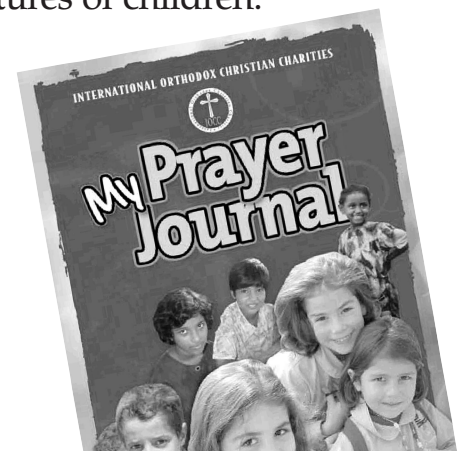
For more information, please visit www.iocc.org/souperbowl

Children's Prayer Journal

Nassia Duncan, 9, of Colorado Springs, Colo., is one of 25,000 children who recently received the first-ever IOCC children's prayer journal. "It gives me a lot of prayers that I can say with my family," said Nassia, whose family attends Sts. Constantine & Helen Orthodox Church (OCA). "It makes me have a lot more feelings for everyone around the world that doesn't have a home."

Now Nassia makes sure that, in addition to using the prayer journal, she visits the online prayer journal supplement each month at www.iocc.org/kids. The Web site features facts, activities that teach something about IOCC's humanitarian work and a brief description of IOCC's relief and development programs in the featured country.

Wherever IOCC works, its programs are aimed at reducing the effects of poverty, lack of access to health care and inadequate nutrition that endanger the lives and futures of children.



For more information, please visit www.iocc.org/kids