

# IOCC SUNDAY

IT'S ALMOST HERE!

November 18, 2007

Please support IOCC's pan-Orthodox ministry:

Read the SCOBA encyclical on IOCC Sunday, Nov. 18, 2007

Have a special collection for IOCC Sunday

Copy the IOCC adslicks into your weekly or monthly bulletins

Show the video "Voices" on IOCC Sunday

## Appoint an IOCC Parish Representative Now!

Parish Representatives play a vital role in generating support for IOCC at the parish level. An IOCC Parish Rep can complete these tasks in just a few hours per month:

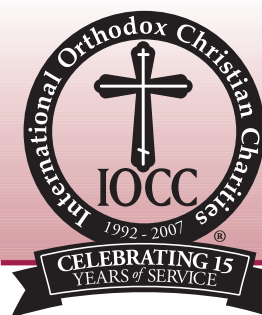
**Display IOCC Materials in fellowship hall • Insert IOCC ads in church bulletin • Stay current on IOCC news and be available to answer questions • Show IOCC's annual DVD on a Saturday night or Sunday coffee hour • Keep priests informed of IOCC related news and campaigns**

Everything necessary for this job can be provided by IOCC. Send contact information for a representative to Vasi Jankovich, IOCC's Outreach Coordinator at [vjankovich@iocc.org](mailto:vjankovich@iocc.org).

## IOCC Upcoming Events

The following events are being sponsored by local Metropolitan Committees throughout the U.S. in support of IOCC's humanitarian work. More details at [www.iocc.org/events](http://www.iocc.org/events).

- **SAN FRANCISCO, CA**  
Remembering Home Banquet, November 4
- **ST. LOUIS, MO**  
Annual Dinner, November 10
- **CHICAGO, IL**  
Greece Fire Dinner, November 10
- **MINNEAPOLIS, MN**  
Annual Dinner, November 14
- **CHARLOTTE, NC**  
Annual Dinner, November 17
- **SPOKANE, WA**  
Benefit Dinner, November 17
- **AKRON, OH**  
Annual Dinner, November 18
- **MCLEAN, VA**  
Annual Banquet, November 18
- **SEATTLE, WA**  
Taste of Orthodoxy, November 18
- **LOS ANGELES, CA**  
Annual Dinner, November 18
- **READING, PENNSYLVANIA**  
Annual Dinner, November 25
- **LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK**  
Lock-in for Youth, November 30



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

# PRIEST to PRIEST

VOLUME 8, NO. 4 WINTER 2007

"For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37)



Max Sivasian

Dear Fellow Laborers in the Lord's Vineyard:

The Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ ushers in a new era overflowing with new possibilities. The impossibility of God's becoming man is rendered possible through a virgin birth. The impossibility of man's becoming god by grace is brought about by Christ's cross, resurrection and man's response. "For with God nothing will be impossible." (Luke 1:37)

Throughout 2007 we have been celebrating the 15th anniversary of IOCC. Our hierarchs' vision and God's grace made IOCC a reality. The fruit of our collective labors — over \$250 million of services delivered to people whose lives have been torn apart by natural and man-made disasters in 33 countries — is certainly the fruit of the Holy Spirit. However, it is only the beginning. During this nativity season when we celebrate Christ, the Light of the world, we know that there are so many who still walk in the darkness of despair, destruction, and death.

In this issue of *Priest to Priest* you will read how brother clergy and laity, working with IOCC, brought help, hope, and new possibilities to small-scale farmers suffering from last summer's wildfires in over 50 villages in the Peloponnese region of Greece. Of special

note is the first-hand account of Fr. Angelo Pappas of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Portsmouth, N.H., a member of IOCC's Emergency Response Network who flew to Greece to provide trauma counseling.

This issue also chronicles IOCC's projects in Syria, Ethiopia, and Serbia. In cooperation with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, IOCC has launched a program which allows Iraqi refugee children in Syria to continue their education and to have a brighter future. The extension of IOCC's HIV/AIDS program and new medical assistance in Ethiopia, as well as a new project of inter-ethnic cooperation in the fragile Serbian province of Kosovo, are rays of light and hope.

This Nativity season we can help Christ "take on flesh" in our own lives and in the lives of those whose void only He can fill. Thank you for helping IOCC in this work of bringing new hope, new life, and new possibilities to our brothers and sisters in need here and throughout the world.

With prayers for a blessed Advent and a joyful Nativity, I am

Your Brother in Christ,

Fr. Michael Ellias

## YOUR PARISH CAN SUPPORT IOCC

1. Make IOCC a line item on your church budget. Go to [www.iocc.org/aboutiocc](http://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](mailto:dchristopoulos@iocc.org).
3. Sign up for IOCC's Email Alerts. Go to [www.iocc.org/updates](http://www.iocc.org/updates).



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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

**IOCC Emergency Response  
GREECE WILDFIRES**



While Greece was still in the midst of the worst wildfires it had experienced in the last 100 years, IOCC sent two Emergency Response Network frontliners to offer survivors trauma counseling.

Fr. Angelo Pappas of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a disaster team leader in his state and a fire chaplain, and Fire Captain Vasillios Pamboukis (also from Portsmouth) spent 10 days traveling throughout the hard-hit Peloponnese region offering trauma counseling, and even fighting a fire.

"We saw many farmers sitting on the roads. These were the true heroes. Many of them lost everything but their lives. Listening to their tales filled my heart with sorrow and respect. These were the best pastoral experiences in my life. I listened, I listened some more, and then I listened even more. When they discovered we represented IOCC in America, their faces would light up. To these people we represented not only the Greeks of America, but also witnesses to Christ as Orthodox. Traveling between villages we passed miles and miles of blackened landscape that was lush and green only weeks beforehand. Entire mountains looked like charred mounds of ash. I cannot stress enough the long-term effects of this disaster. Soon the rains will come and wash all the toxic soot down the mountainside, poisoning the water supply. Greece will be experiencing the impact of this disaster for years to come. I learned once again that the most powerful tool we have as clergy is the ability to listen."

— Father Angelo Pappas

For those small-scale and subsistence farmers who lost homes, livestock, and access to grazing lands to last summer's wildfires in Greece, feeding their flocks, their only possessions of value, was practically as important as feeding themselves. That's why IOCC responded to the devastating fires with the purchase and distribution of 170 metric tons of animal feed to more than 50 villages of the hard-hit Peloponnese. Here are just a few of the beneficiaries from IOCC's latest emergency intervention.

Photos by Sophia Clark/IOCC



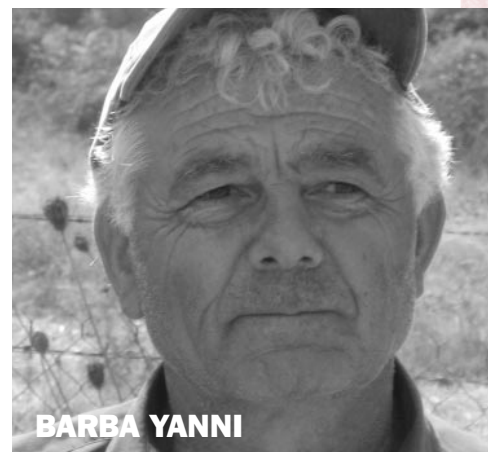
DIAMANDO

"I ran down to open the stables to free my animals. Some made it, some did not," says Diamando from atop her mule, somewhere between her village of Persana and the larger village of Lala, referring to the fires that in addition to killing her animals, destroyed her home, her vineyard, 350 olive trees and some pine trees. "Thank you," she says, referring to IOCC's donation of animal feed. "It is our greatest need right now."



PANAYIOTIS

"The stables and houses can be rebuilt, but I feel so sorry for the animals," says Panayiotis who lost 30 sheep, 5 goats and 300 bales of hay. With the help of veterinarians, Panayiotis is treating his animals that suffered burnt ears and feet. But not a gram of grain is left and animal feed is three-four times the price prior to the fire. Panayiotis thanks IOCC for a timely donation of animal feed.



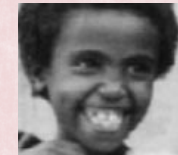
BARBA YANNI

A little oregano to sell was all that Barba Yanni had after the fires burned half of his flock and all of his fields. The shepherd and church chanter set off from his village of Milies to Ancient Olympia to sell the oregano. On his way, Barba Yanni met IOCC workers who needed directions to Lala for their next distribution of animal feed. The next thing Barba Yanni knew he was loading his pick-up truck with enough animal feed for the next five days.

**IOCC Project Summaries  
UPDATE**

★ Ethiopia

Ethiopia recently reported that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS had been reduced from 2.2% in 2004 to 2.1% in 2007. IOCC has been on the frontlines of battling HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia since 2004 through a partnership with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. More than 7 million Ethiopians have received training in HIV/AIDS prevention and more than 22,000 individuals living with AIDS and those who have been orphaned by the disease have received food, clothing, and start-up funds for small businesses. IOCC recently announced an \$8 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that will extend and expand its activities in Ethiopia through 2011.



★ Syria

IOCC is responding to the Iraqi refugee crisis, now numbering at 4.2 million refugees and internally displaced people. As part of its recently expanded \$1.98 million program in Syria, funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), IOCC recently concluded a project that engaged over 500 Iraqi refugee school children in summer school classes. In cooperation with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, IOCC will provide school fees, uniforms, tutoring, vocational training, school kits donated by Church World Service (CWS), and a variety of nonfood items to Iraqi refugee families and disadvantaged Syrians.



★ Serbia

Kosovo, Serbia's troubled southern province, is the ancient spiritual home of millions of Serbs. The brothers of the medieval Visoki Decani monastery have made wine in the region for more than 600 years. In partnership with IOCC, the monastery's winery has just completed the first stage of a major renovation. And with additional equipment provided by IOCC, the winery will be able to increase its annual production fourfold to 100,000 liters. More wine means more grapes purchased from ethnic Serb and Albanian growers, and more cooperation between the two communities. IOCC has operated humanitarian programs in Kosovo since 1993.



T. Kivlan/IOCC



N. Prelevic/IOCC