



## Weathering the Storm Together

*Responding to COVID-19 at Home and Abroad*

Christ is Risen!

As the COVID-19 crisis unfolds, much of the world is struggling to navigate these turbulent waters. Yet IOCC's mission remains more important than ever: to offer, in the spirit of Christ's love, emergency relief and development programs, wherever they are needed.

IOCC is grateful to our donors and supporters for their compassion and determination. During this time of physical distancing, we're harnessing the powers of technology and creativity, and we will get through this together.

Experience has taught us that adaptability and flexibility are critical to an intentional response. It's also taught us to look at each trial as a blessing, and while we honor the losses, we also embrace opportunities to build resilience. Short-term response is important; equally important is anticipating what comes next. IOCC is now assessing and acting on all fronts.

In the United States, IOCC assembled a crisis response team of key staff and Frontliners. Harnessing this team's wisdom, IOCC custom-designed a care-call tool, available at [ioccc.org/covid19](http://ioccc.org/covid19), to help reduce anxiety and isolation and to address individual needs. The tool was developed under the guidance of a team of licensed medical doctors, psychologists, social workers, mental-health clinicians, and Orthodox clergy, who have expertise and training in trauma counseling and disaster mental health. We encourage you to download it, use it to call someone who may need a hand, or create a phone tree with your community.

*The story of St. Peter walking on the water toward Christ reminds us of the power of faith to guide us through difficulties.*

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## Self-Care During Quarantine

### *Staying Healthy and Resilient*

The dramatic effects of quarantining during the COVID-19 outbreak are unavoidably stressful. Anything you can do to reduce your sense of isolation, uncertainty, and boredom and provide some structure to your days will help—both during isolation and afterwards.

We offer you these tips to help you manage stress and anxiety during this time.

#### **Remember:**

- You have coped with difficult situations in the past. You will get through this.
- This is temporary. Life will resume its normal pace in time.

#### **Do These Things:**

- Connect with people you love.
- Create a routine and structure for your days.
- Get some exercise each day.
- Do things around the house that you never seem to get around to.
- Do something for fun you normally don't make time for.
- Plan some time out from each other.
- Get fresh air, but please continue to follow local health guidelines and advisories.
- Don't spend too much time watching the news or on social media.
- Reach out for support.

#### **Additional Resources:**

IOCC's dedicated COVID-19 page, [iocc.org/covid19](http://iocc.org/covid19) offers public health and government recommendations, as well as spiritual and emotional support resources. It also includes the most current information on IOCC's response at home and abroad.

*Content courtesy of the KonTerra Group*

By the time this newsletter reaches you, IOCC will have completed a nationwide needs assessment to shape medium- and long-term response in the US. This will identify the types of support that IOCC can provide to best serve parishes and communities during continuing response and recovery.

Internationally, IOCC is in ongoing dialogue with local churches, governments, and partners. We are working closely with public health experts and practitioners who have extensive experience in infectious disease, so we can execute our twofold strategy: continue to safely deliver existing programs, and position IOCC for the long term to better serve in the new global reality. Responses range from modifying IOCC health programs on the Lebanon-Syria border to adapting how we deliver food and shifting education programs in Greece to online platforms.

As always, we thank you for your continued support, and we deeply appreciate your prayers. Please know that at IOCC, we pray daily for all of you and for those we serve. There is no way to tell right now what resources we will need to deal with this crisis, along with our other regular programs. We will keep you informed about those needs—and our efforts—in the weeks and months ahead.

In the meantime, this issue includes the stories of LaShae, and the people of Kosovo and how they persevered in difficult circumstances. I hope that you'll find inspiration in their stories—and be reassured by the fact that together we can overcome great hardships.

Together, we will weather this storm.

Yours in the Risen Christ,



Constantine M. Triantafilou  
Executive Director & CEO



International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development arm of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and a member of a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.



## A Good Night's Sleep, Delivered

### *New Mattresses for Families in Baltimore*

"My family appreciates the help," wrote LaShae. "It truly came in a time of need."

A resident of Baltimore, Maryland – IOCC's hometown – LaShae and her family received a new mattress through a recent IOCC initiative. There were one among dozens of nearby households that benefited from the delivery.

Working with partner Good360, IOCC acquired more than 80 new Tempur-Pedic mattresses in varying sizes. The team then coordinated with Baltimore-based Union Baptist Head Start Center to reach local families in need. Recipients shared their thanks with staff.

"This is really a wonderful gesture for a small family such as mine that is striving to stay ahead, raise a child, and support us alone," said Masharie, another recipient. "With deepest thanks, I appreciate the perfect gift."

This delivery was part of IOCC's larger gifts-in-kind program, which delivers donated items to communities who need them, in the US and abroad. Other recent deliveries include food items to a food bank in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; quilts to a community center in Shirak, Armenia; and medical supplies to public hospitals in Athens, Greece.



*LaShae's family – along with Masharie's and Masharie's – is one of over 80 Baltimore households in need that received new mattresses through this IOCC initiative.*

## INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES PRAYER JOURNAL

To order copies of IOCC's prayer journal for your class or parish, visit [iocc.org/prayerjournal](http://iocc.org/prayerjournal)



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*His Grace Bishop Teodosije oversees a demonstration of the monastery's new animal-feed line.*

## Kosovo Monastery Producing Grain, Looking Ahead

### *Bread & Wine Project Continues Growing Church's Reach*

There's a new product in the Gračanica Monastery's shop: locally grown, house-milled whole-grain flour.

Two new production lines equip the monastery to process its own grain and make it the go-to for local farmers, who bring wheat, rye, barley, and more for purchase and milling. Funded by IOCC and installed with partner AgroLink, the facility is part of a years-long IOCC initiative supporting the Church's efforts to better serve surrounding communities.

Working closely with His Grace Bishop Teodosije of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Raška-Prizren, IOCC is helping develop a stable grain market. As the Church becomes a trusted buyer for local farmers of all backgrounds, household incomes and food security increase.

Added capacity also means the Church can extend its reach: new facilities produce food for its humanitarian kitchens, Orthodox seminary, and local schools – plus generate income for additional ministries.

With the mill lines complete, the next installation was equipment to produce livestock feed. When full-scale production begins, the Church will raise sheep, goats, and cattle as another source of food and income, in addition to selling the feed itself. Training for farmers complements this work.

The program is helping revitalize local farms across this traditionally agricultural area, which has the natural resources needed for a thriving agricultural economy. In this light, the small packages of flour represent a big vision and a growing hope.



*Carefully packaged bags of whole-grain flour milled at Gračanica Monastery's new facility are now available in the shop.*

## *Text to Give Hope Today*

*IOCC now offers Text to Give.*



*Helping those in need has never been easier:*

- 1** Text IOCCRelief to 44321.
- 2** Click the link to open the donation page.
- 3** Choose your donation amount.
- 4** Select your payment method to complete your donation.

