

Orthodox America's Offering to a World in Need

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where this occurs. It's in the parish where I began to see the impact of IOCC on the ways that average Orthodox Christians, especially the young, expanded their understanding of how all the parts of the Body of Christ not only fit together, but work together to help and love others in their moments of need.

So, when we receive an appeal from IOCC, we should urge all those we know to respond as generously as they are able. And, if you need encouragement, some evidence to bolster your trust, a quick visit to IOCC's website will show you how each of us can make a difference. This is our faith in action.

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PRIEST *to* PRIEST

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As I reflect on how the presence of the Orthodox Church in North America has unfolded in the past few decades, I think that the establishment of IOCC has to be numbered among the most significant.

IOCC has brought an American approach to the charitable work of our Church. It gives our faithful an organization to which they can direct their donations and support. We have a spiritual need to put our faith into action. This isn't something new: the Church always had at its heart care for those in need. But with IOCC, Orthodoxy in the US showed it had come of age.

IOCC immediately took its place among other faith-based and secular humanitarian organizations. It was seen across the board as Orthodoxy in action. A collaboration across US Orthodox jurisdictions, IOCC could assist the Mother Churches, when needed, with humanitarian aid and advice—particularly in the transition years of the 1990s.

IOCC's unique relationship with the Church, especially in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, helped us offer aid in places that few others could go. The Church's network ensured help got to the right places.

Most importantly, we created a charitable organization that is lean and transparent. People can trust that their dollars are being directed to the proper place.

But, in the end, I'm first and foremost a parish priest. And it's in the parish where I noticed a subtle change happening. Always remember that our home parish is the place where we encounter our faith on the most intimate level. It's hard, if not impossible, to think of the Church at large. Most of us have some sense of how our parish is connected to other communities both here and abroad. But in the actual day-to-day, Sunday-to-Sunday, contact with and participation in the Body of Christ, it's our parish

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Your Faith in Action in Greece

Ioanna and her son George, who survived the fires that hit their village in Ileia, Greece, this summer, were among many who received a school-supply voucher and a school kit from IOCC so George could be ready for the new school year. “Our village ... suffered the most from the recent fires,” Ioanna said, “and I am thankful for IOCC’s support.”

Through your faithful generosity, IOCC responds quickly in emergencies and, longer term, helps people in need improve their lives and communities.



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