

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES
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From the Executive Director

Zoe. Life. Down the hill about fifty yards I could see life. A small bright green plant standing eighteen inches out of the blackened scorched earth reached up to the sky. Standing on the top of the mountain in the village of Artimeda I looked out and saw only burnt houses, cafes and small businesses. I saw entire mountains devastated. Even the dirt was burnt dark black and grey. The mountains in the distance looked white as if dusted by snow but the wind blows only ashes. Telephone and electric poles lay on the ground. Shells of houses were scattered on the mountain. The smell of burnt wood and the ashes irritated my eyes and mouth, but I could not stop staring at the mountains and forests. I stood there trying to comprehend how intense and massive the fires must have been to totally destroy all that lay before me. In the distance I could see areas where the fire spared part of a tree or house, but everything else I saw was ravaged by the flames.

I thought about the charred overturned fire truck we passed on the narrow road as we approached the village and the fireman who perished. I thought about the mother and her four children dead arm and arm only a few yards off the road. And yet, God's message was reaching up to me through the weeds in that small green plant. I could see that with darkness there is light.

I turned to see the villagers gathered around the priest and talking about the food they had just received from a group of volunteers. Above the church and on the terrace of a partially burned house there sat an elderly man whom I had met in the square. He had returned to his home and was gazing at the valley below. What is he going to do next? He lost his livestock in the fire. His olive trees are all burnt. I knew that he and those like him would need much help.

I began to think what we could possibly do to respond. At that moment, the priest put his arm around me and said, "Look over there!" He pointed to the small green plant- "Zoe! Life! There is life." I smiled in agreement.

In this expanded Executive Summary you will read about IOCC's relief work in Greece, including our plan to provide animal feed for hundreds of vulnerable farmers (see <http://www.iocc.org/news/9-7-07.aspx>). We have also included a slideshow (see <http://www.iocc.org/news/execsummary8-07.aspx>) of the hard-hit Peloponnese where IOCC is concentrating its response to the wildfires. I am confident that together we can continue to respond in one voice to Christ's call for Greece, as we are doing in 16 other countries around the world.

On behalf of IOCC's Board and Staff, I want to convey my heartfelt sympathy to all those who lost loved ones. May Their Memories Be Eternal!

Yours in Christ
Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director and CEO

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IOCC Provides Greece with Emergency Supply to Feed Livestock

(The Peloponnese, Greece) The plan to bring relief to the farmers of Greece is underway with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) beginning its distribution of 170 metric tons of animal feed on Saturday. IOCC will provide farmers with an emergency supply of animal feed for small (sheep, goats, pigs) and large livestock (horses, bulls, cows)—a total of 53,000 head of livestock.

IOCC will begin by distributing 150 metric tons of animal feed to 54 villages in the Province of Ileia. IOCC will distribute the feed through five centers of the Province (Zaharo, Krestena, Andritsena, Alfira, Foloji). IOCC's distribution will compliment the commodities being provided by the Greek government allowing for a greater variety of animal feed. An additional 20 metric tons of feed will be delivered directly to farmers in isolated mountain villages who are unable to reach the distribution centers. IOCC is coordinating this distribution with local Orthodox churches.

Nenad Prelevic, based in IOCC's Belgrade office, is in Greece overseeing the distribution. "Whatever farmers were saving for the winter they have to use now which is why IOCC is concentrating on providing animal feed, one of the greatest needs after the fires," said Prelevic.

IOCC Executive Director & CEO Constantine M. Triantafilou, in Greece over the past week to assess the damage and plan for IOCC's long term recovery work, described the devastation. "The mountains in the distance look white as if dusted by snow but when the wind blows you realize it is all grey ash," he said. Triantafilou met with authorities and with villagers who lost livestock and homes. He assured them that Orthodox Christians in America will continue to respond to the crisis in Greece.

IOCC, founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), has implemented over \$250 million in relief and development programs in 33 countries around the world.

To help in providing emergency relief, call IOCC's donation hotline toll-free at 1-877-803-4622, make a gift on-line at www.iocc.org, or mail a check or money order payable to "IOCC" and write "Greece Fires" in the memo line to: IOCC, P.O. Box 630225, Baltimore, Md. 21263-0225.