

Prot. No. 01-006 /2017

September 9, 2017

To All of the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey:

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

Christ is in our midst!

All of us have seen on our televisions or computers images of the disaster and devastation that has occurred in the southern parts of our country as a result of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. The loss of life, the destruction of property, and the displacement of whole families are staggering.

Of course, I am asking that prayers be offered in all our churches for the victims of this horrific tragedy. But our response to this national crisis must be more than that. It must be what the Lord has asked of us in the Gospel: “Whatever you do for the least of My brethren, you do it for Me” (Matthew 25:40).

In the face of incredibly great need, I am requesting our immediate assistance with the relief efforts of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which is already responding to the aftermaths of both hurricanes.

I am directing that all our parishes take up a special collection for IOCC as soon as possible, and I ask that each of us give whatever we are able. Please send parish offerings DIRECTLY to IOCC: International Orthodox Christian Charities, 110 West Road, Suite 360, Baltimore, MD 21204.

Additionally, parishes are urged to consider gathering much-needed items, specifically requested by IOCC, and assembling them into emergency kits, that will be delivered to the hurricane victims by IOCC. For parish young people or members of church organizations, this can be a meaningful service project of our “faith in action.” Parishes will be receiving information regarding this option in the very near future.

Once the collection of funds or relief items has been completed, the Chancery will send out an e-mail form, requesting the amount sent and the number of kits assembled, so that we can track the total contributions of the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you in advance for your faith-filled response to this national disaster, and pray that God will bless you richly for the holy work that you undertake in His Name.

With my humble prayers, Archpastoral blessings and sincere love,

+ M I C H A E L

Archbishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey