DEPARTMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

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Report to the 40th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress

The Department of Philanthropy continues its efforts to promote the importance of philanthropic ministries within all our parishes and to heighten the sensitivity of the faithful to their sacred calling to not be simply ***hearers*** but also ***doers*** of the word of God and to stress to them that ***faith without works is dead*** (James 2:26). The Department also coordinates the response of the Archdiocese and the Office of the Archbishop to the many requests received for assistance both at home and from abroad. During the past few years, the Department of Philanthropy has been especially involved in a number of significant projects.

RETIRED CLERGY/WIDOWED PRESVYTERES BENEVOLENCE FUND: As of January 2006, the Department has been responsible for collecting and distributing benevolence to needy retired clergy and widowed presvyteres. Currently, there are 16 individuals (4 retired priests and 12 widowed presvyteres) receiving a monthly stipend from this Fund, which previously had been maintained by the RCA (Retired Clergy Association). Since assuming responsibility for the Fund, the Department has collected and distributed approximately $361,000 to deserving individuals. The Department is especially indebted to the National Philoptochos Society which made the Fund one of its annual commitments in 2006. It should be noted that the recipients of this assistance have annual retirement income (GOA pension, Social Security and Benevolence Fund subsidy) between $14,365 - $28, 512 with most being in the lower range of the scale. Needless to say, the Department is diligently working to augment their meager pensions and to assure an acceptable life-style which these individuals who so faithfully served the Church and community deserve.

GREEK FIRE RELIEF FUND: In August of 2007, the world witnessed the catastrophic fires which ravaged large sections of Greece and caused the tragic loss of life and property, as well as impacting for years to come the livelihood of countless individuals and the environment which was devastated by the fires. Responding to the disaster, the Archdiocese established this relief fund and over $4,072,445 was collected and $63,787 earned in interest in a segregated temporarily restricted account. Of this amount, (minus $190,490 in advertising costs at the inauguration of the Fund), a number of grants were made to IOCC to provide animal feed and forage seed to thousands of farmers in the Prefectures of Ileia and Arkadia (totally $2,705,851), $494,934 for the construction of a Soil Laboratory in Ileia, $117,322 for fire fighting equipment for Pyrgos and most recent an allocation of over $207,000 for fire

fighting equipment, etc in the town of Bartholomeio close to the Ionian Village of the Archdiocese. We are awaiting additional proposals so that the balance of the Fund can be distributed and the account closed. For the record, at no time were any administrative costs deducted by the Archdiocese!

NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS: For the past 9 years, the Director of the Department of Philanthropy has also served as the Advisor to the National Philoptochos. This has enabled the Department to better coordinate and enhance assistance being offered by the Archdiocese of America to the victims of various disasters as well as to various charities and needy causes. Moreover, this relationship with the National Office of Philoptochos has facilitated addressing the needs of numerous individuals who directly contact the Archbishop and the Archdiocese seeking assistance for specific problems. These cases run the gamut from arranging for housing while receiving medical treatment, to offering financial assistance from a number of Funds, to facilitating the identification of organ donors in at least two situations within the last year or so.

IOCC: The Department of Philanthropy continues to work very closely with IOCC and has partnered on numerous projects addressing the various needs of Orthodox faithful throughout the world but also here at home. Most recently, the Department was able to secure funding through individuals and the National Philoptochos for the building of a medical facility/school in the Woliso province of Ethiopia and for two endeavors in Haiti addressing educational and environmental concerns.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS: One project that has yet to be accomplished but is still a priority for the Department is the implementation of this program. With the assistance of IOCC, the Department would like to promote a National Emergency Planning and Preparedness Program to better prepare the Archdiocese, the Metropolises, the parishes and most especially the faithful for disasters. The events of September 2001, the tremendous devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the wildfires in California, tornadoes and floods in the heartlands of our nation and other calamities make evident our "unpreparedness" to deal with the various crises associated with these disasters. It is the conviction of the Department that all parishes of the Holy Archdiocese must take steps to prepare for any disaster which may arise, whether it be an earthquake on the West Coast, more hurricanes along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, tornadoes in the Midwest, additional terrorist attacks, etc. This preparedness will range from: establishing a contact system (one of the difficulties following Katrina was to locate the members of the parishes, especially of Holy Trinity in New Orleans, and which in addition to other concerns, resulted in a delay in offering them assistance); to what steps people should have taken beforehand (copies of all important documents such as insurance policies, licenses, deeds, etc); to coordinating with family members rendezvous points and so much more which will hopefully alleviate some of the impact of the disaster.