

RUSSIAN CHURCH GIVES \$91,000+ FOR NEEDY FAMILIES IN POOREST REGIONS



The number of requests for food aid continues to grow in the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church both in Russia and abroad, the Patriarchate's Synodal Department for Charity told Blagovest-Info.

Thanks to the collection underway on the Department's Mercy website, 21 dioceses have already received more than \$71,700 (5.1 million rubles), and another 6 dioceses will soon receive more than \$21,000 (1.5 million rubles). The funds are used to buy food for people who are in extreme need.

For example, 482 identical sets of food were prepared in the Tver Diocese and will soon be distributed to needy families throughout the Tver Metropolitanate.

"First of all we help those who, for objective reasons, did not receive state benefits or spent them on debts that accrued during the quarantine period. Among them are large families, single mothers with children, people with disabilities, teenagers from the social rehabilitation center, the homeless, the elderly, and the seriously ill, as well as people who have lost their jobs, or parents with children over 16 years old who are not entitled to a lump-sum payment," explained Alexei Artemyev, Deputy Head of the Social Department of the Izhevsk Diocese.

The standard food package includes flour, sugar, vegetable oil, buckwheat, rice,

pasta, cookies, tea, condensed milk, and other canned foods.

And it is not only within Russia that aid is being distributed. The Department for Charity transferred \$5,000 to the Diocese of the Philippines and Vietnam and \$3,000 for residents of East Timor who asked for help in connection with the coming famine.

Despite the lifting of many quarantine restrictions, the number of requests for aid from churches and dioceses remains high, and thanks to the many donors, the Church was able to organize food aid for one month for the poorest regions, noted Deacon Igor Kulikov, the Assistant for the Department's Interaction with the Dioceses.

However, in a month, they will need help again, so the Church continues to count on the generosity of donors, Deacon Igor noted.

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