

## **MASSACHUSETTS PARISH WIPES OUT \$3.5 MILLION DOLLARS OF MEDICAL DEBT FOR NEEDY FAMILIES**



Thanks to a generous donation from Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, Massachusetts, more than \$3.5 million of medical debt was wiped out for a number of local families.

In honor of their centennial celebration, the parish made a donation of \$20,000 to RIP Medical Debt, which was leveraged by the organization to wipe out \$3,566,809 of medical debt for 2,200 families, reports the Webster Times.

RIP Medical Debt, founded in 2014, uses donations to buy large portfolios of medical debt at a fraction of its value, then forgives a significant portion of the debt. Last year, the organization wiped out \$1.7 billion in debt for over 830,000 people.

“Especially after this year of the COVID pandemic, we wanted to reach out to families with the love of God in a concrete manner,” said Fr. Luke Veronis, who has pastored the parish for the past 17 years.

Of course, the beneficiaries are incredibly grateful to the church.

“I am a single parent raising my son with special needs. Life has hit us with some hard blows mentally, spiritually, and financially. Opening your letter to find that my medical debt has been paid in full, I will never forget,” said one parent. “You have truly blessed our lives with your generosity, compassion, and love.”

“We hope that the action of our church will inspire not only other faith communities, but also individuals, to do something similar,” Fr. Veronis said.

Such giving represents how far the parish itself has come, church officials say. Sts. Constantine and Helen was in sharp decline in 2005, but members didn't give up hope. They rallied back by finding creative ways to expand through service and community involvement, which continues to this day.

The church has also been involved in feeding the local community and sending volunteers to build homes for struggling families in Tijuana, Mexico.

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