



— Office of the Secretariat —

*“Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?”*

— Matthew 25:37

To the Most Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and  
Devout Faithful of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the Americas:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this Sunday before Thanksgiving, Orthodox faithful in the United States come together to give thanks to God for His many blessings, and for the privilege of serving Christ by serving others. The Assembly of Bishops has designated this *A Day of Sharing*. It is set aside to focus on the work of International Orthodox Christian Charities, or IOCC, whose mission is to help people in great need, wherever and whoever they may be.

As the official humanitarian and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, IOCC is a way for Orthodox Christians to extend to others the great mercy that Christ has shown us. Since its creation in 1992, IOCC has served people around the world facing war, famine, natural disaster, and economic hardship so that they may have the means to live with dignity, respect, and hope.

Through your faithfulness and generosity, IOCC extends hope to families, refugees and displaced persons, the elderly, schoolchildren, orphans, and people with disabilities—to students, young graduates, small businesses, and farmers. When news of disaster dominates our daily lives, IOCC is present to offer practical assistance: helping Syrian refugees in Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, and Romania, and Syrians displaced in their own country, by providing food, water, shelter, and medicine; offering economic opportunity and business mentoring in Greece amidst continued financial crisis; building school facilities in Uganda; repairing water networks in Lebanon; supporting the Romanian Orthodox Church’s training for social workers in assisting children with special needs; and erecting innovative greenhouses in Georgia to serve the Church and its community with produce and income. With assistance offered in the spirit of Christ’s love, entrepreneurs in Bosnia-Herzegovina have grown their businesses, while fire survivors in Greece who lost everything have started anew. Here in the United States, IOCC has cleaned out and rebuilt homes damaged by floods and hurricanes, offering emotional and spiritual care to individuals and families.

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As an agency of the Assembly, IOCC is an organization of all our Orthodox jurisdictions, echoing our unity in Christ as His body. IOCC's mission to offer assistance without discrimination recalls Christ's teaching to help our neighbors, even as the Samaritan of the Gospel helped the injured traveler, seeing not our differences but our shared humanity. As we thank God for His goodness to us, let us not forget our neighbors – God's children – facing difficulty near and far, and let us recommit to serving those in need, whoever and wherever they may be!

During this holy season, may the Lord shine His mercy upon you and your family and bring His peace into your homes and your hearts.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

+Metropolitan NICOLAE of the  
Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas  
*Liaison for IOCC from the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox  
Bishops of the United States of America*