



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL  
ORTHODOX BISHOPS  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

November 19, 2023  
Humanitarian Relief Sunday

*“And the King will answer and say to them,  
‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you  
did it to one of the least of these My  
brethren, you did it to Me.’”*

- *Matthew 25:40*

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Orthodox faithful in the United States offer thanks together to our Almighty God for the privilege of serving Christ by serving our neighbors in need. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America has designated this Sunday as Humanitarian Relief Sunday to highlight humanitarian relief. Therefore, we lift up the ministry of International Orthodox Christian Charities. IOCC is the Assembly of Bishops’ Agency which, since 1992, has helped people in dire need around the world.

Through humanitarian service, IOCC connects Orthodox Christians in the United States with our fellow human beings, near and far, who face conflict, drought, famine, disaster, economic crisis, and other catastrophes. In an uncertain world with deep, persistent needs, IOCC remains a crucial channel for our offerings of Christian service.

Because of the faithful generosity of people like you, IOCC responds. IOCC offers help that is practical and meets basic human needs, whether urgent or more enduring. To name just one instance, as conflict in Ukraine approaches the two-year mark, IOCC continues providing shelter, groceries, emergency supplies, and care, both in Ukraine itself and across the region, including in my home country, Romania. There, and in Poland and Moldova, IOCC and its partners—especially through the local Churches—are serving our neighbors whose lives are upended by conflict.

Other areas where IOCC serves span Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and of course, the US. I name only a few examples of goods and services that have been offered: emergency food and supplies for Ethiopian farming families facing devastating drought and conflict; specialized equipment and businesses training for microenterprises in Greece as they rebuild their economy; food for schoolchildren in Lebanon amid deep social and economic turmoil; eyeglasses, hearing aids, and other necessary devices for people in need in Jordan; psychological support for children living with the trauma of conflict in Syria and Gaza; emotional care and help cleaning up and rebuilding after US disasters.

In these ways and many more, through IOCC, we can feed, clothe, and care for one another in the spirit of Christ's love. Thus, we answer Christ's call in the Gospel to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and care for the sick. This Thanksgiving, in a spirit of gratitude, I invite you—through your prayers and in any other way you are able—to support IOCC's work serving our brothers and sisters in need.

May our loving Lord shine His mercy upon you and your loved ones during this Nativity season. May your hearts and homes be filled with His peace!

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Nicolae".

+Metropolitan Nicolae  
*Episcopal Liaison to IOCC*