



For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. —Mark 10:45

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 come together to give thanks to God for His blessings and for the privilege of serving Christ by serving our neighbors in need. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America dedicates this day to the ministry of International Orthodox Christian Charities, or IOCC—the Orthodox agency that serves people in need worldwide.

For more than 30 years, IOCC has provided Orthodox Christians with a concrete way to serve people in need, near and far, as they face conflict, drought, famine, natural disasters, and economic hardship. As needs change across time, IOCC remains a reliable, effective channel for our offerings of Christian service. Because of the faithful generosity of people like you, IOCC responds amid crisis, offering practical assistance that meets both immediate and longer-term needs. IOCC has given emergency supplies, shelter, and groceries to Ukrainians displaced by conflict: this is especially meaningful for me because in my homeland of Romania, countless families as well as the Federation Filantropia—an IOCC partner organization managed by the Romanian Orthodox Church—have opened their doors to their neighbors who are fleeing Ukraine.

Consider, as well, IOCC's offerings of emotional care, cleanup, and rebuilding after US disasters; of food for schoolchildren in Lebanon amid deep economic crisis; of groceries, animal feed, and equipment for farmers and small businesses in Greece recovering from wildfires; and of emergency food for those affected by drought and conflict in Ethiopia—in these and many more ways, IOCC fulfills human needs in the spirit of Christ's love.

Mark's Gospel reminds us that Christ, the King of all, came to serve—and that we are to follow His example. By supporting IOCC, you and I may follow the example of Christ the Servant-King. Through IOCC, we can feed, clothe, and minister to one another for His sake. This Thanksgiving, let us thank God for His blessings, and let us continue to answer the call to serve our brethren in need.

May the Lord shine His mercy upon you and your loved ones throughout the Nativity season, and may your hearts and homes be filled with His peace!

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

+Metropolitan Nicolae
Episcopal Liaison to IOCC