



IOCC SUNDAY | NOVEMBER 21, 2021

"Through love, serve one another." – Galatians 5:13

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,

As we thank God for His many blessings, we also thank Him for the opportunity to serve Him by serving others. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops dedicates this Sunday before Thanksgiving to the ministry of International Orthodox Christian Charities, or IOCC – the Orthodox agency that serves people in need worldwide.

IOCC, the humanitarian and development agency of the Assembly of Bishops, provides Orthodox Christians with a concrete way to serve people in need, near and far. Through IOCC, we can extend a humble reflection of the great mercy Christ shows us. For almost 30 years, IOCC has offered practical assistance to people facing conflict, famine, natural disasters, and economic hardship so that they may live with dignity, respect, and hope. This work continues in a rapidly changing world.

Through the faithful generosity of people like you, IOCC responds amid crisis, offering practical assistance in both the short term and the long term, as communities around the globe rise to meet challenges. Cleanup and emotional care after US disasters; nutritious meals for preschoolers in Gaza to combat malnutrition; counseling for Syrian families who have survived unspeakable trauma; equipment to help small businesses in Greece flourish and emergency response after wildfires there; supplies to help parishes in Uganda safely resume worship amid the pandemic; repairing homes, hospitals, and shops after the devastating explosion in Lebanon's capital – these examples offer glimpses of the work IOCC does in the spirit of Christ's love. IOCC also equips us to care for one another amid crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, still a part of our daily lives, by providing resources like the Care Calls program.

IOCC's mission reflects our shared calling to serve Christ by serving others. St. Paul reminds us that loving each other through humble service is the way to obey Christ: when we support IOCC, we do precisely that, remembering the incarnate Lord's request that we 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.

This blessed Nativity season, may the Lord shine His mercy upon you and your dear ones, and may His love fill your homes and your hearts to overflowing!

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

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