

The Pie Is Bigger than You Think continued from front cover

That is how IOCC has extended blessings to us. It has taught us to give joyfully and sacrificially – which, by the way, is the only kind of giving that brings blessings (cf. Mt 25, 2 Cor 9:7). Who would have thought when it was founded 30 years ago—or could the bishops gathered 28 years ago in Ligonier have imagined—that IOCC would one day provide more than \$771 million in relief and development programs to people in some 60 countries?

Dear Fathers and Brothers, never forget that the “pie is bigger than you think.” Fear not, for it is indeed big enough to support the needs of your own parishes, as well as the work of IOCC, the other agencies of the Assembly of Bishops, your diocese, and your local charitable agencies which do the work of Christ. Be generous in your support both prayerfully and financially. Remember, “God loves a cheerful giver!”

+Bishop Basil (Essey), Bishop of Wichita and the Diocese of Mid-America
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If you wish to contribute a reflection to the next issue of Priest to Priest, please email rloumiotis@ioccc.org



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PRIEST *to* PRIEST

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR ORTHODOX CLERGY

Fall 2022

The Pie Is Bigger than You Think

A Reflection by Bishop Basil of Wichita



Thirty years ago, IOCC was founded by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), the forerunner of today's Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops. Today, it is among the premier interjurisdictional agencies of the Orthodox Church in the US and a treasure of Orthodox Christianity throughout the world. And the blessings of IOCC also extend to us—the Orthodox Christians of this nation. How is that?

In late 1994, SCOBA sponsored a conference of bishops at the Antiochian Village, near Ligonier, Pennsylvania. During one session, the 29 hierarchs heard an in-depth report from Alexander Rondos, then Executive Director of IOCC, on the agency's work and aspirations. Being one of the youngest bishops at the meeting, I was appointed to take minutes, so I remember well Mr. Rondos's words, as well as the reactions of my brother hierarchs (I was seated on the dais, facing the assembly).

When Mr. Rondos spoke of the financial aspects of IOCC and the absolute necessity of supporting the agency's work on the jurisdictional, parochial, and individual levels, I saw the bishops beginning to squirm. How could Orthodox dioceses and parishes, many already strapped for operating expenses, support IOCC without “robbing Peter to pay Paul”? Mr. Rondos had clearly anticipated this concern, and allayed it with the simple image of a pie chart. He concurred with the bishops' unspoken fear that all financial needs of the US Orthodox Church are met from the same “pie”—but he challenged the bishops, saying, “However, the pie is much larger than you think or have ever before imagined.” And he was right! IOCC has given us the opportunity of learning to give and to give generously in support of the ministries expected from those who identify as Orthodox Christians.



Fresco depicting Matthew 25 in the refectory at the Monastery of Dionysiou.

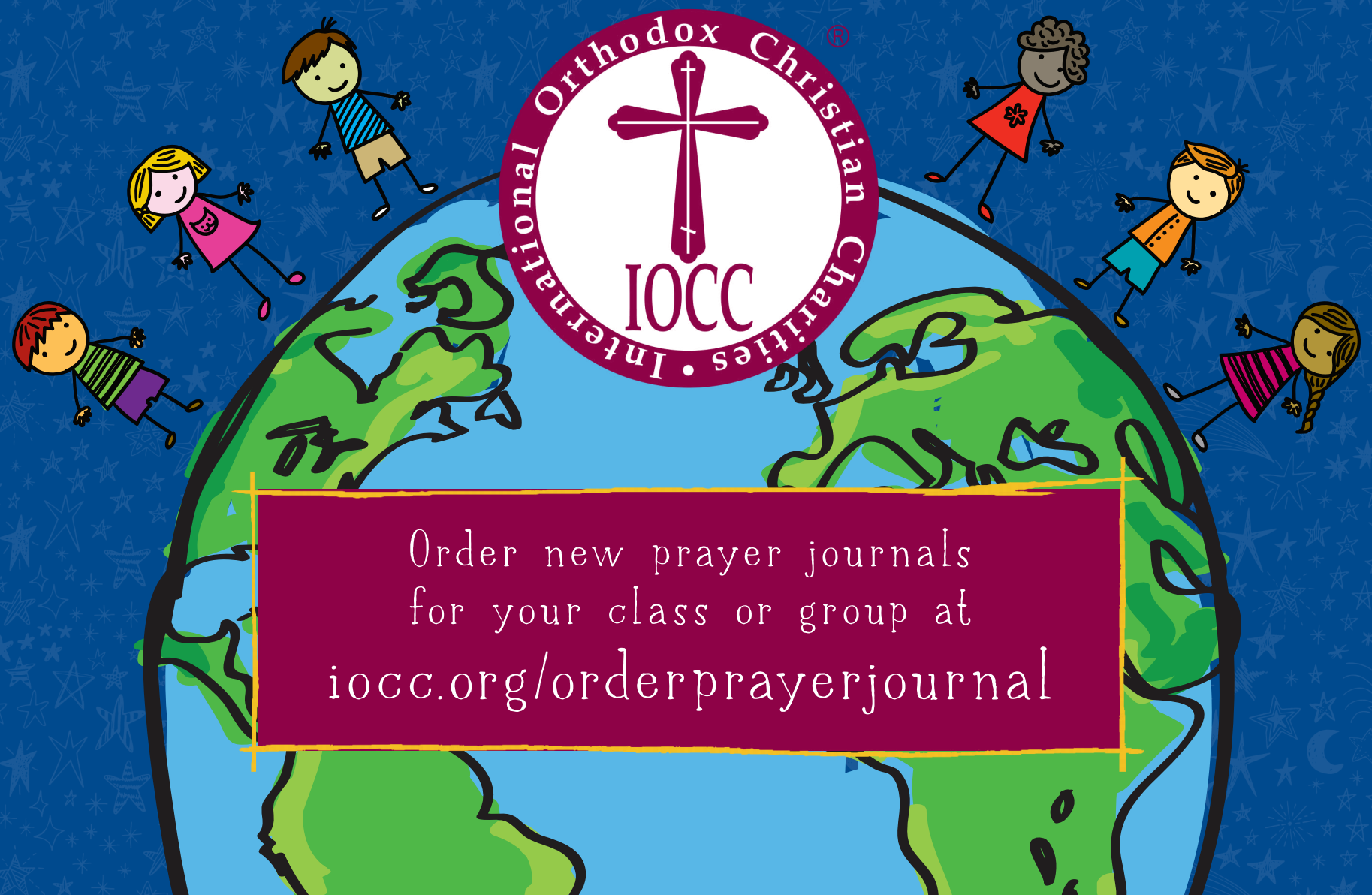
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