



IOCC

This journal belongs to:

PRAYER JOURNAL



Reaching around
the World with
Christ's Love...



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

A Note to Clergy, Parents, and Church School Directors

Dear Friends,

IOCC's Prayer Journal is a resource for young people that offers a glimpse into the lives of children and families we're helping around the world. This piece aims to encourage you by sharing ways that, together, we reach around the world with Christ's love.



Each chapter includes stories of your impact, plus activities for families, small groups, or Sunday School classes. In fact, please consider using the prayer journal in your parish in the weeks leading up to IOCC Sunday (November 19, 2023).

As you read the Prayer Journal, I hope that you'll continue supporting IOCC's ministry and those it serves by:

- Praying for people facing hardship whom IOCC is helping.
- Organizing a school-kit drive in your parish to help connect your parish youth with children in other parts of the world (iocc.org/kits; also see page 25).
- Taking a special collection in your parish to support IOCC's ongoing programs like those featured here.

Thank you for your steadfast support of IOCC's humanitarian mission.

Yours in Christ,

Dean

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director + CEO



STORIES

LET'S SERVE AND PRAY TOGETHER



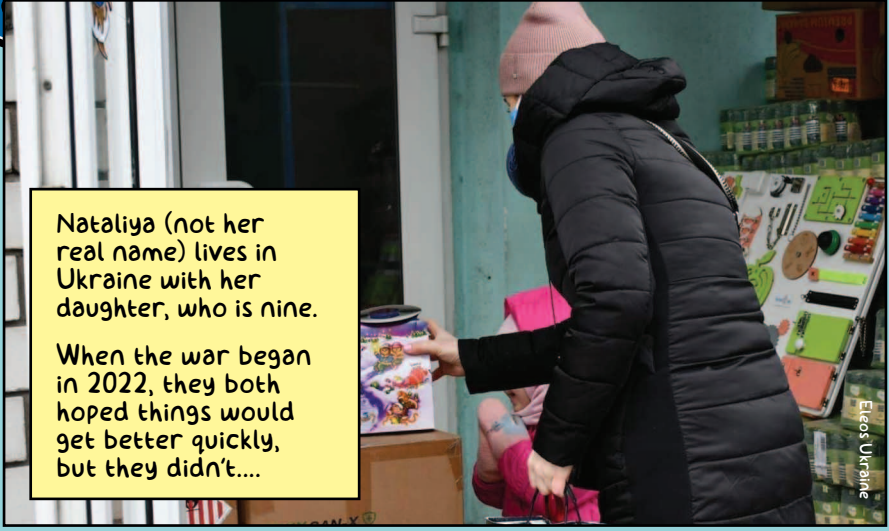
The Orthodox Christian Church teaches that every single person carries the image of God. So no matter who someone is or what kind of help they need (food, water, someone to listen, etc.), we offer it because God loves people, whom He made in His image—and because He asks us to help one another.

The stories in this booklet show a few ways we can help people around the world through IOCC. As you use this booklet, please pray for the people in the stories and for the IOCC staff helping them every day.



ESCAPING TO SAFETY

UKRAINE



Nataliya (not her real name) lives in Ukraine with her daughter, who is nine. When the war began in 2022, they both hoped things would get better quickly, but they didn't....

So Nataliya decided to take her daughter to a safe place. They had to leave everything behind. With only a few belongings, they traveled to a new city in Ukraine and found a shelter supported by IOCC. There they got things they needed like food, medical checkups, and a place to stay.



Workers at the shelter also helped Nataliya's daughter go to school and helped Nataliya find a job. IOCC is serving many people in Ukraine every day, especially those who had to leave their homes to stay safe.

Many people in Ukraine still need help. You can pray for them and ask God to keep everyone safe and give them what they need.

CHILDREN FIND HELP AFTER EARTHQUAKES

SYRIA AND TURKEY



IOCC is working with children who survived terrible earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. These programs help children deal with loss and learn to cope in healthy ways. Children can participate in fun activities and learn about their feelings through play, which helps them feel better.

One mother from Aleppo, in Syria, said her son has not slept well since the night of the earthquakes. IOCC is helping children like him by providing emotional support and giving them someone to talk to.

Since the earthquakes, IOCC has also given grocery vouchers to families in Syria and Turkey so they can buy food and other things they need. It will take a long time for people in Syria and Turkey to feel normal again, but IOCC is there to help.



Please pray for the children who have lost their homes, that God will help them feel safe and make a new start in life.



REBUILDING AFTER WILDFIRES

GREECE



Ioannis has owned a bike-repair shop in Greece since 2015. In the summertime, he rented bikes to vacationers and also repaired broken bikes in his shop. The rest of the year, he organized bike tours on his beautiful island home of Evia. Ioannis had a dream to grow his business, but in summer 2021, a huge fire hit his neighborhood and burned his bike shop down.



My business is reborn from the ashes. Thank you!

Ioannis didn't give up. He rebuilt his shop quickly, but he also needed all new equipment, which was expensive. IOCC helped Ioannis by giving him new tools and a state-of-the-art repair bench. In 2022, Ioannis reopened his shop in a new space. Now, Ioannis is growing his business again and fixing bikes for people in Athens—and even some from other countries!



WHEN THERE IS NO FOOD TO EAT

ETHIOPIA



God intervened, and Mekiya is very well. I am very happy.

Aregu is a mom with two children. There are lots of problems where she lives, like years with not enough rain and locusts that destroyed farm crops. This made it hard for Aregu to find work and earn money to feed her kids. Her one daughter, Mekiya, was weak and inactive.

An IOCC program checked Mekiya and found that she wasn't getting enough healthy food to eat (called malnutrition). After IOCC helped her get treatment, including regular checkups, Mekiya reached a healthy weight for her age, and is now active and happy again.



IOCC tested and treated many people like Aregu and Mekiya in Ethiopia for malnutrition and provided emergency food for them. IOCC also taught parents how to keep their children healthy with nutritious foods and regular health checkups. Over 1,650 people got nourishing food through this program. Aregu was grateful for the help that IOCC provided and felt blessed that her daughter is now active and strong.



AIDING KIDS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

HAITI



Fr. Barnabas is the headmaster of an Orthodox Christian elementary school near Haiti's capital. He works hard to make sure children there can continue going to school.

In recent years, there have been lots of problems in Haiti, including earthquakes and hurricanes, an unstable government, and a poor economy. Hunger is everywhere, there are dangerous areas, and things are very expensive. Every day parents must decide whether their children can safely get to school.

IOCC has helped rent and repair a building for the school to use after earthquakes destroyed their original space. And because of IOCC's support, Fr. Barnabas, teachers, and staff are always there, ready to teach the children. Fr. Barnabas has even started growing food on the land—things like corn, papayas, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes. He gives some of these to the kids to take home.

"On behalf of the kids, parents, teachers, and myself," said Fr. Barnabas, "I say thank you to everyone and IOCC for their love for us all."

KIDS TAKE ACTION IN AFRICA

ETHIOPIA



Netuh is an eighth grader who lives in rural Ethiopia. She noticed that some people in her community had swollen legs and feet and were often in pain and had a fever. She wondered why.

When IOCC came to her community to help, Netuh learned that these symptoms were caused by a disease called podoconiosis ("podo" for short). People get podo from walking barefoot on volcanic soil in that area for a long time.



Netuh learned how to treat and prevent podo and joined a club at her school that IOCC helped start. Students in the club teach others what they've learned so everyone can stay healthy. With the help of her teachers and other club members, Netuh shares at school ways to prevent the disease and help those who already have it.

When people like Netuh learn, then teach others, they make sure that IOCC's work reaches more people, and they make their own communities better places to live.



BUILDING A SMALL BUSINESS

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Without my first loan from IOCC, I couldn't have started my business.

Nataša is a single mom in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She worked hard to learn how to cook and loves to make yummy food for others.

Nataša took out a small loan for \$1,200 through an IOCC program. She used her savings plus the loan to open a grill. The restaurant is in a good location near many factories and businesses, so she has lots of customers.

Nataša has taken out three more loans from IOCC, paying each one back before getting another. Her last loan helped her buy a vehicle so she could start delivering food. Nataša says that without that first loan, she couldn't have started her restaurant to take care of her son.

You can pray for people like Nataša that IOCC helps, as they work hard to take care of their families.



HELPING KIDS LEARN

UGANDA

IOCC works with the Uganda Orthodox Church and the St. Nektarios Education Fund to help kids learn in Uganda. Together, we've built schools, science labs, student dorms, and more.

At one Orthodox Christian boarding school, IOCC recently helped build a new septic system and restrooms. A septic system gathers waste and stores it safely.

While restrooms might seem like a small thing, we use them every day. When students live and study at a boarding school like this one, it's important that they have everything they need. Including restrooms!



Thanks to this IOCC project, Ugandan students like these can learn new skills, pursue their dreams, and go to college.





REPAIRING HOMES FOR NEIGHBORS

UNITED STATES



Mr. and Mrs. Randall (not their real name) have lived in their home in Florida for a very long time. They built it many years ago. But in 2017, a strong storm called Hurricane Irma caused a lot of damage to their home. It was so bad that they couldn't fix it right away, and water got inside and caused more problems, like mold.

A group of volunteers from IOCC came to help them. They fixed the Randalls' roof and built a ramp to make it easier for them to get into their home. Now the Randalls can live in their home safely again.



When you pray for IOCC, you are helping people all over the world and maybe even in your own community too.

EXACTLY WHAT HE NEEDED

JORDAN

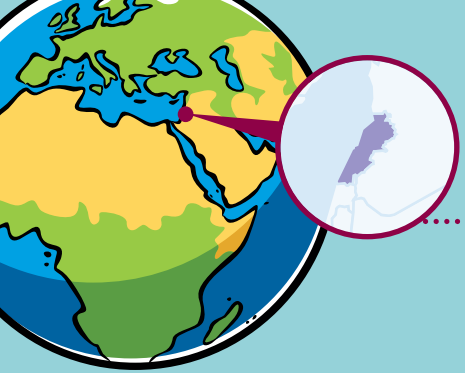


Adil is seven and lives in Jordan with his family. They are refugees from Syria. Adil's mom, Reema, noticed that he was having trouble growing and learning like other kids his age. A doctor discovered that Adil had some problems that made it hard for him to talk and move his body.

Adil started going to speech therapy, but he still needed more help. Then Reema found a clinic that is supported by IOCC. The people there helped Adil with a special treatment plan. He worked with therapists who helped him learn how to interact with others more and strengthen his muscles so it was easier to move.



Because of IOCC's work, kids like Adil can get the help they need to have a better future. Your prayers help IOCC reach even more kids and families around the world.



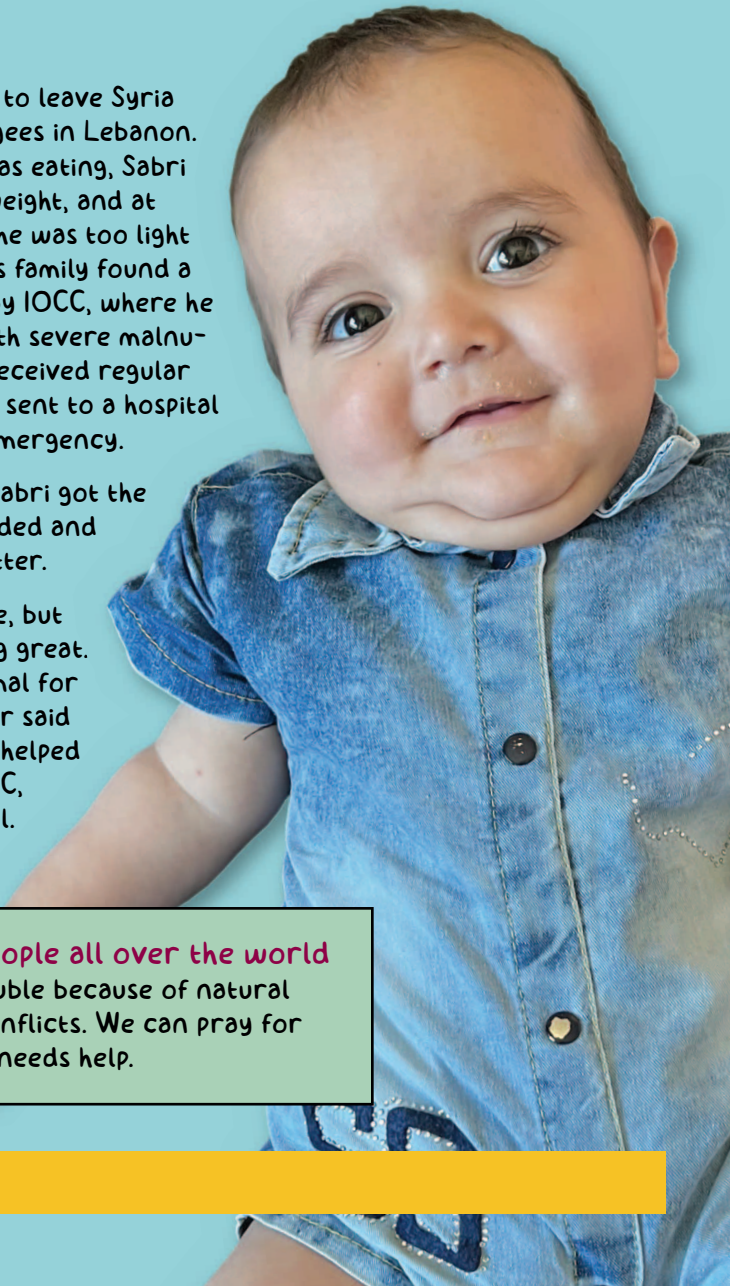
GROWING UP HEALTHY

LEBANON

Sabri's family had to leave Syria and become refugees in Lebanon. Even though he was eating, Sabri was not gaining weight, and at nine months old, he was too light for his age. Sabri's family found a clinic supported by IOCC, where he was diagnosed with severe malnutrition. Then he received regular checkups and was sent to a hospital when he had an emergency.

Thanks to IOCC, Sabri got the treatment he needed and started to get better.

It took a long time, but now Sabri is doing great. His weight is normal for his age. His mother said she couldn't have helped Sabri without IOCC, and she is grateful.



GOPA-DEIRD

ACTIVITIES

Whether you are at home or in Sunday School, these activities will help you learn about the needs we see in the world and how we can help. IOCC gives Christians a way to serve Christ by serving others.

The activities here can be used throughout the year. They will help you think more about how IOCC helps people around the world, and how you can help too.

At the bottom of each page, there's space where you can write things to pray about—both what you're praying for and what you're thankful for.



IOCC helps people all over the world who are in trouble because of natural disasters or conflicts. We can pray for everyone who needs help.



Our Compassionate Lord

How did Christ show compassion? Brainstorm (or flip through the Gospels to find) at least five miracles when Christ performed healings and showed compassion for people's suffering. Choose a miracle and draw a comic strip about it. For example, draw scenes from the miracle of Christ healing the blind man.

Use a half- or quarter-sheet of paper and glue it on construction paper or poster board. Talk together about saints or people who have shown compassion.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



The Greatest Commandment

Read Matthew 22:36-40. Think about this for a few minutes: It has been said that you cannot love God if you do not love your neighbor. Title your paper "Love Your..." and then below the title, in all capitals, vertically spell out the word NEIGHBOR.

Work individually or in pairs to make a mesostic, a type of acrostic that allows your words to intersect the letters (see photo above). For example, you could place the word "Syria" across the "I" in neighbor. Check out the picture to get started. Your word entries should come from the names of countries where IOCC is helping, or from the names of people in the prayer journal stories.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



Prayer Stand-Ups

Take a blank sheet of paper, and fold it in half horizontally, making two sides of 5½ x 8½ inches. Next, fold each edge in 1 inch. These will make the bottom of the stand-up.

Write the prayer before meals on one side and the prayer after meals on the other. (Find these prayers at the end of the prayer journal.)

Fold the 1-inch margins toward each other until they barely touch, and then tape them together. Lead your family in these prayers for one week.



i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



What Do You Really Need?

Think about people who have to leave home because of war or other difficulties. Imagine having to travel by foot to a refugee camp and having only 10 minutes to prepare.

Besides food, water, and clothes, what would be the first, second, and third items you would bring? How would you feel when you were packing?

What questions would you be asking your parents? What might your thoughts be when you arrive at your refuge? Share responses with your family or classmates.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____

GRADES 3-5



Praying for the Sick

Ask your priest for the names and mailing addresses of those who are sick, and if possible, ask him to share a little about each. Students or families can choose a parishioner and make a card to send to that person. You can also write out one of the prayers in this prayer journal, and pray for your parishioner daily.

Ask your Sunday School teacher if you can say the prayer together, and each student can mention their parishioner's name.

You can also ask your family to pray together for the parishioner during family prayers.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____

GRADES 6-8



Does God Care?

So many places in the world don't have enough food or clean water, or there's not enough safe housing, or many people are sick. When we see this, we might wonder, "Does God care?" When Christ was ministering to people on earth, He showed us that God does care. God has always cared, from the Old Testament through the New, and He asks us to be His instruments of caring.

Look up these passages from the Old Testament, the Gospel, and the Epistle of James, and read their contexts as well: Deuteronomy 15:11, Matthew 10:8, and James 2:26. Choose one to copy onto a quarter-sheet of paper. Decide where to tape it as a reminder to find a way to care for those in need—whether it be someone hurting, someone in need of a friend, or people that IOCC serves.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



A Work of Compassion

Compassion consists of *com*, which means “with,” and *passion*, which means “feeling.” *Compassion* means to feel the need or suffering of another person and to have a desire to help.

As Orthodox Christians, we know that each of us was created with great dignity, “in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26). The work of IOCC stems not from pity, but from compassion. IOCC is present with those who are suffering and works with them to remedy it.

Write your thoughts, maybe in a haiku, about how and why compassion (rather than sympathy or pity) helps rebuild the God-given dignity of people in need.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



The Needs of Displaced People

Split the class/family into two groups to deal with the following situation: “You live in a remote area, and the next town over is in a valley that is quickly being flooded. The school gym will have to shelter those who can make it out and those who are being rescued, about 200 in all. You’re on an emergency planning committee.”

Each group is to make a list of resources and people required to meet the needs of these displaced persons and families.

Consider the physical, spiritual, and mental needs of those who will be arriving, in both the short term and the long term. Compare the lists, and then discuss them together.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



The Life of a Refugee

Ahead of time, write out scenes to role-play. Consider these ideas:

- (1) "The Refugee Student Speaks a Different Language"
- (2) "The Family Barely Escapes the Floodwaters and Finds Refuge"
- (3) "The Drought and the Long Walk to a New Country"

Then, divide into groups of three or four people. Each group acts out a scene. Afterward, share thoughts.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____



Organize a Kit Drive

IOCC helps families meet their basic needs in disasters and emergencies. Often IOCC sends kits of basics like school supplies, toiletries, and cleaning items to people in need.

Work with your parish, class, or family to organize a kit drive for IOCC. Read the information at ioccc.org/kits, and talk with an adult about how to set up this activity.

Decide what kind of kit you want to make, ask people in your class or parish to donate the things you need, and collect all the items. Then get together with others to assemble the kits, and ship them to the IOCC warehouse. You can pray for the people who will eventually use these things.

i'M PRAYING FOR _____

i THANK GOD FOR _____

Reflections

Think about your experience participating in the activities on the last few pages. What have you learned? How have your ideas about people in need changed? What will you do differently in the future because of what you've learned?



DRAW A PICTURE



PRAYERS

.....

"Prayer is the light of the soul,
giving us true knowledge of God."
—St. John Chrysostom

When we pray, we grow closer to God by giving thanks, asking for forgiveness, asking for help, or telling God how much He means to us.

On the following pages are Orthodox prayers to help you as you pray each day. While we can always pray in our own words, it is also helpful to use prayers passed down through our Church, so we learn how to pray regularly and thoughtfully.



A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE BEFORE SLEEP

Lord our God, by Your goodness and mercy
forgive all the sins I have committed
this day in thought, word, and deed.

(Specify your sins to God, and repent of them.)

Grant me peaceful and undisturbed sleep,
and deliver me from all temptations and attacks of the evil one.
Raise me up again in the morning that I may glorify You.
For You are blessed, together with Your Son and Holy Spirit,
now and forever. Amen.

FOR TIMES OF TROUBLE*

O Lord of hosts, be with us.
For in times of distress we have no other help
but You. O Lord of hosts, have mercy on us.

*Prayers marked with an asterisk are from the *Ancient Faith Prayer Book*, compiled and edited by Fr. Vassilios Papavassiliou, published by Ancient Faith Publishing. Used with permission.



AN EVENING PRAYER OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM*

O Lord, grant that I may love You
with all my heart and soul,
and that I may obey Your will in all things.

THANKSGIVING AFTER DELIVERANCE FROM TROUBLE*

Almighty and merciful God, I most humbly and
heartily thank Your divine majesty for Your loving
kindness and tender mercy, for You have heard
my humble prayer and graciously granted me
deliverance from my trouble and misery.
I entreat You to continue granting Your helping grace,
that I may lead a life pleasing to You, and that I may
continually offer to You a sacrifice of praise and
thanksgiving, to the Father and to the
Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

Christ our God, bless the food, drink, and fellowship of Your servants, for You are holy always, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER MEALS

We give thanks to You, Christ our God, that You have satisfied us with Your earthly blessings; deprive us not also of Your Heavenly Kingdom. As You came to Your disciples and granted them peace, so come to us and save us, Savior.

HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

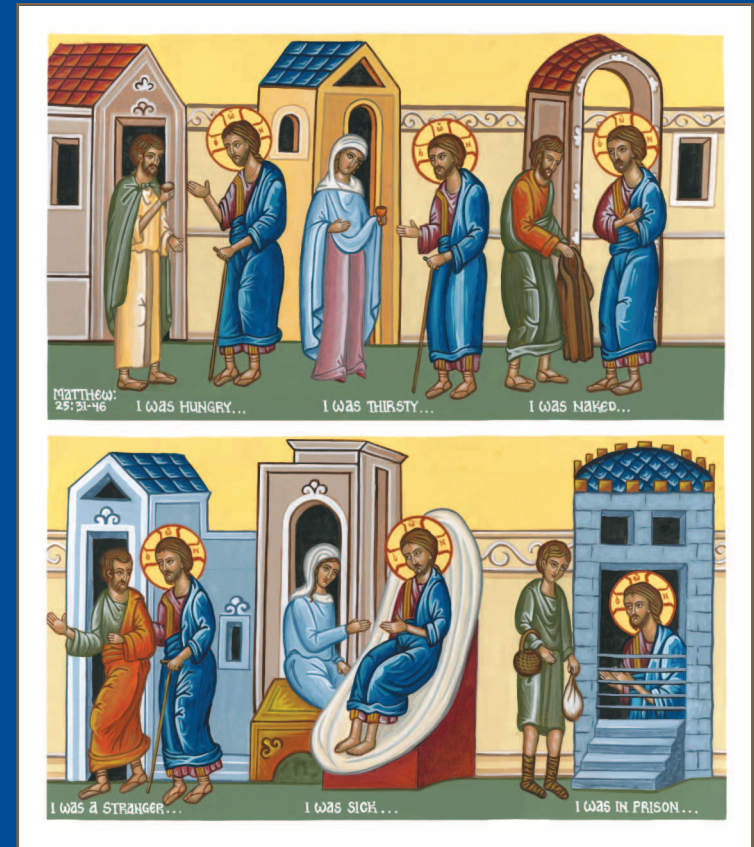
It is truly right to bless you, Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you!

PRAYER FOR THOSE IN NEED

Christ, Who alone are our Defender:
Be mindful, Lord, of the young and the old;
orphans and widows; the sick and the suffering,
the sorrowing and the afflicted, all captives,
and the needy poor; upon them all send forth Your mercies, for You are the Giver of all good things.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Christ, Who alone are our Defender: Visit and heal Your suffering servant [Name], delivering him/her from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him/her up that he/she may sing to You and praise You without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, You Who alone love humankind.



The icon of Matthew 25:35 was generously donated to IOCC by iconographer Bessie Zgourides.

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INSPIRED BY FAITH, DRIVEN BY PURPOSE

"I was thirsty and you gave me drink;
I was a stranger and you took me in;
I was naked and you clothed me;
I was sick and you visited me;
I was in prison and you came to me."
... 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 25:35–36, 40