



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

“And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, ‘if any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.’” – Mark 9:35

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,

In the United States, Orthodox Christians gather on the Sunday before Thanksgiving to express gratitude to God for His blessings and to embrace the privilege of serving Christ through acts of charity. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States dedicated this day as Humanitarian Relief Sunday, a day of Christian service that International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), the Agency of the Assembly that brings aid to those in need around the globe, champions with such dedication.

“[Christ] sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, ‘if any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35). The Lord reminds us that in order for us to gain our crown in heaven, we must serve all through love and charitable works. There are many ways each of us can serve others in our community, whether by volunteering at local charitable organizations, offering our talents pro-bono to those in need, or by donating our treasures to help in moments of crisis, when our time and talent are unable to serve.

While we ourselves may not be able to travel the globe or get involved in more complicated situations – such as Hurricanes Helene and Milton, Lebanon, Uganda, Gaza, Ethiopia, Greece, Romania, and more – IOCC is there, in the field, responding with love and compassion on our behalf. And while crisis and disaster response reflect one side of IOCC’s efforts, they are also committed to long-term recovery and rebuilding projects, community development, and finding ways to help people sustain themselves economically.

Let us follow the example of Christ, the Servant-King, by caring for one another. This Thanksgiving, let us take a moment and reflect on the countless blessings God has bestowed upon us, and how we can share those blessings with one another. By doing so, we multiply them and bring honor to His All-Holy name.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

+Metropolitan Nicolae
of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas
Episcopal Liaison to IOCC