

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA



Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

Prot. no.: 539/2025

October 30, 2025

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by 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:

Beloved in Christ,

In the United States, Orthodox Christians gather on the Sunday before Thanksgiving – November, 23 2025 – to give thanks to God for His blessings and for the privilege of serving Christ by serving those in need. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops observes this day as Humanitarian Relief Sunday, and its agency, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), invites our common prayer and participation in its worldwide humanitarian efforts.

For more than 30 years, IOCC has offered practical works of mercy to those facing conflict, famine, natural disasters, and economic hardship, so that they may live with dignity, respect, and hope. Today, in a world which continues to see crises develop and needs arise—this work is as critical as ever.

Through the faithful generosity of Orthodox Christians, IOCC responds to diverse needs – both immediate and long-term. These include disaster cleanup and rebuilding in the United States; food assistance and psychosocial care where war has wounded communities; livelihood support for refugees; small-business recovery in times of economic strain; school construction and repairs where children lack safe facilities; and nutrition programs for infants and students. These are concrete expressions of the Lord’s command to feed, clothe, and serve one another.

As an agency of the Assembly, IOCC represents all our Orthodox jurisdictions, bearing witness to our unity in Christ as His body. Saint John the Evangelist reminds us to “love not in word or in speech, but in truth and in action” (1 John 3:18).

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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Through IOCC, our love takes form in deeds that bring comfort and renewal to those in distress.

I invite all parishes and communities of our Holy Orthodox Churches to join in observance of *Humanitarian Relief Sunday* by:

- Praying for those who suffer and for all who labor to bring them comfort and hope;
- Learning about the ministry of IOCC and sharing its witness of love through parish communications or announcements;
- Giving a special offering in support of IOCC's humanitarian work;
- Volunteering where local needs and IOCC opportunities arise, to extend the compassion of Christ to those in need.

As we approach the blessed Feast of the Nativity, may the Lord's mercy shine upon you and your loved ones, and may His love fill your hearts with steadfast hope.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+SABA". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping 'S' and 'A'.

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