

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRAYER JOURNAL

Reaching Around the World with Christ's Love



Dear Friends,

We're excited to share IOCC's *Prayer Journal*—a meaningful resource created especially for young people. Through its pages, you'll discover inspiring stories from children and families whose lives have been touched by IOCC's work around the world. It's a reminder of how, together, we share Christ's love across borders and support communities in need.

Each chapter includes powerful stories of your impact, along with engaging activities perfect for families, youth groups, or Sunday School classes. We encourage you to incorporate the *Prayer Journal* into your parish life—especially in the weeks leading up to IOCC Sunday (November 23, 2025).

As you explore the journal, we invite you to continue supporting IOCC's mission in these meaningful ways:

- **PRAY** for those enduring hardship, whom IOCC is serving.
- **HOST A SCHOOL-KIT DRIVE** in your parish to help youth connect with children in need around the globe (visit iocc.org/kits and page 25).
- **COLLECT A SPECIAL OFFERING** to support IOCC's ongoing programs, many of which are highlighted in the journal.

Thank you for being a vital part of IOCC's compassionate outreach. Your continued support makes a real difference.



Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

A NOTE FROM
Constantine M. Triantafilou
IOCC Executive Director & CEO



LET'S GO EXPLORING WITH THE **IOCC PRAYER JOURNAL**

by Mila, Guest Contributor to IOCC

Hi Everyone!

My name is Mila, and I'm an Orthodox Christian.

I'm in 4th grade, and this year I went to Saint Sava Church Camp at Shadeland in Western Pennsylvania. Every year, hundreds of Orthodox children come together there to learn more about our faith, tradition, and culture.

One of the topics we explored this year was "giving." We had the opportunity to read the IOCC Prayer Journal, which explains how IOCC helps people around the world. The journal also included creative ideas for organizing food drives and supporting those in need.

I hope and pray that some of us campers will bring these ideas back to our home parishes so we can put what we learned into action and witness our faith in the Lord.

With God's help, we can do our best to make the world a better place for everyone!

Sincerely,

Mila
Buffalo, NY



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Did You Know? The capital city of Bosnia, Sarajevo, hosted the Winter Olympics in 1984.



Little Loans are a Big Deal

Saša (not his real name) and his parents live in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, despite working two jobs, Saša's Dad had difficulty providing for the family. Looking to build a better life, Saša's parents decided to borrow money to buy farmland.

They turned to an IOCC microloans program, where small loans are granted to people who can't get money from regular banks. Saša's parents used the loan, together with

their own savings, to buy farmland and dairy cows.

And what would you know—the farm has been a big success! They now have 27 dairy cows producing milk. And after the first loan was paid back, Saša's parents took out new loans to rent more land to grow feed for their cows and buy a tractor. Since IOCC started its microloan program, 17,000 families like Saša's have been given a chance to start their own businesses, including farms, bakeries, shops, and more.

I'M PRAYING FOR:

St. Seraphim

AND THE BEAR

St. Seraphim of Sarov is one of the greatest and most beloved saints of the 19th century. Known for his deep devotion to God, as well as his feats of fasting and prayer, St. Seraphim was also a great friend to animals. In one of the most famous stories about St. Seraphim, a bear approached the saint and a nun who was with him, who quickly became very frightened. But St. Seraphim calmed her down, promising that the bear would not hurt her. Together, they fed the bear, and the nun was given a chance to see the special gifts that St. Seraphim possessed.

You can bring this story to life by coloring in the tracing of St. Seraphim and the Bear below! Grab some crayons or colored pencils—whichever colors you like—and start coloring.



Artwork courtesy of ByziKids Magazine and ByziMom.com

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? Ethiopia is considered the birthplace of coffee, where it was discovered and first put to use in the 9th century.



Senayt Gets Help for Her Coffee Shop

Senayt (not her real name) is a 27-year-old mother of two living in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. Because of economic challenges and a husband away in the military, Senayt had trouble providing for her family.

All that changed, however, when Senayt discovered she was eligible for aid through an IOCC program. IOCC was able to offer her cash support, which helped her start her own coffee shop. Now, not only can

she support her family, but the shop is so successful that she says, "I'm also thinking about expanding my business to include food... I'm thankful for the support from IOCC."

So far, IOCC's program in Ethiopia has provided more than 1,290 households with cash support, trained 58 health professionals in disease management, and helped more than 14,000 people receive access to healthcare.

Humility and Generosity:

ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER



Let us take a closer look at one of the most beloved saints in the Orthodox Church: Saint Nicholas. He was not only a bishop, but also a quiet giver.

One famous story tells of how he secretly left gold coins in the home of a poor family to save them from disaster.

He did not want to be praised. He simply wanted to help. This kind of hidden giving is what Christ meant when He said "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." (Matthew 6:3). Saint Nicholas teaches us that true charity is often quiet, humble, and filled with love.

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Saint Nicholas gave in secret?
- What can we learn from his way of helping others?
- How can we practice kindness without looking for attention?



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? *The Dead Sea in Jordan is the lowest point on earth, sitting at over 400 meters below sea level.*



Safe, Fun, and Educational Playgrounds

Every kid looks forward to recess at school, but to safely enjoy the break every school needs a safe, well-equipped playground. That's why IOCC has been working with Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Schools, creating better playgrounds for eight schools in Jordan.

IOCC has put in benches for resting, canopies to protect kids from sun and rain, and artificial grass to keep

students from hurting themselves on hard surfaces.

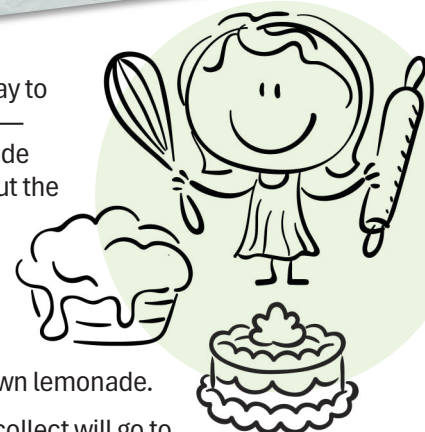
At a kindergarten in Amman, IOCC created a city traffic game on the playground. Here, young kids can learn about safety and how to stay aware when living in the city. This is a fun and effective way to teach youth about traffic lights and rules to follow when crossing the road.

Fun Fundraising

FOR KIDS

Here's a cool and creative way to help others and raise money—host a bake sale or a lemonade stand! Ask your parents about the best option for your family, and then you can invite friends or family to join you in baking delicious cookies, cupcakes, brownies, or preparing a pitcher of your own lemonade.

90 cents of every dollar you collect will go to IOCC's work around the world, helping people in need. It's a sweet, refreshing, and rewarding way to have fun, learn teamwork, and spread kindness all at once!



Tip: Ask your Sunday School teacher about teaming up with your class to put together a bake sale for IOCC. It's easier in a group and a fun way to bring people together!



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? The Georgian language has its own unique alphabet, and is one of the few in the world not descended from Latin or Cyrillic. See sample below!



New Equipment for a Kindergarten

In the small village of Shamgona in Georgia, the local school stood empty. The 75 village children who should have been learning there had to attend classes in a cramped old house, since the school had no kitchen equipment and no furniture.

That's when IOCC stepped in to help. After furnishing a kindergarten in a nearby town, IOCC decided to donate items to Shamgona's school to get it up and running again. The items included computers, a

printer, kitchen equipment (dishes, pots, bowls, spoons, forks, ladles, and a freezer), and furniture for classrooms and school offices.

When the building got all its new equipment, the village of Shamgona held a colorful opening ceremony to celebrate the new school. Thanks to the help and support of IOCC, local children will be able to learn and play in their newly equipped school for years to come.

This is what the word "Georgian" looks like in Georgian script
ქართული

I'M PRAYING FOR:

Fix Something

AROUND THE HOUSE

Let's face it—sometimes things break! But with a little work, something broken can be made whole again, and put to good use. It could be as simple as tightening a loose doorknob, organizing messy shelves, or helping an adult change a lightbulb.



Think of it like being a little detective or a mini-builder, figuring out how things work and how to make them better.

So ask your Mom or Dad if there's anything around the house that needs fixing or repair, and work together to get it done!

When you finish, reflect on what you did, and what it means to fix what is broken. How did it make you feel? What did you learn? What other ways can you help around the house?



I THANK GOD FOR:



Did You Know? The area known as Gaza was once home to the Philistines, an ancient people who are frequently mentioned in the Bible.



Finding Friends and Community Amid Crisis

Nora (not her real name) is a 14-year-old girl who was forced to leave her family's home due to the conflict in Gaza. After fleeing their home, they found shelter in a temporary camp. The upheaval caused Nora to lose her sense of safety, and she began to struggle with fear and anxiety.

While dealing with these problems, Nora and her family learned about an IOCC project, providing fun activities for children like her in

Gaza. Nora decided to attend an event organized by IOCC, which gave her the opportunity to join in playful activities and get together with other kids in a friendly atmosphere.

Nora expressed how much happiness and relief she felt being able to play and feel joy again. She hopes to attend similar gatherings in the future and is grateful to IOCC for helping the youth in her community get together in a spirit of friendship.

Make a

GRATITUDE COLLAGE



We all have things in our lives we're grateful for, it could be family, friends—or a favorite pet! It's important to be mindful of all the things Christ has blessed us with, and to try and be grateful, even when it seems hard. To help remind yourself of all the good things, you can make a Gratitude Collage. It's a cool way to put together and recognize all your favorite things!



First, gather some supplies like magazines, photos, newspapers, stickers, scissors, and glue. Then, start looking through the

magazines and papers for pictures, words, or colors that remind you of all the good things in your life—like your family, friends, pets, favorite hobbies, special memories, or even your favorite foods.



Cut them out and arrange them on a big piece of paper or poster board in any way you like. You can mix and match shapes, sizes, and colors.



When you're finished, you can hang the collage up on your wall so you can always remember all the good things to be grateful for!



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:



UKRAINE

Did You Know? Ukraine is known for its unique cultural tradition of Easter egg painting, using beeswax and special dyes.



A Mother and Son Flee Conflict

Danilo (not his real name) and his mother left Ukraine to find safety and get help for his health condition. Leaving behind all their family, Danilo and his mother went to Poland where they found shelter.

Once they got there, they found financial help from IOCC and its partners and were able to afford basics like food, clothes, and medicine. This helped make it

easier on his mother, and she was able to afford therapy to help with Danilo's condition.

"It is thanks to your support that we live and sleep safely...I am very grateful to all of you for your help," said Danilo's mother.

Through IOCC, Ukrainian families like Danilo's are able to get the items they need to carry on.

Donate Gently-Used Clothes

TO THOSE LESS FORTUNATE

Do you have any clothes or shoes you've outgrown or that you just don't wear anymore? Try donating them to people in need! Start by getting together with your Mom or Dad to see if there's anything they wouldn't mind giving away. Then you can go through your closet, making piles of stuff you wouldn't mind sharing with someone else.



After that, help wash, fold, and pack the clothes and shoes neatly into boxes or bags. Once your parents help you find the nearest place to donate—it's time to drop everything off! It's a simple way to spread kindness, make a big difference, and have fun at the same time.



As you sort through your clothes, think about how fortunate you are. Not everyone has clothes or shoes to keep them warm and protected. In what other ways are you fortunate? What other items could you donate or share with others?



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

POLAND

Did You Know? Poland has produced 17 Nobel Prize winners, showcasing its contributions to literature, peace, and science.



Fostering Community for Refugee Families

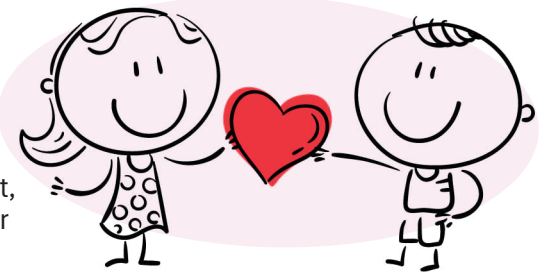
Poland has had many people from Ukraine cross their borders over the past few years seeking safety. But moving to a new place can be a bit scary—especially when you don't know anyone. That's why IOCC and its partners in Poland have been sponsoring events to try and introduce communities to their new neighbors.

Recently, IOCC hosted a concert and a dinner to help locals and refugees from Ukraine to get to know each other. Families were able to meet, talk, and enjoy some good food and fellowship. Can you think of a time when you went somewhere and didn't know anybody? Can you think of any ways you might try to make someone new feel welcome?

Love In Action:

DRAW A MAP!

On a piece of paper, draw a big heart in the middle. In that heart, write the word LOVE. Around it, draw little bubbles or branches that say:



LOVE IS... sharing
LOVE IS... listening
LOVE IS... helping

LOVE IS... serving
LOVE IS... giving
LOVE IS... praying



Now, think of a time you showed love to someone. For each bubble, add a drawing or a sentence next to it describing a time you showed love in that way. If you shared something, describe a time you shared; if you listened, describe a time you listened, and so on.

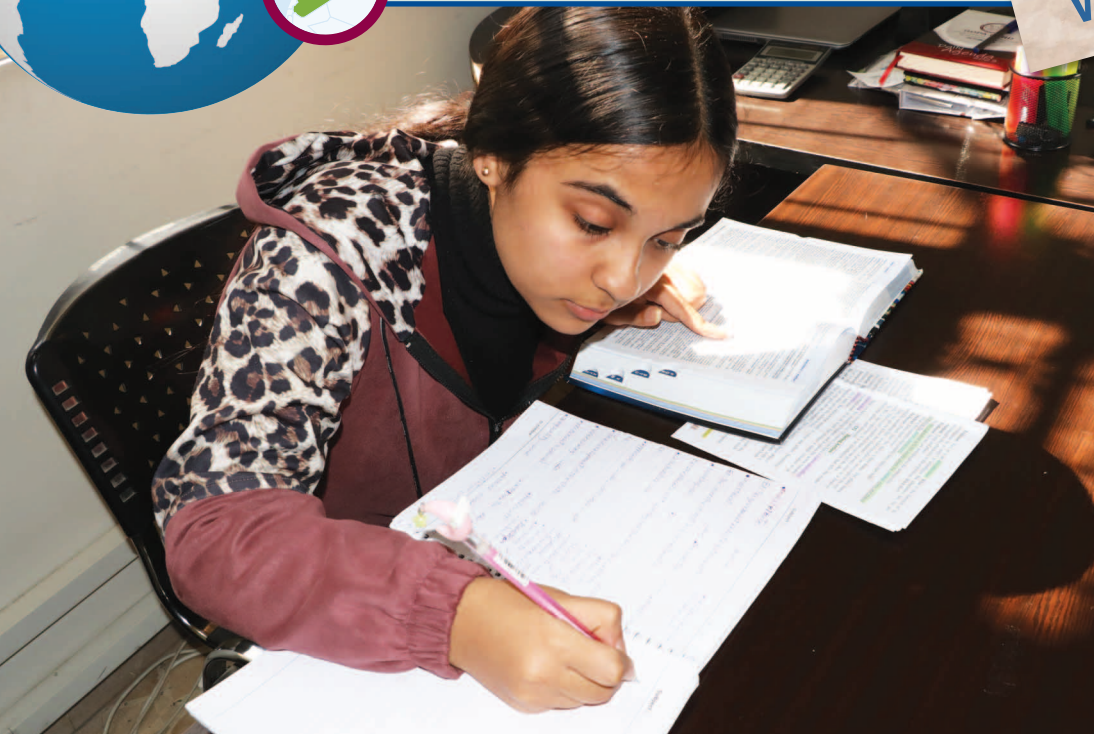
If you can't think of a time you did one of these things—don't worry! This is an opportunity to go out and show some love!



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? The Roman theater in Bosra, Syria, was built in the 2nd century AD.



Sanaa Realizes Her Dream of University

Sanaa (not her real name) is a teenage girl living in Syria who learned about an opportunity for better education through IOCC—and immediately wanted in! The program supported by IOCC gave Sanaa the teaching she needed to prepare for her big test to get into university.

Sanaa took the exam. Not only did she

pass, she got one of the highest scores in her whole area! Thanks to her success and IOCC's program, Sanaa was able to choose any school she wanted.

Sanaa said, "My hopes for the future are high...you are motivating a generation of children to hold on and fight hard for their futures. Many thanks!"

Write A Letter

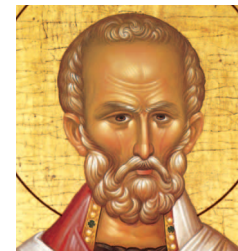
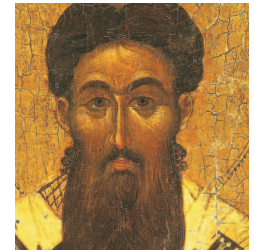
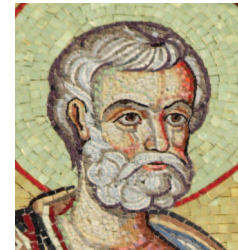
TO YOUR PATRON SAINT!

Have you ever tried writing a letter to your patron saint?

It's a meaningful way to deepen your connection with someone who has truly walked a path of holiness. You can tell them about your day, ask for help with something you're worried about, or just say thank you. You can even draw pictures or decorate your letter! So pick up a pen, pencil, or crayon, and use the space below to tell your patron saint what's on your mind.



Tip: If you're not sure who your patron saint is, ask your parents, or simply write a letter to your favorite saint!



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? Uganda is home to the source of the Nile River, the longest river in the world.



Repairing Schools in Rural Communities

Since 2009, IOCC has been helping build and fix up schools in the countryside of Uganda, where rural areas often don't have what they need to provide quality education.

In April 2024, when a big storm hit the Prophet Obadiah Primary School in Butembe causing a lot of damage, IOCC stepped in to help. IOCC and its partners took off the broken roof and put on a new one made of

strong steel. The well and water pump were completely rebuilt so people could get clean water again, and new pipes were added for better airflow

Now, students are back in school, and with help from donors and partners, IOCC will continue supporting Uganda's small communities, helping them grow strong for the future.



Role Play:

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

In Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan, we are given a lesson in how to treat and care for those who are different from us. The Good Samaritan is an example of compassion, service, and selflessness that we all seek to imitate.



Now imagine this: a new student at your school is being left out and ignored. No one wants to be friends with them. What do you do?

With your family or Sunday School class, try to brainstorm some ways to be welcoming toward the new student, and how to encourage others to be welcoming.

Here are some other things to reflect on:

- Is it always easy to help others? Why or why not?
- Can you think of a time when someone was a Good Samaritan towards you?



I'M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:



Did You Know? The name Lebanon comes from the Semitic word “Ibn” which means “white” in reference to the snow-capped Mount Lebanon.



Zara and Her Baby Get Proper Nutrition

When Zara (not her real name) arrived in Lebanon with her five children, her baby daughter was frequently ill from feeding in conditions that were not clean. Babies always need to feed in a clean environment to make sure no germs are present. Fortunately for Zara, she was able to connect with an IOCC specialist who gave her tips on safer feeding practices.

After learning from the IOCC specialist, Zara made some changes to how she fed her baby, and now she is feeding regularly and healthily. “The specialist helped me a lot and gave me all the information I needed on how and what to feed my daughter,” Zara said.

Memorize

A PRAYER



Can you recite a prayer from memory?

Memorizing a prayer is a great way to deepen our connection to Christ, and to keep God and loved ones in our hearts throughout the day. You can pick a short, meaningful prayer and practice saying it quietly to yourself until you know it by heart. Then, whenever you think of a person you want to pray for, you can say the prayer to ask God to help and protect them.

If you don’t have a short prayer available to memorize, you can memorize the prayers below:

For Yourself: *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!*

For Others: *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon _____, remembering them always in thy kingdom.*



I’M PRAYING FOR:

I THANK GOD FOR:

Did You Know? The current, 50-star US flag was designed by a high school student, Robert G. Heft, in 1958.



Restoring Homes After Hurricanes

After Florida was hit hard by Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, many homes experienced multiple flooding events and needed serious repairs. One homeowner, Camilla, left to stay with her sister during the hurricanes, and when she returned home, she found severe flood damage she couldn't address on her own.

Fortunately for Camilla, IOCC was able to step in and provide people with the skills necessary to get her home fixed. IOCC and its volunteer team made significant repairs,

including installing a special waterproof drywall, to make sure Camilla's home would not suffer similar water damage again.

IOCC and its volunteer teams have been cleaning up and rebuilding homes all across Florida and Tennessee—but anyone can be a volunteer! You can volunteer to help around the house, at church, or assemble school or hygiene kits for someone in need. Someday you can even volunteer to be part of a real IOCC team!

Assemble a

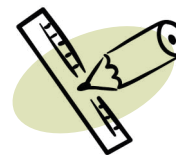
SCHOOL KIT

Many students around the world go to school every day without the tools they need to learn. Think about how hard it would be for you to take part in class without a pencil or a notebook! To try and help, IOCC collects School Kits to give out to students who are less fortunate. And you can get involved!

Talk to your Sunday School teacher about choosing a day to assemble School Kits for IOCC.

Here is what goes in a kit:

- 12 colored pencils
- Two-pocket folder
- Glue stick
- Blunt-tip scissors (packaging removed)
- 70-page spiral-bound notebook
- 30-cm/12" ruler
- Hand-held pencil sharpener (packaging removed)
- Large eraser
- Six new, unsharpened pencils (bundled with a rubber band)
- Box of 24 crayons
- 12"x14" to 14"x17" cotton or lightweight canvas bag with handles (solid color or kid-friendly fabric, no logos)
- Optional: Handmade or store-bought pencil pouch



For packing information, visit iocc.org/schoolkits. When ready, your kits will be collected at a warehouse, prepared for shipping, and sent to children in need!



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



I'M PRAYING FOR:



SAY YOUR **DAILY PRAYERS**

When we pray as Orthodox Christians, we can 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 daily prayers to help you as you pray each day. While we can always pray on our own, it is helpful for us to also use daily prayer routines passed down through our Church, so we learn how to pray regularly and thoughtfully.

With these prayers, try to find a special time and place that works for you, and start your own prayer routine. After a while, with daily prayer we feel less worried, more happy, more loved, and protected by God—just as St. John Chrysostom tells us.

I THANK GOD FOR:



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.

MORNING PRAYER

O Lord, grant that I may meet the coming day in peace.
Help me in all things to rely upon Your Holy will.

In every hour of the day, reveal Your will to me ...

In all my words and actions,
guide my thoughts and feelings ...

Direct my will and teach me to pray, to believe,
to hope, to be patient, to forgive, and to love. Amen.

MID-DAY PRAYER

O Christ our God, who at this hour stretched out
Your loving arms upon the Cross that all people might
be gathered unto You, help us and save us
who cry unto You: Glory to You, O Lord.

EVENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, You received the
children who came to You, receive also
from Your child this evening prayer.

Shelter me under the protection of Your wings
that I may lie down in peace and sleep.

Awaken me in due time that I may glorify You,
for You alone are good and love all people.

Into Your hands, O Lord Jesus Christ,
I commend my spirit and body; bless me,
save me, and grant me eternal life.

The Father is my hope,
the Son is my refuge,
the Holy Spirit is my shelter.
Holy Trinity, Glory to You.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

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.

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.



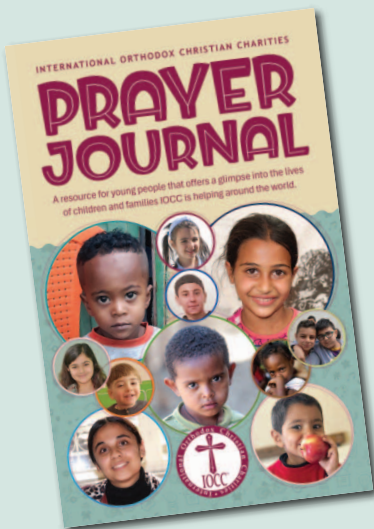
SPECIAL THANKS:

IOCC would also like to offer a special
thanks to the Serbian Orthodox
Diocese of Eastern America for their
collaboration and support in bringing
this year's *Prayer Journal* to life.



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