



**The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

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January 6, 2009  
Great Feast of Theophany

Beloved in Christ:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was baptized by John in the river Jordan for our salvation. A blessed and happy feast day and New Year to you and your families.

While we rejoice in this great feast of our holy Church, we also are deeply saddened by the humanitarian crisis that we are witnessing daily in Gaza. With each news update we hear of more and more people, many of them women and children, whose lives have been abruptly and needlessly ended by the brutality of the ongoing invasion of a foreign army. In addition to this senseless loss of life, there is a humanitarian disaster taking place. Food and water are running out, there is a dire lack of medical supplies, and countless thousands have no place to rest their heads at night.

Since there is no infrastructure in Gaza, we have no way to help these suffering people directly as an Archdiocese. Thanks be to God, however, that we have IOCC, International Orthodox Christian Charities. IOCC is mobilizing its forces in the disaster relief community and through its contacts in Gaza to bring much needed aid to the suffering people there. Therefore, I strongly urge each of our parishes to collect money in a way they see fit and forward it directly to IOCC as soon as possible. For more information on IOCC and how they are helping in Gaza, please see the attached news release or view their website at [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org).

Praying that the All-Holy Trinity, made manifest on this great feast, will grant all of you a safe and healthy New Year, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Metropolitan Philip'.  
+Metropolitan PHILIP

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America