



TOUCHING LIVES

FOCUS NORTH AMERICA

Master Bless! It is with the deepest respect for your heart for the Lord's poor that I write to thank you for your generous gift to help those most in need. Your gift will provide hot, nutritious meals, vital care and family counseling for many homeless, unemployed and hurting people in America who are struggling against the odds to make ends meet. And because we are an Orthodox ministry people also know that God loves them too!

COVENANT HOUSE

Thank you so much for your generous gift to our Covenant House. Tonight, when I thank God that over 51,000 homeless and runaway children received lifesaving help at Covenant House this year, I will also thank God for you. Your generosity is a sign that love lives all year round, and God doesn't forget these kids for even a single moment. Especially as we struggle through these difficult economic times and more young people will be looking for our help. I can never thank you enough for the love and the hope that you brought to our kids.

UNION STATION HOMELESS SERVICES

We are very grateful for the generosity of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. Your grant makes a tremendous difference to the Union Station Homeless Services, and will provide food, shelter and vital supportive services for the homeless men, women, and children who depend on us for assistance. We have been dedicated to helping homeless individuals and families become productive, stable and self-supporting. Everyday, we have the privilege of seeing people bravely rebuild their lives. On behalf of those lives you have helped transform, thank you for your compassion and your confidence in our work.

LEBANESE LADIES CULTURAL SOCIETY

We would like to thank you for your generous donation so that many fortunate students will be able to stay in school another year. Your involvement with humanitarian projects and your international Food for Hungry People program touched and saved many lives. You are greatly admired and respected for your good work. God bless and guide your efforts.

TELEIOS MINISTRIES

On behalf of Teleios, may I take this opportunity to offer to you my gratitude for the gift from the Food for Hungry program. Once again, it has been helpful in our ministry to both so called 'at risk' juveniles and inmates who are preparing to re-enter our society. In both cases it allows us to put our faith in action with good works.

FISTA

(Diagnostic Center and Schools for Exceptional Children) From the staff members, parent committee and especially the children of FISTA we send the Antiochian Archdiocese this small note from the heart, to thank you for your continuous support and care for our children with special needs. Their smiles are your thank you. Your help enables us to provide a better future filled with countless opportunities for our children.

Much needed food and necessities were provided for the Orphans and Poor in the following Archdiocese:

Archdiocese of...

- Tyre & Sidon, Lebanon
- Houran, Syria
- Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines
- Mt. Lebanon, Lebanon

THANK YOU



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

ALMSGIVING

In Christ's teachings, almsgiving goes together with fasting and prayer. When one prays and fasts, one must show love through active generosity to others. Giving alms should be a sacrificial act if it has any worth. One cannot give merely what is left over when all his own needs are satisfied. One must take from oneself and give to others. In the spiritual tradition of the Church, it is the teaching that what one saves through fasting and abstinence, for example during the special Lenten seasons, should not be kept for other times, but should be given away to the poor.

A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

O, Heavenly Father,
We thank You for food and remember the hungry.
We thank You for health and remember the sick.
We thank You for friends and remember the friendless.
We thank You for freedom and remember the enslaved.
May these remembrances stir us to service,
that Your gifts to us may be used for others in need.
Amen

ALMS BOX

We propose that you use a household ALMS BOX. Augment your personal prayer life with communal prayer with the other members of your family each day during the Great Lent. Choose a time when your entire household can be present. After prayer and appropriate Scriptural reading, each member of the family should place his personal offering in the box. Parents of younger children will find it helpful to discuss the joy of giving and emulating Christ who loved us and taught us to alleviate human suffering.

Our Lord looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." —Luke 21:1-4

When we see a homeless man begging for food on the corner or in front of a store, do we see Christ in him? When we hear stories about the increase in families using food banks during the Great Recession, do we recognize ourselves in them? The economic downturn has caused millions to lose their jobs, their homes and a sense of financial well-being. This tragedy has produced a drastic increase in the number of

families who go hungry every day. Can you imagine what it would be like if you could not eat on a daily basis, simply because you could not afford food? Can you imagine how your stomach would hurt, how your head would grow light and your energy would falter? Would you know where you would turn for help?

For almost four decades, Food for Hungry People has been our way of helping the poor and needy who struggle to find food, clothes and hope. They also find a personal touch that says, "You're not alone," I'm here and I'll help."

During the Great Lent, we ask that you engage in Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. We recognize giving as a part of our Lenten Journey because we recognize Christ is the stranger

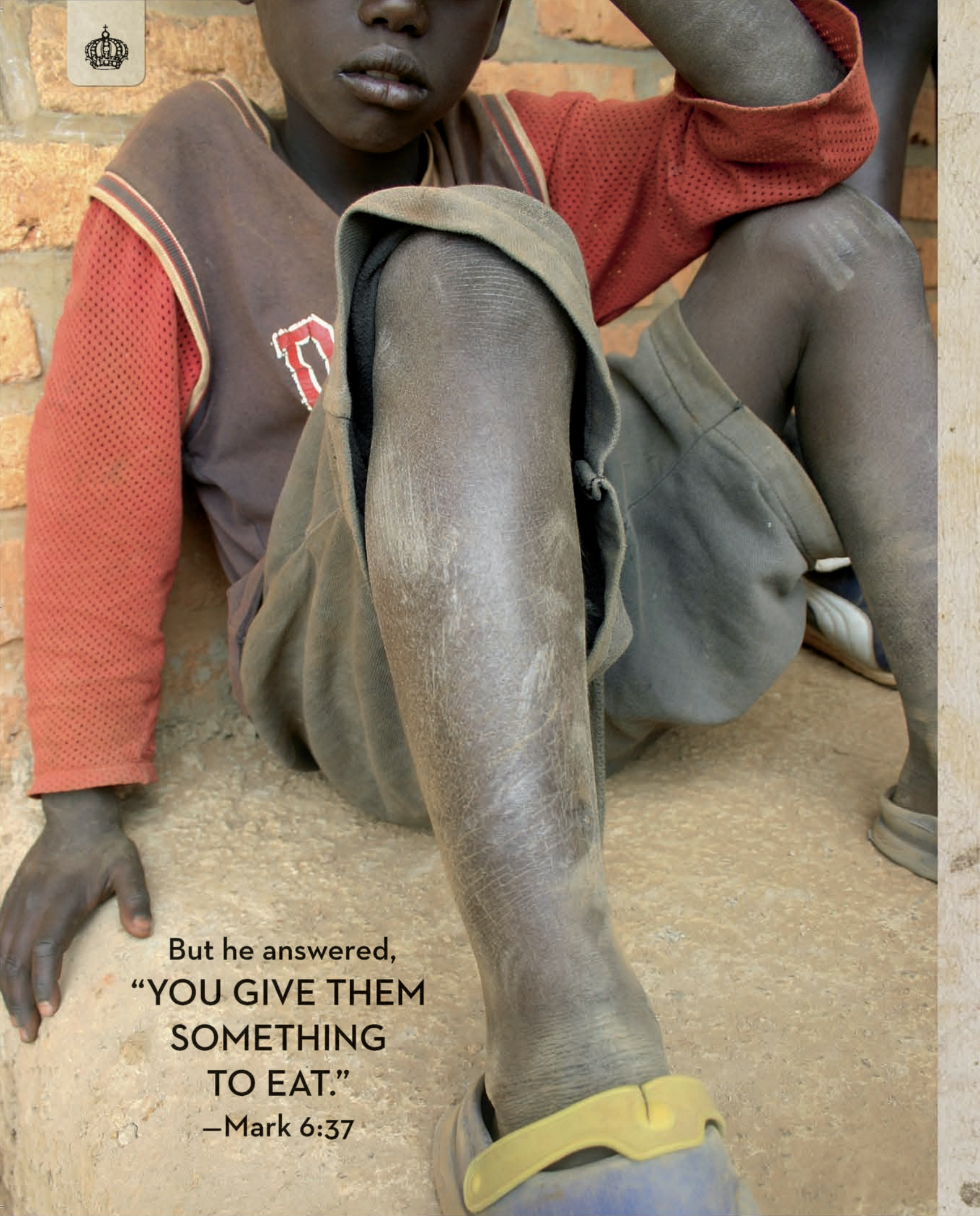
we feed and clothe. When you give during Lent, you are demonstrating your love and commitment to Christ's mission and saying with Him, "You're not alone, I'm here and I do care enough to help."

We ask that you look inside your heart and actively participate in our program with your family. We ask that you give what you can, using the poor widow as your guide. Through your generosity to the Food for Hungry People campaign, you embrace the world with the love of Christ, saving yourself as you literally save others.

Robin
Robin Lynn Nicholas
Food for Hungry People Coordinator



FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE

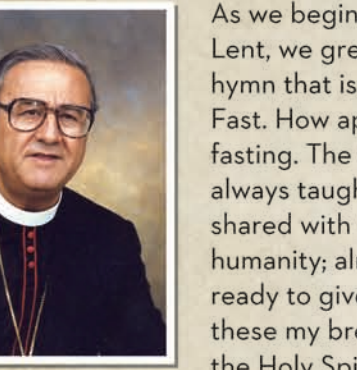


But he answered,
**“YOU GIVE THEM
SOMETHING
TO EAT.”**
—Mark 6:37



“Come, let us purify our souls with the alms and mercy to the poor, not blowing our trumpets, nor making public what we accomplish in charity, lest the left hand know what the right hand is doing, and vain glory does away with the fruit of alms. Let us however, plead secretly with Him who knows our secrets, crying: Father, forgive us our faults; for You are the Lover of mankind.”

BELOVED IN THE LORD




As we begin another fast period in the life of the Church, Great Lent, we greet you with this most beautiful and meaningful hymn that is sung on the evening of the First Sunday of the Fast. How appropriate that we combine our almsgiving with our fasting. The Church Fathers and Mothers of blessed memory always taught us that the food we give up during Lent should be shared with the less fortunate. Fasting is a cutting back of our humanity; almsgiving is a sharing of our divinity. When we are ready to give of our time, talents and resources to the “least of these my brethren,” we are doing the will of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the World.

Do not allow a hungry soul to go to bed tonight without your gift. Do not deny a homeless person the possibility of a shelter from the elements. Do not neglect your responsibilities to the elderly, the infirm, the weak. Great Lent is a school for our spirituality which we shall nourish all year long.

We commend to you the Food for Hungry People campaign which has become synonymous with our Great Lenten Season. Under the guidance of our daughter in Christ, Robin Nicholas, we have been able to help countless numbers of people with the donations given by the faithful of our Archdiocese.

Asking the Almighty God to bless you during this journey to Pascha, we remain

Your Father in Christ,

Metropolitan PHILIP
Primate
The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of North America

37 YEARS OF CARING

**“If you are not
successful in
your prayer,
you will not be
successful in
anything, for
prayer is the root
of everything.”**

GREAT LENT

The season of Great Lent is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Christ. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds in conformity with Christ and His teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors.

FASTING

Jesus Himself fasted and taught His disciples to fast. The purpose of fasting is to gain mastery over oneself and to conquer the passions of the flesh. It is to liberate oneself from the dependence on the things of this world in order to concentrate on the things of the Kingdom of God. We are called upon to fast not only for reasons of self-control and prayer, but also for reasons of love: to deny ourselves something, that we may share what we have saved with a needy person.

PRAYER

All of the virtues and powers of God are attained primarily by prayer. Without prayer, there is no spiritual life. As the Russian Bishop, Saint Theophan the Recluse, has said, “If you are not successful in your prayer, you will not be successful in anything, for prayer is the root of everything.” (Theophan the Recluse, 19th c., The Art of Prayer, Igumen Chariton, ed.)

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret: and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

—Matthew 6:5-6

