

JOY

grades 3-6

Y²A M Ministry Plan

December 2017

Part of the 2017-2018 Ministry Year

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Office of Camping Ministries

Welcome to the Y²AM Ministry Plan!

August 3, 2017

Dear JOY Leader,

Being a ministry worker isn't easy. For too long, Church workers have spent countless hours finding or identifying resources and materials for their important work: drafting curricula, brainstorming sessions, creating calendars, etc.

That's all valuable effort. But wouldn't it be better if you could spend that time working with the JOY children in your care, rather than cooped up in your office?

But to do that, you need support. You need a set of reliable, high-quality materials to help you lead Christ-centered ministry for your community.

That's why we created the **Y²AM Ministry Plan**.

We've created nine months of materials carefully designed for well-rounded, effective, and Kingdom-oriented ministry. Organized week-by-week and month-by-month, the Y²AM Ministry Plan gives you a comprehensive set of tools that will help you lead ministry designed, not simply for the head, but for the heart.

After all, Christians aren't simply informed: they are formed. They are transformed in the light of Christ into the people, the saints, God has called us to be.

That's why the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** offers a diverse set of experiences that don't simply pass on messages but rather facilitate encounters: both with other Christians and with our Lord Himself.

And it's all laid out for you, from the first week of September 2017 through the last week of May 2018.

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at y2am@goarch.org. Please, let us know what you think: we're committed to creating a new **Y²AM Ministry Plan** every year and constantly refining and improving the materials we offer you.

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y²AM

Special Acknowledgment

August 3, 2017

The **Y²AM Ministry Plan** takes the very best ministry insights and sets them forth in a simple, concrete, easy-to-use resource that can offer ministry workers help today. It reflects the great work of our Team, a fantastic group of people who have done (and continue to do) amazing things for the Church.

I'm blessed to work with them; their fierce dedication and humble love of the Lord encourage me daily.

Yet I'd be remiss if I don't offer special thanks to Cassandra Garibaldi, Y²AM's Resources & Training Coordinator, for her unique contribution.

Cassandra started working on this vital project almost a year ago. It's been an interesting and challenging process as she's both helped shape Y²AM's ministry vision and crystallized it into this concrete, user-friendly **Y²AM Ministry Plan**. Despite all the twists and turns and challenges along the way, Cassandra stayed focused on serving Christ and doing her best to help create ways to reveal Him in our lives.

Her leadership and effort (not to mention the amazing final product) are an incredible testament to Y²AM's ministry vision and the incredible impact that committed, Christ-centered young adults can have on the Church.

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y²AM

Additional Acknowledgment

August 3, 2017

The **Y²AM Ministry Plan** reflects the successful work and cooperation of dedicated, Christ-centered Church workers from across the country. It is a testament to the way the fruits of our labors are multiplied when we work together, both *for* and *with* each other.

Thanks in particular to our dedicated brothers and sisters in Christ:

Bryce Buffenbarger
Father Joseph Collins
Elaine Cremeens
Alex Demos
Spyridoula Fotinis
Father Andreas Houpos
Father Sampson Kasapakis
Summer Kinard
Father Dean Kokanos
Maria Koursaris
Alyssa Kyritsis
Alex Magdalinos
Father Nicholas Mueller
David Munkres
John Shelton
Emma Solak
Melissa Tsongranis
Natalie Wians
Sam Williams

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y²AM

How to Use the Y²AM Ministry Plan

When working with small groups, it can be easy to let talkative people (leaders and students included) take over conversation. Small groups are also filled with people who process things in different ways: some may need more time and silence, some may need physical manipulation (writing, getting up, etc.).

Here are some tips that you can use to help your groups thrive in discussion:

Before each session:

1. It is important to read through each session before presenting the session to participants. Be confident in what you are presenting.
2. Note time allotments and have in mind what you would like to accomplish with your group during the session.
3. Before each session begins, pass out paper and pens to each participant. This can help participants process their thoughts and reactions.

During each session:

1. When asking questions, allow time for participants to reflect and write their answers down on the paper.
 2. Read one of the main questions or Bible verses from the lesson and write it on a board. Give a few minutes to respond and then allow time for each participant to respond.
 3. Try many different ways to engage conversation, and don't be afraid of silence; just because people aren't saying anything doesn't mean that they aren't thinking or responding.
 4. Remember to listen before reacting.
 5. If a question comes up and you are not sure of the answer, be honest and let participants know. Ask a priest and follow up with the participants. Be honest and true to yourself.
 6. If you have a good discussion going on a topic, allow the conversation to flow. Don't feel like you have to ask every question or go through every activity in its entirety.
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Remember:

1. These sessions are a time for participants to share their own hearts, thoughts and feelings. They have much to say and offer, so try your best to be an active listener.
2. The goal is for participants to speak and learn, not to force a lesson on them for the sake of getting through the paper outline.
3. You are on a journey with your participants, and everyone is on a journey of learning together.

Thanks for letting the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** help you lead incredible, Christ-centered ministry.

And thank you for letting us join you on this journey.

JOY

Grades 3-6

Resources Book

A Y²AM Project
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Office of Camping Ministries

“Fruit of the Spirit” : Patience

Model sessions, activities, and lesson plans for the month of December

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LEARNING SESSION

DECEMBER 2017

How Patience is a Fruit of the Spirit

DATE:

Week of Monday, December 4, 2017

GOAL:

To learn why patience is a fruit of the Spirit

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can show patience in your daily life, even when it is difficult

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

**LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. marshmallows
2. paper plates

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ICEBREAKER

10 minutes

Gather participants in a circle. Ask them to say their name and share their pet peeve.

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with a fun activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Ministry is about hitting hearts, not just heads, and we should strive to establish a level of comfort and safety to encourage participants to open their hearts to each other and to God.

ACTIVITY 1: MARSHMALLOW

WAITING GAME

10 minutes

Give a marshmallow to each participant. Tell them they can eat the marshmallow now or wait and get two more. Wait one or two minutes and then give two marshmallows to the participants who did not eat their first marshmallow.

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Were you able to wait to eat the marshmallow?
- Was it hard to wait?
- What made it hard to wait?

Remember:

Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what is happening in the group. Take this time to connect with what is important to them and notice what connections they are making.

**LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ACTIVITY 2: LEARNING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What is patience?
- When have you had to be patient? Can you share a story?
- What makes it hard to be patient?
- Think of a patient person in your life. What has made them patient?

Remember:

This is another chance to have participants wrestle with important questions, and share their hearts.

Lesson:

We all have things in life that we do not want to do. It is only through doing the things we do not want to do, in a way of not complaining, that we grow patience in our lives. When we are successful at this, patience can bring peace and joy to our lives and relationships. Patience is a gentle, long-suffering attitude toward the other. Family life gives us many opportunities to grow in patience. Practicing patience allows God to work in our lives and gives other people space to learn and grow. Patience counters anger in our lives.

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 3: SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNA

10 minutes

Read the life of Saints Joachim and Anna:

There was a man named Joachim who was a wealthy shepherd in Nazareth, known for his generosity. He would add up all of his lambs and sheep, their wool and his profits, and he would give one third to the orphans, widows, strangers and the poor; he would give another third to the Temple and its servants and those who worshipped God; and he would keep only the last third for himself and his household. Because he was so generous and good, the Lord blessed him and multiplied his flocks.

When Joachim was twenty years old, he married Anna, a girl from Bethlehem. They wanted children but no children came, until finally they were very old. One day, Joachim brought his usual, generous offering to the Temple, but Zacharias, the high priest, sent him away saying that God must be judging Joachim by not sending children. Joachim was heartbroken. He took his sheep deep into the countryside, and pitched a tent. He would not eat or drink, but he fasted and prayed.

While Joachim was in the wilderness, Anna walked in the garden. As she prayed, she thought about Sarah, Abraham's wife who gave birth to Isaac in her very old age. She noticed a sparrow's nest on a laurel branch, and prayed to the Lord about how the birds had babies, but she did not. Like Joachim, she was very sad, so she prayed and drew closer to God.

One day, the angel Gabriel came to Joachim and said that God knew about his generosity and his love, and heard his prayers. He said, "Anna, your wife, will bring forth a daughter and you shall name her Mary. She will be devoted to the Lord from her infancy, and she shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from her mother's womb. Mary shall not eat or drink anything unclean, nor shall she be among the crowds of the people, but in the Temple of the Lord. She will be born to a barren woman, and then later she will give birth to the Son of the Most High, the Savior of all nations." As the angel left him, he said that Joachim would find his wife at the Golden Gate.

Meanwhile, in the garden, Anna did not know that the angel visited her husband with amazing news, and she was still very sad. Then the same angel of the Lord appeared to her, saying, "Anna, Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive a child and your seed shall be spoken of in all the world." And Anna said, "As the Lord my God lives, whether I have a boy or a girl, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God; and my child shall minister to Him all the days of its life." The angel told her also to look for her husband at the Golden Gate.

Just as the angel promised, Joachim and Anna arrived at the Golden Gate at the same time, and both were filled with joy at the wondrous tidings they had heard. Anna gave birth to their daughter, and they named her Mary.

On Mary's third birthday, her parents and all of their friends had a beautiful procession, bringing Mary to the Temple, where the high priest Zacharias was waiting to receive her. She was so happy to be there that she ran up the stairs. Her uncle the high priest gave her a tour of the Temple, and because she was to be the Mother of God, he brought her into the holiest of holies. Before Mary arrived, only the high priest could enter the holiest of holies, and he would only do so one day a year,

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

on the Day of Atonement. But Zacharias brought Mary into this holiest place, and she was frequently visited by angels there, who brought her food and talked with her. Mary grew up happily in the Temple, with a small group of other young girls, all dedicated to the service of the Lord.

*from *Welcoming the Christ Child: Family Meditations for the Nativity Lent* by Elissa Bjeletich, published by Sebastian Press, 2016.

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What kind of life did Saints Joachim and Anna lead?
- Where can we find examples of patience in the story?
- What did their patience lead to?

Lesson:

Saints Joachim and Anna lived their life generously serving others. They were prayerful and loved God very much, but they had to be patient to wait for God to send them a child. Their patience paid off, because the child God sent was none other than Mary, who would bring our Savior into the world. Saints Joachim and Anna are remembered at every Orthodox liturgy, as the grandparents of our Lord.

**LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way you will try to be patient with others, even when it may be difficult?

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us to turn to You for help. Lord, help us to be patient. Christ assured us that only the ones who are patient will inherit the Kingdom of God. Help us to remember, “He who endures to the end will be saved.” Amen.

(Matthew 24:13)

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

DECEMBER 2017

How to Demonstrate Patience Through our Relationships

DATE:

Week of Monday, December 11, 2017

GOAL:

To learn how to demonstrate patience through
our relationships

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can show patience in
your daily life, even when it is difficult

ESTIMATED DURATION:

2 hours

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. meal recipe
2. meal ingredients
3. 5-6 decks of playing cards

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 1: PREPARE THE MEAL

45 minutes

Feel free to use your own preferred recipe. Organize participants to clean up and prepare the meal for the night. Make sure everyone has a job, even if it is a small one. Remember to pray before everyone starts eating.

Remember:

You can order pre-made food, but preparing a meal is a great way for people to connect and share a special bond. It is no accident that the focus of every Liturgy is a meal, and that early Christians shared meals together as a sign of their love and community.

ACTIVITY 2: CLEAN UP

10 minutes

Make sure the space is completely clean after everyone has eaten.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 3: CARD TOWER

30 minutes

Split participants into groups of three or four. Have participants build a tower with the playing cards. Tell them they must use all cards. They may not bend the cards in any way.

The activity is complete when each card is used to build the tower.

ACTIVITY 4: ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Was the activity easy or difficult?
- What was good about working in a group?
- What is needed to build a tower like this in a group?
 - Patience, team work, cooperation

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 5: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- How did you demonstrate patience in the activity?
- How did you see others demonstrate patience in the activity?
- What are some examples we see of this kind of patience in our own lives?
 - Parents, siblings, friends, family

Lesson:

It can be easier to do things on your own, and working together with others can be very difficult. We each have our own needs and desires, and we want to do things our own way. Being patient with others means we have to put our needs away and do things in a kind way then we are able to work with the other person patiently.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way you will try to be patient with people in your life?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to practice patience in all things even when it's difficult?

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us to turn to You for help. Lord, help us to be patient. Christ assured us that only the ones who are patient will inherit the Kingdom of God. Help us to remember, “He who endures to the end will be saved.”

Amen.

(Matthew 24:13)

WORSHIP SESSION

DECEMBER 2017

Experiencing Patience Through Worship

DATE:

Week of Monday, December 18, 2017

GOAL:

To experience patience through our Christian worship

OBJECTIVE:

To chant the Small Paraklesis together

ESTIMATED DURATION:

90 minutes

**WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. copies of Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
2. pencils and paper

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

ACTIVITY 1: SMALL PARAKLESIS

45 minutes

Invite your parish priest to lead the service. If your parish priest is not available, you can still chant it as a reader service. If it is a reader service, make the following changes:

1. Instead of “Blessed is our God...” to begin the service, we say: “Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.”
2. After the “Our Father,” we say “Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us,” instead of “For Thine is the power...”
3. We omit all the petitions and commemorations of names done by the priest.

Assemble your group either in the Church building (if possible) or before an icon of the Theotokos.

A copy of the service is available here: http://www.goarch.org/chapel/chant/paraklesis/index_html.

Remember:

The more we are exposed to prayer and the language of the Church, the more our minds and hearts are shaped by the mind and heart of the Church. Over time, we can internalize the prayer of the Church and better learn to talk to God ourselves. This takes time, and should be an important part of every ministry.

**WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ACTIVITY 2: DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you feel or experience during the service?
- What is one lesson that you can take away from the service?

Remember:

Many participants may not have ever celebrated this service before. Some may not have heard it chanted in English. Give them space to process and verbalize what they've just experienced.

ACTIVITY 3: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Was it easy to sit through the service?
- What happened during the service?
- Can you identify themes from the Small Paraklesis?
 - Love, repentance, forgiveness, patience
- How does the Small Paraklesis relate to patience?
- How do you experience or feel patience through chanting Paraklesis together?

Remember:

Some (perhaps many) participants don't feel patient in Church services. Instead, they're more often bored than inspired. Don't be afraid of "negative" or "challenging" answers. We can always ask the Theotokos to help us as we struggle with boredom and distraction.

ACTIVITY 4: REFLECTION

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Can we become more patient through worshipping in church?
- What makes it hard to be in Church for an hour, but easy to sit in front of the television for hours?

Remember:

When they are very young, we teach children “how” to connect with God: prayer, fasting, etc. As they grow, we need to teach them “why” we need God. As children grow, they develop a better understanding of the brokenness of the world and the inner brokenness against which we all struggle. We all need help: verbalizing this is a step towards humility and opening ourselves to God, who is the source of life and healing.

ACTIVITY 5: EXCERPT & APPLICATION

10 minutes

Ask one participant to read the following verse aloud:

Ode 3 - Verse 4

*With most serious ailments,
And with the passions so dark,
I am being tested, O Virgin,
Come and bring help to me;
For I have known of you,
That you are without fail
the endless treasure of cures,
Only all-blameless One.*

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What stood out to you?
- What can we do when bad things happen in life and we are tested?
- Can these bad things help us to be more patient?

WORSHIP SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Lesson:

Patience is not an easy thing to learn. It is only through the tough times that we can learn to be patient and kind with the people in our lives. We can always pray to the Panagia to help us grow our patience.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way to experience patience in your daily life through what you learned in the service?
- Have you been following up on your commitment from last week to try to be patient with people even when it's difficult?

Remember:

Don't just use this opportunity to ask participants to commit to action: check in with them, and follow up to see how they're doing after past sessions. We can all be accountable to each other to make necessary improvements in our lives.

WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us to turn to You for help. Lord, help us to be patient. Christ assured us that only the ones who are patient will inherit the Kingdom of God. Help us to remember, “He who endures to the end will be saved.”

Amen.

(Matthew 24:13)

SERVICE PROJECT

DECEMBER 2017

To Serve with Patience

DATE:

Week of Monday, December 25, 2017

GOAL:

To learn to serve with patience

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way to be patient in our daily lives while serving others

ESTIMATED DURATION:

1 hour 15 minutes

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

As needed (depending on the specific service project you choose)

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Good and gracious Lord, Creator of all, help me to recognize Your image in all the people that I will serve today and every day, in person or through activities that may benefit them. Help me to respect the people in need and to give my full attention and effort to the work that we do for them in Your Holy Name. Guide me to recognize all these people as my brothers and sisters. Help me to open my heart and fill it with compassion. Quiet any fears or nervousness that I might have so that I can be fully present to everyone I encounter today and every day. Help me to remember that some of the people I serve may be broken or wounded persons who need healing. Let my heart be moved to show love, and let my heart rejoice with any good that I may see or do in your name. Remind me to do my part, no matter how small, in Your great work of charity. Through serving my neighbor, may I recognize the better world that has been created.

Amen.

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ICEBREAKER

10 minutes

Ask participants to sit in a circle, with one person in the middle. The person in the middle will walk up to someone and ask, “Do you love your neighbor?” That person will respond, “Yes, except for [insert your own criterion here].” For example, “Yes, except for people wearing red.”

Everyone in the circle who matches the criterion needs to get up and find a new seat while the person who was in the middle tries to steal (sit) in someone’s seat. The person left standing becomes the new person in the middle.

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ACTIVITY 1: SERVICE PROJECT

30 minutes

Begin by introducing participants to the organization or population they will be serving, and the specific project they will be starting. Give participants any directions or materials they will need to achieve their goals for the day's service project.

Possible service organizations include:

- Local soup kitchen or food bank
- Homeless shelter
- Nursing home
- YES (*Youth Equipped to Serve, of FOCUS North America*) - focusnorthamerica.org/programs/yes/
- FOCUS North America - focusnorthamerica.org
- IOCC (*International Orthodox Christian Charities*) - iocc.org
- OCMC (*Orthodox Christian Mission Center*) - ocmc.org
- Salvation Army - salvationarmyusa.org

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ACTIVITY 2: DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you do during the service project?
- How do you feel after today's project?
- What was the goal of the project? Do you think the goal was achieved?
- What is something new that you learned today?
- Did you think you would be able to complete the task?

ACTIVITY 3: REFLECTION

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Did you experience patience through this project?
- How were other people patient with you?
- How did you work patiently during this project?

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

ACTIVITY 4: SCRIPTURE READING & APPLICATION

10 minutes

Have one participant read the following passage aloud to the group, twice:

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

(James 5:7-8)

Then ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What is one lesson you can take away from the project?
- How does the service project relate to the theme of “patience”?
- How is service an important part of patience?
- Can we make patience a habit?

SERVICE PROJECT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Lesson:

We should practice patience in our lives through kindly serving one another. By doing this, we can make a habit of patience in our lives. Serving one another can help us to become more patient in our lives.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way to experience patience in your daily life through what you learned during the service project?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to be patient with people even when it's difficult?

**SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18**

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, teach us to render to You all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise You with our whole lives, turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our life into a living sacrifice to you; Remind us, O Master, to opening our hearts daily to serve our brothers and sisters who are in need. In Your Holy name we pray.

Amen.