

Dear Parishioners,

Holy Week 2020

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)

I pray that everyone and your families are healthy and well as we are still in the grips of the tragic corona virus. We have been given certain mandates from our Metropolitan to follow concerning the Church and its worship services. This is not easy. No one could imagine this to happen. Unfortunately, we are in a very serious predicament.

We, as Orthodox Christians, are having common sense to understand what is at stake today. The very life of man. We take this seriously. We do not play games. This is the most sacred concept. God’s children suffering or in danger. Watch of what is happening in Italy, in Spain, in France, in England, in New York... Even the Monasteries in America are closed to visitors. Also, Mount Athos is closed to Pilgrims and the visitors have been asked to leave.

Now, our Metropolitan along with the Archbishop Elpidophoros and the other Hierarchs decided for us to implement a “closed doors” policy for the worship Services to safeguard the wellbeing of all. We are having everyday Services which will be on our website **“Live Streaming”** from Saturday of Lazarus to Pascha, Easter, with only up to five necessary people in the Church present, that is Fr. Aaron, the Altar boy, the Acolyte, the Chanter(s) and the Usher. **The doors of the Church will be locked.** We cannot distribute Palm crosses, Holy Unction, candles, the Pascha light, the eggs, or give Holy Communion, Antidoron etc. We will be able to watch live streaming all the Services. This is fair to all. When this evil will pass, we will go to Church and be anointed with the Holy Oil, receive Holy Communion, take Antidoron and everything else that we are so deprived at this predicament.

Specifically, the mandate from our Metropolis says: **including regarding attendance at services (minimum complement, no more than 5 including the clergy).** *“some of the “trappings” of Holy Week that we are accustomed to (decorations, large processions, etc.) should be left behind under the current circumstances (limited personnel, limited contact with others, etc.) in favor of a simpler expression consistent with our present limitations”.*

*“ Per the decision of the Eparchial Synod, there is to be no distribution of Antidoron, Palms, Flowers, Holy Unction, Eggs, or any other item to those not in attendance in the services (nor utilizing the attendees as proxies to distribute to the community). There will be no drive-up distribution or mailed distribution, and the clergy will not be making home visitation circuits”.*

*“No invitations for the people to come to Church for flowers, palms, unction, Holy Communion, etc.”*

*Holy Wednesday: -- Holy Unction does not have to be celebrated. Holy Unction will be reserved on the Holy Altar Table until such time as the restrictions are lifted.*

*Holy Saturday: The use of leaves / flowers to spread in the Church at the triumphant prokeimenon “Arise O God” is optional.”*

These are mainly the directives for Holy Week. Caring for each other and attending on the wellbeing of our fellow parishioners we are invited to support and honor these rules.

It is a painful decision that the Metropolis is making but necessary and beneficial. In these uncertain and risky times, we must adhere the guidance from the CDC, Medical Personnel, Government authorities, our Metropolitan, and we need to have a strong faith and our faithful be protected and healthy. We need to be proactive and serious about protecting our parishioners and not experimenting their health with this invisible and easy to transmit virus. Thus, we prevent the possibility of receiving or giving this deadly virus to others.

Let us stay home, pray from home and make our home a "Church". Please keep your Clergy, the Parish Council members and all the parishioners at Holy Trinity in your prayers, as well. Please also pray for the health of the medical personnel, emergency personnel and all the front line health providers during this crucial time. Please pray for the families that are sick, the families who have lost loved ones and especially please pray for the entire world to be rid of this virus.

On behalf of the Clergy and the Parish Council members of our Cathedral we ask for your understanding, pray you remain healthy and wish you all **Kali Anastasi**.

With love in Christ,  
Fr. Michael