



# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Parish Newsletter

RESTON

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA 2 April 2020

For persons interested in official directives, here is a bevy of them.

### THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Synodal Directives for the Clergy and the Parish, Mission, and Monastic Communities of the Orthodox Church in America Concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 30, 2020

In accordance with the Synodal Statement of this same date and in effect for the period of: March 30, 2020–April 30, 2020

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### 1. A General Directive regarding the Divine Services and Parish Gatherings:

Keeping in mind that in the Orthodox Church in America in general, all Divine Services and all ministries that are done in a monastery, parish, mission, or mission station are only done with the blessing of the Ruling Hierarch (the Diocesan Bishop or the *Locum Tenens*):

- All monasteries, parishes, missions, and mission stations must seek a specific blessing from their bishop to perform any Divine Service whatsoever during this period. This includes not only ordinary services, such as the Divine Liturgy, but also particular Holy Week and Paschal Services, as well as extraordinary services such as Holy Unction, funerals, baptisms, and weddings.

- Clergy may not serve Liturgy in their home or in any private home. If they desire to serve other Divine Services in their own home, they must consult with their bishop.

- As usual, the directives of a bishop given either via diocesan-wide letters or by individual communication of the bishop to his clergy and parishes are to be considered as binding.

**In Europe 90% of all deaths from Covid-19 are of people over sixty years of age. (ABC News) Ours is a community of older people. So with the help of God and Father let us do everything to dodge such a statistic. Stay at home. Let our prayer be our efforts to make our homes a place of peace.**

- All other in-person gatherings and in-person activities of any kind continue to be forbidden.

### 2. Regarding Civil Directives:

In accord with the Apostle Paul's injunction to bishops to remind their flocks "to be submissive to rulers and authorities" (Titus 3:1):

- The authority to interpret the civil authority's directives resides with the bishop.

- All Divine Services performed in a local community must be in accord with all local, state/provincial, and federal civil directives regarding the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

- All parish priests must daily make efforts to ensure that they are aware of any changes in the local, state/provincial, and federal civil directives in their community's locality, and must ensure that the Divine Services of their parish or mission community are in compliance with all such civil directives.

- If anyone among the clergy or if any member of a parish, mission, or mission station holds any sort of church service or gathering in direct opposition to the local civil authorities' Covid-19 preventative directives, such an action may result in severe canonical sanctions.

### 3. Limited Divine Services:

If the Ruling Hierarch has blessed for limited or "closed" Divine Services to be served in a community, services must be served according to whatever directives he has given to the priest and his parish or mission community either by diocesan-wide letter or individually. Nevertheless, all communities serving such limited services must adhere to the following at this time:

- Once the Priest and the assigned server(s) and singer(s) have entered the building for the service, the doors of the church must be locked.

- Anyone among the at-risk population, including those over 65, those with serious medical conditions, and those with any symptoms of illness of any kind, should not be among those attending any of these limited Divine Services. An exception may be made in the cases of a priest and of a priest's wife, due to age only. See below.

- Anyone who within 15 days has made in-person contact with a household member, family member, or other acquaintance working in a medical facility with Covid-19 patients must absolutely not attend services. Even if such a person be a priest, a singer, or server in the parish, this still applies.

- Anyone who is a health-care provider or a regular caregiver for a person among the at-risk population must not be among those at services. An exception may be made in the case of a priest's wife, due to age only. See below.

- Any priest of age 65 or older has the blessing of the Synod to excuse himself from serving the Divine Services without canonical penalty. Any priest of age 65 or older but in good health and suffering no symptoms of any illness may be able to serve the Divine Services if he consults with his bishop. Any priest's wife of age 65 or older, but in good health and suffering no symptoms of any illness, may be able to attend the Divine Services, in consultation with the bishop.

- During all Divine Services, all entrances into the church building, and church complex if applicable, must display a warning statement regarding the fact that no one may enter the building without the express blessing of the parish priest, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Appropriate medically-approved prevention measures as prescribed by the public health agency of the federal government (e.g., the CDC in the United States) must be followed as much as possible.

- For the serving and celebration of the Divine Services, only as many parishioners as needed in order to serve in the altar and sing the responses should be present. Efforts should be made for this limited "crew" of singer(s) and server(s) to be the same at every service.

- If it is possible, live-streaming of the Divine Services should be provided. Live phone access should be provided for those parishioners who do not have internet access. If a parish is not serving Divine Services, or is unable to live-stream, parishioners should be directed to the live-streaming services of another parish or monastery.

- A priest should take extra care if in his family his wife is pregnant or there are infants and/or young children. If he has such concerns, it is recommended that he consult his bishop.

#### **4. Holy Communion:**

On the days when the Ruling Hierarchy has blessed the Divine Liturgy to be served by a limited number of community members, the following directives hold:

- In the case that anyone is unable to receive Holy Communion at this time due to any reason related to parish closure, distance, health risks, or civil travel bans and "stay at home" directives, the Holy Synod blesses that such a person may wait until such a time as they are able to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, with all proper preparation and faith in the Eucharist.

#### **5. Confession:**

Taking into consideration the spiritual and mental healing that comes through the Sacrament of Confession, the Holy Synod blesses, for all priests and communities in the Orthodox Church in America, that for this period:

- The Sacrament of Confession may not be held in person during this period, except for those who are among the limited "crew" of servers and singers in a parish or mission that is holding Divine Services. If thus done in person, six (6) feet of social distance must be maintained, as well as must be all other civil and public health measures applicable in the locality.

- The Sacrament of Confession may be held over the telephone or by live video communication.

- If Confession is heard over the telephone or by live video, the priest must read the Prayer of Absolution before ending the phone call or video communication, in the hearing of the penitent.

- If anyone of the faithful is uncomfortable with Confession over the phone, then he or she is not bound to confess, but may wait until a time when in-person Confessions will be possible again.

#### **6. Unction:**

If the Ruling Hierarchy has given his blessing for the Sacrament of Holy Unction to be held in a community, the following directives hold:

- The Unction service should only be held with the minimal crew of singer(s) and server(s) present.

- A new burnable cotton swab or cotton wand (Q-Tip) must be used to anoint each individual. The used cotton swabs or wands must immediately be placed in a separate bag or container and set aside for burning.

**As the Paschal moon waxes in the night sky  
(look for a full moon on the night of 8 April = 14 Nissan, when the Lord's Passion began),  
hope for an expeditious end to the Corona virus crisis wanes.**

**As Saint Serafim of Sarov would say:**

**Greek:** Christós anésti. — Alithós anésti. **Church Slavonic:** Christós voskrése. — Voístinnu voskrése.

**English:** Christ is risen. — Indeed [or Truly] he is risen.

## Psalm 33—Communion Psalm at the PreSanctified

Carpathian Chant

Taste and see that the Lord... is good! Hap--py the man who takes re--fuge in him.

Al--le--lu--ia! Al--le--lu--ia! Al-----le--lu-----ia!

**NOTE:** The Church reads Psalm 33 with Christ in mind (e.g., none of his bones shall be broken, v.20). In Peter's first epistle, he cites verse 8a in the context of Christian initiation which concluded with the Eucharist. English cannot duplicate the unintended play on words that the Greek translation of Holy Scripture has in this verse: In Greek, good is *chrēstós*, sounds like *Christós*, Christ.

**I will bless the Lord at all times; ever shall his praise be on my lips!**

<sup>2</sup>In the Lord shall my soul glory; let the lowly hear and be glad.

<sup>3</sup>**Come, extol the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.**

<sup>4</sup>I sought the Lord, and he answered me; from all my fears he delivered me.

<sup>5</sup>Whoever looks to him will beam with joy; no longer will he hang his head in shame.

<sup>6</sup>Here was a poor wretch who cried out to the Lord: The Lord heard him and rescued him from all his distress. <sup>7</sup>The angel of the Lord is ever encamped with those who revere him, to rescue them.

<sup>8</sup>Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy is he who takes refuge in him. <sup>9</sup>Revere the Lord, all you, his holy ones; those who revere him want for nothing.

<sup>10</sup>The rich suffer want and go hungry, but those who revere the Lord never lack anything.

<sup>11</sup>**Come, children, hear me; awe and respect for the Lord is my lesson for you.**

<sup>12</sup>**Who is there among you who delights in life, who looks for a long life to enjoy prosperity?** <sup>13</sup>**Guard your tongue against malice, then, and your lips against words of guile.** <sup>14</sup>**Avoid evil and do good; seek out peace and follow after it.**

<sup>15</sup>The eyes of the Lord are on the just; his ears hear their cries of anguish. <sup>16</sup>But the Lord turns his face away from the wicked; all trace of them vanishes from the face of the earth.

<sup>17</sup>**When the just cry out, the Lord hears, and he frees them from all their troubles.**

<sup>18</sup>**The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he saves those who are crushed in spirit.**

<sup>19</sup>**It is woe upon woe for the just man, but the Lord will deliver him from them all.** <sup>20</sup>**For he keeps watchful care over every bone of his body: not one of them will be broken.**

<sup>21</sup>But evil will reward the wicked with death, and he who despises the just will pay for it.

<sup>22</sup>**The Lord rescues the souls of his servants; those who take refuge in him shall never perish!**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

**Alleluia [=praise God], Alleluia, Alleluia!  
Glory to you, O God! [3]**