



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church

ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΤΡΙΑΔΟΣ

Commentary on the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

CHRIST IS AMONG US! HE IS AND SHALL ALWAYS BE!

This common greeting said among people of the Orthodox Faith serves as a witness that Christ is alive and always present in His Church. We can be assured of this regardless of anything we face during this earthly pilgrimage, whether it is something that brings us overwhelming joy or something that poses a threat, like the deadly Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading throughout the world. *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."* – Matthew 28:20

As concern grows about the impact of this virus, it seems appropriate for me to write to you this day to offer some guidance and to communicate the procedures Holy Trinity has implemented to help ensure the health and well-being of our members and guests.

We are utilizing an upgraded cleaning schedule which includes regular disinfecting of surfaces throughout the church proper and building. In addition to this, and until more clarity can be offered by government agencies as to the spread of this virus, I would like to offer some practical suggestions.

For now, the most important thing is to stay informed and be personally aware of the situation. This weekend the World Health Organization (WHO) posted a short, 90-second video about coronavirus transmission mechanics. It's mostly common sense but is a great reminder. <https://youtu.be/1APWq1df6Mw>

THINGS TO DO AT CHURCH:

- As highlighted by the W.H.O., it is important to minimize person-to-person contact. This will have a direct impact on how we greet one another. Culturally, we greet each other by kissing. This should be avoided as much as possible with the implementation of some other form of greeting instead. Remember: when speaking to others, keep a safe distance that will minimize the transference of germs via droplets.
- This Sunday, March 8, happens to be the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Of great note is the procession of the Holy Icons. For the time being, instead of kissing the Narthex icons, a reverent bow or prostration will suffice to display our love and affection for our Lord and the Panagia.
- Concerning Holy Communion - Epidemics and pandemics have plagued human history from the beginning of time. Disease does not affect Holy Communion,

nor does it change its basic elements of being the Body and Blood of Christ. Throughout the ages, it falls upon the parish priest to consume the remaining gifts of Holy Communion at the conclusion of every Divine Liturgy. **As of now, the administration of Holy Communion will continue in the traditional way.** Guidance and potential change as to how Holy Communion is administered to the faithful can only be offered by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Metropolis of New Jersey.

- In times of trial and struggle, in times of disease and conquest, in times of poverty and illness, in times of natural disasters, a Christian is called upon to pray for our Lord's strength. It is critical even in this day and time to cling unto God and call upon His Holy Name. Let us continue in service to Him and come together with fervent faith allowing nothing to separate us from the Assembly of the Church.

St. Iakovos clearly states: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing Psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH WILL SAVE THE SICK, AND THE LORD WILL RAISE HIM UP." - James 5:13-15

THINGS TO DO AT HOME:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Clean surfaces that are commonly used.
- Boost your immune system, i.e. supplements, sleep, stay hydrated.
- Practice good hygiene; wash your hands, cover your mouth when sneezing and coughing, keep hands from touching your face, mouth, nose, eyes.
- Be informed – I suggest you visit the official website of the Center for Disease Control – www.cdc.gov Educate yourselves with the steps you should take.

Lastly, if you have travelled to a country with widespread transmission, a self-quarantine may be suggested. For more information on this and other travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

In Christ, the only Physician of our souls and bodies,

Fr. Peter Delvizio