



St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral



Ελληνικός Ορθόδοξος Καθεδρικός Ναός Αγίου Σπυρίδωνος

Beloved Faithful in the Lord,

On behalf of Fr. Nicholas and the entire Parish Council, I want to express my heartfelt prayers and wishes that you and your family will remain safe, healthy, and spiritually strong during these unprecedented times.

Staying in Touch: The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging us all in ways that we could have never foreseen even a few short weeks ago. This is particularly true for churches, for our parish of St. Spyridon and nearly every other church around the world. Fr. Nicholas and I are working every day to provide you with spiritual resources to keep your faith, hope, and love for God strong - for the young, the elderly and everyone in between. We would like to highly recommend that you search for our new educational videos on Facebook or, if you don't use social media, our YouTube page: Saint Spyridon Cathedral Worcester. Please subscribe to the page and stay in touch with us.

Holy Week: As for church services, our directives from His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios are to continue essentially as we have been, with church services online only. Beginning with Palm Sunday evening, we will be having one chanter at the chanter's stand (psaltiri) to assist us with the beautiful and familiar hymns of the week. We all realize that online services are not the same as we are used to, and that much is lost by being physically separated from each other, but these are truly unprecedented times and we simply cannot afford to conduct them any other way.

Below is a communique from the Archbishop and Metropolitans in America, the Holy Episcopal Synod, who have now given us our final instructions as we enter Holy Week. Despite our deepest desires to include you, to distribute to you the sacred elements of the holy Sacraments, or even to offer you palms and flowers, we are simply not able. God willing, when this is all over, we will be celebrating the Holy Unction service, which is permissible at any time throughout the year, for you to be anointed. We also plan to keep the palms which have already arrived and to distribute them at some point in the future.

Feeding Ministry: Through this entire pandemic, we have been opening on Saturday to provide food to the needy of our area. We simply cannot do it anymore. It is too dangerous. So, until further notice, we will suspend the Food Pantry and Feeding ministries. Our faithful volunteers mean far too much to us to put them in harm's way. Thanks to all who have been contributing to it.

Parish Administration: This afternoon, Fr. Nicholas and I joined our brother priests from Central and Western Massachusetts on a video conference call with His Eminence. He offered us

his love and any support that we may need during these most sacred days. Please know that we, the priests and the Parish Council, are doing all that we can for the proper functioning of our parish. We have taken full advantage of the recent law enacted by the Congress and the President to continue funding our ministry and fulfilling our financial commitments.

Stewardship: To all those who have contributed generously to our community in recent days, we thank you most sincerely. We want to emphasize that, while we are sustaining ourselves at this moment, we are still very much dependent on you for our future financial health. We hope that you will continue to contribute your yearly, monthly, and weekly stewardship as usual.

Lighting a Candle: For those who would like to have a candle lit in honor or memory of someone, please go to our website or click here.

Closing Thoughts: We wish you God's continued blessings. We will be praying fervently throughout the week for you and we hope that you, with your children or grandchildren, will participate in the divine services as much as possible from your homes. Please, now, read through the encyclical from the Archdiocese.

Fr. Christopher H. Stemas

Fr Chris

HOLY EPARCHIAL SYNOD COMMUNIQUE

NEW YORK - On Monday, April 6, 2020, the Holy Eparchial Synod convened, via teleconference, in order to discuss significant matters that affect the Archdiocese of America, and unanimously decided the following:

- 1) The sacred services of our Orthodox tradition for Holy Week and Easter will continue to be observed in the Parishes and the Monasteries following the directives of the local Metropolitans and in accordance to the mandates of the respective State and Health authorities. Therefore, the "closed-doors" policy will be strictly enforced, the services will be broadcasted via the internet and they will be celebrated only with the participation of the priest, the chanter, and the acolyte.**
- 2) Abiding by the regulations of the aforementioned State and Health authorities, there will be absolutely no distribution of the traditional material offerings to the faithful, including palms, candles, Holy Unction, flowers, eggs and the Paschal Light.**
- 3) Spiritual guidance may be provided remotely using technological means, but the Sacrament of Holy Confession and the Prayer of Absolution cannot be offered via the telephone or via electronic media.**
- 4) This year's National Clergy-Laity Congress will be held through an internet teleconference forum on a date to be announced in the near future.**

FROM THE CHIEF SECRETARIAT OF THE HOLY EPARCHIAL SYNOD