



HOLY TAXIARHAI AND SAINT HARALAMBOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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PARISH CLERGY
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March 17, 2020

My dear friends and fellow stewards of St. Haralambos,

We are all under great stress due to the Corona Virus, and I am reaching out to you on behalf of myself, Fr. George, Deacon John and the whole community, that we stay in touch with one another and our Lord, and praying for one another's physical and spiritual well-being.

I am also writing to you regarding the directive that we received from our Metropolis, to suspend church services.

Our reactions have been diverse, hasty, critical, some reasonable and some emotional.

In marriage counseling, when there is tension, we ask the spouses to take a "time out" and consider their partner's point of view. I am 100% certain that our Metropolitan did not make this decision lightly, but fully believes it to be the right thing. We all know the huge effort that is being made for "social distancing," and the fear that our medical systems will be overwhelmed if this virus is not dramatically slowed down.

We may disagree, but there is nothing ill-intended about this decision.

The Lenten season is always a period of testing. Circumstances this year are making it a severe test indeed.

It is also a time for forgiveness, patience and understanding. If you disagree with the decision, forgive. Let us be careful to not hurt our Church or say things that we may later regret.

I ask everyone to slow down, become calm and peaceful in our minds. It is not a time for divisiveness--we need one another! Let us love one another and get through this multi-faceted crisis together.

The Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim is particularly appropriate for us:

Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of sloth, meddling, love of power and idle talk;

Give me rather the spirit of purity, humility, patience and love.

Yea, Lord and King, grant that I may see my own faults and not judge my brother, for You are blessed to the ages of ages.

Asking your prayers,

Fr. Dean

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