

Coronavirus and Metropolitan JOSEPH's encyclical

March 14, 2020

Greetings to all the Faithful of St. Andrew's,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

As we continue to move through Lent devoting our thoughts to acts of mercy, prayer, and fasting, we find ourselves in the context of uncertainty as our country deals with Covid-19. During this time, we have no choice but to rely on God through faith while at the same time using our God-given reason take precautions.

This message contains a link to an encyclical from our beloved Metropolitan Joseph regarding the Corona virus. Please read the entire text.

There have been many questions and concerns expressed to me, and in response to these and in keeping with the Metropolitan's letter mentioned above I would like to say the following relative to our community of St. Andrew's.

1. All of St. Andrew's Worship Services will take place as scheduled.
2. All our members who are the most at risk, the elderly and those with an immune deficiency, have my blessing to stay home. If you are in this risk category do not feel as though you have a lack of faith in God if you decide to stay home. I will offer some thoughts for those who decide to stay at home rather than attend the public assembly. let your conscience be free from unnecessary doubt regarding this matter.
3. We will put the following steps into effect immediately,
 - a. All Sunday school classes are to be discontinued until further notice.
 - b. Coffee hour and potlucks following the Divine Liturgy are to be discontinued until further notice.
 - c. All non-Liturgical Church sponsored gatherings are to be postponed until further notice.
4. For those who do not attend public worship services due to health concerns I offer the following:
 - a. At the time you would normally be at Church, pray the Trisagion Prayer (which includes the Lord's Prayer), and read the Epistle and Gospel for that Sunday. These readings are found in the monthly bulletin.
 - b. Pray for family, friends and neighbors, our country and its leaders, asking God to help them do what they can for the betterment of all who live within the boundaries of our country and the entire world. May this difficulty and test be a cause for growth in faith and reliance on God.
 - c. I recommend the following prayer which comes from His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania:

Lord, our God, Who are rich in mercy, and with your wise providence govern our life, hear our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop the new infectious disease (the new epidemic), as You once ceased the punishment of Your people in the time of King David.

You, Who are the Physician of our souls and bodies, grant recovery to the sick, raising them hastily from the bed of suffering so that they may glorify You, our Merciful Saviour, and protect the healthy ones from any disease.

Bless, O Lord, strengthen and protect with Your grace all those who with philanthropy and sacrifice take care of the sick at their homes or in hospitals.

Remove all disease and suffering from among the people and teach us to value life and health as Your gifts.

Give us, o God, Your peace and fill our hearts with steadfast faith in Your protection, with hope in Your support and with love for You and our neighbour.

For it is Yours to have mercy on us and save us, our God, and to You we give glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

As I mentioned above, please read our Metropolitan's encyclical linked here:
<https://antiochian.org/regulararticle/619>

May God grant us his peace during this uncertain time and may he lead us through the Cross to his glorious Resurrection.

Wishing you all a profitable and Holy Lent!

In Christ,
Fr. Herman