

Addressing the Coronavirus

The coronavirus is of great concern to all of us. Our approach is focused on precautions, prevention, and prayer. We should each be exercising vigilance within our homes, our churches, and our communities. We may react in different ways as precautions, but we should respect the decisions of others. Let us offer our prayers that the pandemic may quickly subside, as we do in one of our liturgical litanies, *“Protect our Holy Church and our city and every city and land from pestilence...”*

It is incumbent for us as a church community to offer certain guidelines for the well-being of all. Although we cannot address every possible scenario, let us use our common sense to stay clean, healthy, and sensible. We shall continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as the situation warrants.

For the present, here are recommendations we can personally follow:

- Stay home from church services and activities if you are feeling sick or your immune system is compromised.
- Cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer if available.
- Refrain from touching your face and then touching other things.

These are recommendations that the Church is acting upon or suggests:

- Hand sanitizer will be placed in the narthex as available.
- Pews and Sunday School classrooms will be cleaned after usage.
- Clergy and prosfora cutter will wash their hands regularly.

Discretionary measures that may be followed:

- Kissing the hand of the priest, as is traditional in our Orthodox practice, is not necessary.
- Kissing the icons. Honor may be shown to the icons by doing the sign of the cross and bowing.
- Liturgical books will remain in the pews, but the worshipper makes the decision to use or not use them.
- Worshipers will take their own flowers from a tray for special services.
- It is best to avoid kissing, hugging, and shaking hands.

Holy Communion

The Eucharist is the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore pure and germ free. At the conclusion of every liturgy, the clergy consumes the remaining communion and thank God that they remain healthy. If you prefer not to touch the spoon, open your mouth wide and the clergy will turn the spoon, thereby dropping the elements without the spoon touching the mouth.

Nursery

The nursery is cleaned and sanitized after Sunday usage and on Friday afternoon. If members use the nursery during the week or on Saturday, it is their responsibility to leave the nursery clean and neat. Unfortunately, this is not always practiced.

- Some of our little ones have certain allergies. We are therefore going to make the nursery we are now using (Room 136) **food free**.
- We will open the second nursery (Room 133) where the children may have a snack.
- The room #135 in between will remain for nursing mothers and be food free.
- When a diaper is changed, please use the newly installed “diaper genie”.
- Please do your part to put toys back in place and clean up after each use.
- If your child shows any signs of illness, it is best not to expose him/her to other children.

This posting is not to cause alarms. It is simply our responsibility to do our part for the safety of all. Please don't panic with the media frenzy that surrounds us. Remember that our Lord told us, *“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious...”* (Matthew 6:25). St. Paul tells us, *“If God is for us, who can be against us”* (Romans 8:31), and *“But the Lord is Faithful; He will strengthen you and guard you from evil”* (II Thessalonians 3:3). Let us call upon our reservoir of faith to sustain us and get us through this crisis.