

Message from Fr. Jim Regarding COVID-19

Especially in times of trial and distress, our Church remains grounded in the hope of the Resurrection. We believe firmly in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our Source of strength and sacrificed Himself to save the entire world. We also rely on our local authorities – for whom we pray at every divine service – for direction in how to approach matters of public health. Thus, for the time being, all Divine Liturgies and lenten services at St. George will continue as regularly scheduled and the Eucharist will be distributed as per usual.

However, this does not mean that we should not be prudent and use common sense. In line with directives from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Metropolis of San Francisco and the CDC, the St. George community is taking the following preventative measures in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

- We ask you to refrain from kissing the icons or blessing crosses. We do ask that you instead bow in reverence.
- During the “kiss of peace,” please refrain from touching one another but rather bow.
- Our clergy will not be offering their hands to be revered.
- Following the Divine Liturgy, the Priest will distribute antidoron to the faithful so that only one hand goes into the bowl, but we ask you to not kiss his hand.
- There will be ways to disinfect your hands available in all common areas.
- We have removed the books from pews until further notice. Feel free to bring your own.
- Our staff will be cleaning all liturgical objects and surfaces both before and after our sacred services. This means that all pews and frequently touched places will be wiped down and sanitized Saturday before the Divine Liturgy and Monday following the Divine Liturgy.

We understand that there are some members of our community who are more susceptible to the effects of the Coronavirus and disease in general. If you are unable or do not feel comfortable participating in the services at this time, there is no need for shame or judgement. You can still follow along from home using livestreaming services. For a complete list of Greek Orthodox churches from our Archdiocese who livestreaming their services, see <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>. All parishioners and visitors, ***if you are sick, please do not attend services*** until symptoms are gone.

Perhaps all of us would be benefited in adding the following prayer for the sick to our own spiritual rule.

“O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, thy people gathered in thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord Who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Coronavirus and all infectious disease. Send thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and preserve those who are healthy. Enable us to continue to serve our suffering

brothers and sisters in peace that together we may glorify thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.”

With love in Christ,
Fr. Jim Pappas