



Office of the Metropolitan

*312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906*

March 19, 2020

Protocol No.9/2020

God is with us!

Dear Reverend Clergy and Faithful Laity of the Diocese,

I am writing to you again within 24 hours as the very fluid situation with the Coronavirus pandemic continues to change for us. The Patriarch has reversed the suspension of services directive that we all received yesterday specifically for his Churches in the United States. Below is the letter from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros to the Metropolitan concerning this decision.

Your Eminence,

It is with brotherly joy but also with much agony that I communicate with Your Eminence in these critical and unsettling times, when all of humanity is in turmoil over this sudden pandemic of COVID-19. As Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, I am informing you of the just-issued decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod concerning the pastoral measures which must be taken for the protection of the flock of the Mother Church throughout the world.

Having discussed the situation with the Sacred Center of Orthodoxy, at length, and having inquired specifically about the United States, I received His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's reply, namely, that we should allow for the divine services, including Divine Liturgies, to be celebrated in our Holy Churches behind closed doors, as is the case with the Monasteries. In this way we may be able to keep our liturgical tradition alive, even in this minimal way, but also that we may broadcast through streaming and other means the aforementioned services for the spiritual benefit of our faithful.

Having duly conveyed the above to Your Eminence, I pray for continued strength and resolve as we face this unprecedented and disconcerting situation.

With undiminished love in the Lord, and esteem,

New York, March 18, 2020

+Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

As we move forward until further notice, all divine services will be offered by the Priest and any other

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

necessary few individuals in our Churches. The people are instructed to stay home and watch services that are being broadcast from either their own Church or from the Cathedral in Johnstown.

I know that these are confusing, conflicting, frustrating and scary times. The sky is not falling and it is not the end of the world. However, it is a trying time and we must be patient with one another. Please continue to pray in your homes with your families and ask God to extend His hand to calm our fears and remove this pestilence from among us.

“But the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you: do not be afraid, nor be terrified.” (Deut 31:8)

Working in His Vineyard with much agape,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Metropolitan Gregory".

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

This Protocol is to be distributed by all means available including the emailing of parishioners as soon as possible.