

Monday, March 23, 2020

Beloved in the Lord,

The Blessing of the Lord Jesus, the Physician of our souls and bodies, be with you!

How odd it was not to be in church with you yesterday morning! Nonetheless, as I prayed at church, I felt that you were present in spirit with me and with our parish family as we joined in prayer. Not being in church, not serving at the Holy Altar, not being able to see and greet you, and not speaking with you at coffee hour was a harsh reminder and a clear sign of how different and difficult these days are for everyone. I am sure you felt the same feelings and shared some of these same emotions.

Sadly, we continue on the course that has been set out for us through the rapid spread of the coronavirus. Although we hope that it will quickly be curtailed and that our lives will rapidly return to normal, there seems to be no indication that this will happen soon. We must acknowledge that, if we're not already staggering under the weight of this reality, we will soon begin to feel beaten down and the stress will weigh all the more heavily upon. We are already aware of the real impact this is having on our parish community. I've learned of family members and friends of our parishioners that have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. Though these cases are in other states, this is still all too close to us. I've also heard of a couple of employment lay-offs within our parish. Locally, small businesses and restaurants and other community-based business endeavors are already suffering. Please pray for all those who are presently affected as well as for those who will be.

As we move forward into a new week with added stress and tensions and as we continue to address the needs of our families, our parish, and our communities, we are able to acknowledge that through all this, we can find the strength we need in our faith and in one another.

I hope you had the chance to listen to Saturday's interview with His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON on Ancient Faith Radio. His Beatitude's words were encouraging and calming. If you didn't hear it or if you'd like to hear it again, it is archived here:

https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/aftodaylive/an_archpastoral_perspective_on_the_coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR2maf6sL3WMuWfV7nvyonmKGSwfnNuDowuuduawka-6wK4Aut1A2yfAOyA

Our schedules and routines have been greatly impacted and our usual activities have been greatly curtailed. It is being recommended that we remain at home and restrict our interaction with others as much as possible. For those who are already "sheltering in place," I'd like to occasionally suggest some activities to help remain active and engaged while at home:

Spend some extra time in prayer, reading the Scriptures, or in quiet reflection. Get out a favorite book you haven't read for some time. Watch a favorite movie. Listen to your favorite music. Call two or three friends or fellow parishioners. Go for a walk or drive (of course, always observing "social distancing.") Check out the resources provided by

the web team of The Orthodox Church in America: <https://www.oca.org/resources-coronavirus>

We're also grateful that Father David Balmer has set up a blog to help everyone stay connected. You can visit his blog at: <https://sobornost2020.blogspot.com/>

I assure you of my thoughts and prayers throughout the day. As always, our clergy are available by telephone, email, text, etc. (Concerning email communication, I ask your patience. It may take me longer than usual to respond—but I will respond.)

Have a peaceful, prayerful, calm, and blessed day!

With my love and blessing...

+Bishop Daniel