

March 24, 2020

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

I pray that everyone is finding the necessary calm and peace to face the difficulties of these present days, be they large or small. I'm learning that there is a big difference between real challenges and difficulties and mere inconveniences. I ask you to join me in trying to bear the inconveniences with as much care and understanding as we can and to face any difficulties with faith in God and acceptance of His Holy Will. I have heard from many of you this past week or so and am so deeply moved to hear that you are all praying for me, for our parish family, and for the needs of all.

Some of you might have seen a "meme" that was going around last week. It pictured a group of healthcare personnel in a hospital. They were holding signs that spelled out the message: "We go to work for you. Please stay home for us." Indeed, physicians, nurses, other healthcare professionals—as well as police, firefighters, EMT's, and others—are going to work every day to continue to care for us, for our health, and for our safety. Their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families and loved ones are so deeply appreciated. With so many others in need during these present days, let's remember them in our daily prayers. I suggest the following prayer for inclusion in your prayer rule:

Prayer for Those Who Serve our Health and Safety

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Lover of Mankind, Physician of our souls and bodies, who didst bear the pain of our infirmities, and by whose wounds we are healed; Who gave sight to the man born blind; Who straightened the woman who was bent over for eighteen years; Who gave speech and sight to the mute demoniac; Who not only forgave the paralytic his sins, but healed him to walk; Who restored the withered hand of a troubled man; Who stopped the flow of blood of her who bled for twelve years; Who raised Jairus' daughter to life; Who brought the four-day-dead Lazarus to life; and Who heals every infirmity under the sun: Do now, O Lord, grant Thy grace to all those who have labored and prepared themselves to go into all the world and to protect and to heal by the gifts Thou hast given to each of them. Bless and grant Thy wisdom to our physicians, nurses, firefighters, police, emergency personnel, healthcare workers, and all who serve for the health, healing, and protection of Thy people. Strengthen them, by Thy strength, to fear no evil or disease. Enlighten them to do no evil by the works of their hands, and preserve them and those they serve in peace, for Thou art our God, and we know no other, and to Thee we ascribe glory together with Thy Father who is from everlasting, and Thy most Holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

As part of your daily reflection, please read the following, written by Saint Seraphim of Vyritsa (+1949) to one of his spiritual children. It is written in the voice of the Lord, speaking to us, His children:

<http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/fromme.htm>

With my love and blessing...

+Bishop Daniel