



SS. PETER & PAUL
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
9980 Highway 9 ♦ PO Box 458, Ben Lomond, CA 95005
Phone: (831) 336-2228 FAX: (831) 336-2227

Reverend Father Nathan R. Thompson, Pastor

March 17, 2020

... until we are joined together in worship at the Throne of Christ.

Christ is in our midst

Dear Fathers, brothers and sisters in Christ,

I spoke to Father Michael Habib who is still arguably Metropolitan Joseph's right hand man. He just refuses to move to Englewood and work for the Archdiocese.

We will have services even if they have to be held outdoors. This is highly unlikely. While COVID 19 is highly contagious, it is still just a flu, not the plague. The death rate will be higher in places that do not "flatten the curve" by putting restrictions in place. Santa Cruz county has responded appropriately by the Shelter in Place order.

Shelter in Place is NOT martial law You can still drive to get food, toilet paper, and other essentials.

Your outdoor activities are not limited. Just remember to maintain 6 feet, cover your mouth with the crook of your elbow (also known as doing the Dracula, mwah-ha-ha) and practice proper hygiene.

WASH YOUR HANDS RELIGIOUSLY. In other words, say the Lord's Prayer while you wash your hands. It takes the recommended amount of time to wash and is the recommended prayer that you pray. You know, recommended by that first century carpenter.

IF YOU ARE SICK OR AT HIGH RISK STAY HOME! I don't need nor want to perform any more funerals than are necessary.

IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, STAY HOME!

IF SOMEONE ISN'T THERE, DON'T JUDGE THEM.

"...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11:26



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What did you say? One more time with gusto. **DO NOT JUDGE.** There is one Judge and He gets gets a little jealous about us trying to do His job.

Finally, do the "one thing needful." It is sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ in prayer and repentance.

When we are sick or lie on our deathbed, we cannot serve others as Martha did, worrying about food and drink, hospitality, etc... We can say what she said when Christ came to raise Lazarus "Yes Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, come to save the world."

Let us all pray daily these prayers from the Russian Prayer Service sung in times of Devastating Epidemic and Pestilence"

"More than all others we have sinned against Thee and we have transgressed, O Master, and if we have not acquired repentance instead of repentance accept our offering. And having set Thyself to mercy, as Thou art almighty, free Thy servants from death bearing sickness and grievous afflictions, groaning in pain we pray Thee, quickly hearken and have mercy."

"We have sinned and we have transgressed, and therefore Thy righteous anger has visited us, O Lord, our God; and the darkness of death has encompassed us and we have drawn near to the gates of Hades. But, with compunction, we cry out unto Thee, our God, in our infirmities: Spare, O spare Thy people, and destroy us not utterly, humbly we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy."

"O Lord, Who rules by life and by death: do Thou not enclose the souls of Thy servants in death, but turn aside from wrath and forsake anger, for our days vanish like smoke, and our strength has wasted away, and we are perishing utterly because of our sins. Be Thou merciful unto Thy servants who are repenting with tears, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy."

Love in Christ,

Father Nathan Thompson, Pastor

Saints Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

Ben Lomond, California

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