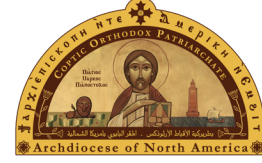




إبارةشية نيو يورك ونيو إنجلاند

Diocese of New York & New England



المقر البابوي بأمرিকা الشمالية

Archdiocese of North America

Friday, March 20, 2020

3rd Joint Statement Concerning Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Dear beloved congregations of the churches of the Archdiocese of North America in New Jersey and the Diocese of New York & New England.

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ to each and every one of you. We continue to pray for your safety and well-being and for the steadfastness of your faith during this difficult time.

We are facing an unprecedented situation in the recent history of our Church. In response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, communities throughout the world have taken extreme measures to attempt to mitigate the spread of the virus, including government-mandated lockdowns of entire regions. As you know, despite these efforts, cases in the United States have continued to rise and pose a significant health risk to individuals of all ages. Unfortunately, our community has likewise been impacted, as several parishioners and members of the clergy have tested positive for COVID-19.

In view of our spiritual and moral obligations and civic responsibility to cooperate with our leaders and make every effort to protect the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, the Church is cooperating fully with government efforts to implement social distancing. Out of our love and care for our congregations and our neighbors, we are suspending all liturgical services in all of our churches effective immediately and until further notice. Each church will continue to reach out and serve her beloved children through our various technological capabilities, and we will remain united throughout this difficult period in prayer and fasting. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your priest(s) or servants in the event of any need.

Although the church building may be temporary closed, the mystical spiritual church within each of us, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our bodies as the Temple of God (1Cor 3:16; 1Cor 6:19), is still open for prayer and offering an acceptable sacrifice to our Heavenly Father. In addition, during this period, the priests shall continue to pray liturgies in their homes upon the holy consecrated tablets which are used as portable alters and intercede for their congregation before the omnipresent God. We will remain united throughout this difficult period in prayer and fasting. We are all at your service if you ever need anything. Please do not hesitate for a moment to reach out to us.

May our Lord protect His Church and His children throughout the world, shorten these days and bring healing and tranquility to our land.