



METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ukrainian Catholic

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No. 200/2020 O

This Number Should be Prefixed to Your Reply

**Office of the Auxiliary Bishop
Most Reverend Andriy Rabiw**

March 10, 2020

Dear Fathers, Deacons and Faithful of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia,

As you are well aware, the entire world watches the spreading of COVID-19 (also known as coronavirus) with much fear, anxiety and worry. It already affected many countries as they struggle to control the virus and heal the infected with a great success rate. And while we mourn the loss of many lives and extend our sympathies to the bereaving families, we will remain steadfast in our hope and with unshaken faith in our Lord and God, the Provider of every good thing and Healer of the infirmed.

In addition to our continued prayers for the infected and curbing the virus, we also should contribute to the general effort by closely following these recommendations:

1. If you notice any flulike symptoms, please limit your interaction with other people to a minimum, do not attend church services and see your doctor at the earliest convenience;
2. While you are in church (especially now in the time of Great Fast), concentrate more on spiritual union with the Lord. Venerate the icons, relics and objects of piety but not necessarily touching them physically (for example, kissing);
3. Make sure that you will not touch the golden spoon at the time of receiving the Holy Communion but patiently await when the priest drops the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ into your mouth;
4. Observe the already known rules of personal hygiene and washing your hands more frequently especially after being in public spaces;
5. Do not share any information that may cause further anxiety, worry and panic.

Pastors are also asked:

1. Make sure that surfaces of icons, religious articles and pews are disinfected in our churches;
2. Remove or cover containers with Holy Water usually found at the entrance doors;
3. Put a clear plastic cover over the window in confessionals (from the side of a confessing priest) in order to prevent a direct physical contact with a penitent.

We need to take every precaution to ensure that the virus does not spread in our communities and bring grave consequences. For more and most updated information, please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov and World Health Organization (WHO): www.who.int.

With prayers for your health, physical and spiritual well-being during this blessed Lent,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Andriy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Andriy Rabyi
Auxiliary Bishop for the Archeparchy of Philadelphia
Protosyncellus