



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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REVEREND FATHER MICHAEL J. LAMBAKIS
DEAN

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38

March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year our Orthodox Church, in Her wisdom, provides for us the Lenten season as a means for us to step out of our routine lives and our everyday world. Through this holy season we are given the opportunity to recognize our dependence on God, and to strengthen our relationship with Him and with others. What a Lenten season we have been given this year! Perhaps it is not the Great Lent that we envisioned or hoped for, but it is the one we have been given.

There can be no doubt at this point that we are living in unprecedented times and that the situation regarding the current Covid-19 virus has never been experienced by any of us in the way that we are currently experiencing this pandemic.

With the current situation in mind, His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah has sent directives to the clergy of the Metropolis of Denver to make adjustments to our parish life, which includes the service schedules as well. They are certainly not ideal, but given the circumstances in which we find ourselves, they are prudent and necessary. As Orthodox Christians we treasure our pious traditions, however, we must be mindful that at their core, they are intended for the salvation of the faithful. Let us approach these temporary "kat oikonomia" measures with that goal and focus.

*Until further notice in the Metropolis of Denver Houston area Parishes, the Sunday Divine Liturgies will be celebrated by the clergy and chanter only. The Divine Liturgy on Sunday will be available via live streaming at the following address from our parish website, <http://agoc.org/stream>. The Salutation services on Friday evenings will be celebrated by the clergy and chanter only. This service will also be available online for our parishioners.

**All other services beginning today, March 17 are canceled and all extracurricular activities at Annunciation Cathedral are canceled.*

**Any scheduled sacraments will still be celebrated but with only immediate family attending that particular sacrament.*

**Funeral services will be celebrated with immediate family members of the deceased only in attendance.*

**All non-liturgical gatherings of the parish are canceled.*

**The Feast Day of the Annunciation Divine Liturgy will take place the same way, we will live stream that service also.*

I have been in consultation with Fr. Luke Palumbis at our sister parish of Saint Basil Greek Orthodox Church and they will adhere to the same schedule as Annunciation Cathedral. Should any of our faithful desire to receive Holy Communion, they may contact the Cathedral office to set up a time for the clergy to either visit or to schedule an appointment to come to the Cathedral for Holy Communion.

His Eminence went on to say in his letter to the clergy, ***“As these temporary accommodations physically separate us for a time, may our loving and merciful God preserve His people as he has done for 2000 years, and ultimately draw us closer to Him and one another in the very near future”.***

As your parish priest, I am fully aware that not everybody will agree with these measures and they are personally agonizing for me to implement. Having said this, we are a Hierarchical Church and we must be obedient to the direction of our Metropolitan. While these temporary actions may be frustrating, perhaps we can use this time to increase our personal prayer life at home and to pray for our fellow parishioners, many of whom will certainly be affected by this temporary halt to our daily way of life in a negative way.

Once we receive the “all clear” to resume services and daily operations as normal, we will relay that to the entire parish. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the Cathedral office. Please also check our parish website for updates, www.agoc.org

I hope and pray that our Good and Loving God, and the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos, will quickly deliver us from this current calamity. Let us pray more fervently at this time for our world and those who are being adversely affected by this illness.

May Christ our God grant us all patience and wisdom!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Michael Lambakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

+Fr. Michael Lambakis