



SAINT ATHANASIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ

REV. PROTOPRESBYTER ANARGYROS STAVROPOULOS
IERATIKOS PROESTAMENOS

March 20, 2020

Dear Faithful of St. Athanasios,

I greet you with love in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and pray this message finds you well as we continue our journey through this Great Lenten period.

The situation surrounding the Covid-19 has filled all of us with much anxiety and fear and has truly impacted our daily lives. All parish activities have been cancelled, many of you are working from home, businesses have closed, people have lost their jobs and faced with financial difficulties, our children's academic schedule has been altered and sadly we have been cut off from our family and friends because of this pandemic the world has been experiencing.

Our spiritual and civil leaders have had many difficult decisions to make over the past few days and weeks, decisions that have been changed as the severity of the coronavirus has progressed.

The following decision did not come easy. As your parish priest, I wish to inform you as per the revised directive issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, effective immediately the Divine Services are permitted to take place within our parishes, however, the doors to the church will remain closed to the faithful during all Divine Services. The faithful are instructed to participate in the Divine Services through various online live streaming services that have been available. If you wish to come to Church for a private prayer and light a candle, please call ahead and check with the church office.

These changes do not mean that Great Lent is over but that plans have changed. It is timely that we read the story of Noah. Remember, Noah had faith, obedience and trust that if His God desired him to build the Ark then he ought to do just that. Just as Noah saw peace after a difficult storm, I too am confident that our olive branch will come. I pray and ask that we all trust in accordance with His will.

For the time being, I encourage you to retreat to your homes, especially if you are not feeling well or you are among the high risk groups. Pray, read and be the Church outside the four walls of the Church. Bring it to life in your homes. This is a challenge that might inspire the growth of our faith, trust in God and in one another. Please let us look after one another. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone, text, or email. All together we are the Church. Let us continue to pray for the entire world and ask our Lord to continue to have mercy on us, protect us and guide us all through this season of prayer and repentance to a joyous Pascha and His Heavenly Kingdom.

With Love in Christ,

Fr. Anargyros