15/03/2020

His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada issues his Encyclical about the coronavirus outbreak



His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada has issued his Encyclical about the coronavirus outbreak. Read the full text below:

Reverend Fathers, Honourable Presidents and
Esteemed Members of the Boards of Directors,
Members of the Philoptochos Societies,
Teachers, Students and Youth Members of the Communities,
and to the Entire Plenitude of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada

With much pain, but also after very careful consideration, I write this

Encyclical to you. Unfortunately, the challenge of the coronavirus is great, but it must be dealt calmly, peacefully and with great faith. I therefore ask you to adhere to the following instructions:

1. Our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and its Communities will precisely observe the directives and instructions of the Canadian government and public health authorities.

2. One of the directives is that no more than two hundred and fifty (250) persons be gathered indoors. As a result, all of our Church Services will regularly take place, but the Parish Priests and the Boards of Directors of our Communities will ensure that no more than two hundred and fifty (250) people enter the Church for any service or Divine Liturgy. Whenever the limit of two hundred and fifty (250) persons is reached, pious Christians should be kindly instructed to seek to attend services at other Greek Orthodox Churches where the limit of two hundred and fifty (250) has not been reached. Alternatively, they could seek to participate in Church Services and Divine Liturgies which can be held in the same Church on the same day, but at a different time.

3. On the basis of the principle of Economia, our Church will allow during this critical time the same priest to perform two Divine Liturgies during the same day, that is one in the morning and one in the afternoon or evening.

4. The ordinations of Bishops-Elect Nektarios Mostratos of Keramos, Alexandros Salmas of Patara and Dimitrios Antonopoulous of Zinoupolis are postponed until further notice.

5. If the government directives have not been lifted before Holy Week, there will be many more difficulties. Church services should take place in the same manner as prescribed above for Sundays and Great Feasts, or even outdoors. It must be remembered that no more than two hundred and fifty (250) persons can be present for gatherings indoors.

6. The Parish Priests and the Community Boards should be aware that if these instructions are not followed, their insurance policies may decline to cover any potential issues that may arise, rendering the Communities and the Community Boards directly liable.

I urge the Parish Priests, the Community Boards, and pious Christians to

strictly adhere to the instructions in this Encyclical. I know that the situation is not easy and is very upsetting, but it is a crisis which we all have to face responsibly and with faith in God. I pray and hope, and ask all of you to pray, in order for us to overcome this great trial with God's help. I want all of us to continue the period of Great Lent with faith and trust in God, and eventually arrive with complete health to worship the Holy Passion of Christ and His Victorious Resurrection.

With fatherly love and blessings,
ARCHBISHOP SOTIRIOS OF CANADA