11/04/2020

From His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta: 3 Ways to Grow Closer to the Church, from our home



March 24, 2020

To The Clergy,
The Esteemed Parish Council Presidents and members
The Esteemed Philoptochos Presidents and members
And All the Faithful of the Metropolis of Atlanta:

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

“O save your people, and bless your heritage;
be their shepherd, and carry them forever.”
(Psalm 28:9)

I greet you with love in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray that this message finds you all safe and healthy.

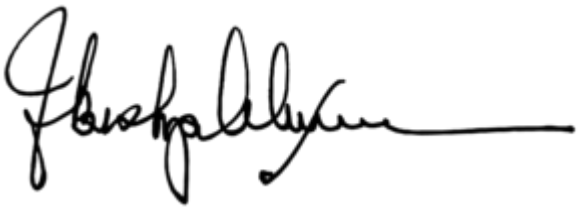
In these uncertain times, when news of the Coronavirus can shift from hour to hour, I am mindful of the worry and fear that many of us are feeling. For this reason, I encourage each and every one of us to practice the recommended practiced suggested by the CDC and enacted by our local governments: whether this means simply keeping the recommended six feet apart in distance, limiting our travel to only necessary places, or, in some cities, staying only in our homes.

I recognize that for many of us, staying in our homes represents a new kind of challenge, and so this note is meant to suggest some ways to pass the time, that will be spiritually fruitful.

1. **We should pray**. We can begin by praying for our affected brothers and sisters, especially those throughout Europe, and here in the United States. We should also pray, of course, for our Lord's deliverance for ourselves, and our loved ones.
2. **We should read Scripture, and other Orthodox books**, to help us become more aware of inner lives. Our ordinary daily lives often make it easy to avoid, or simply forget that part of our growth as Christians is to support our faith through the words of the Church, and not only through the Sacraments and prayer. Now, with the internet, there are many ways to order various books, in Greek and in English, that correspond to very simple, or very complex understandings of the faith.Consider: The Orthodox Church by His Eminence Kallistos Ware, or books by St. Porphyrios, St. Paisios, St. Iakovos of Evia–for these are contemporary Saints who knew and understood the struggles we face in our modern world.
3. Finally, even in our homes we can occupy ourselves by fulfilling our Lord's Gospel in the simplest way: by **calling our brothers and sisters**. Such a personal way to show Christian love will especially mean a great deal to those who are alone; for loneliness is also a great problem during times such as these. If we are going out for necessary things such as food, be sure to reach out to your neighbors to see if they are in need, all while fulfilling the appropriate social distancing measures.

In spite all the difficulties and worries that this disease presents for our world, I ask you to keep these things in mind, as we seek to live out our Lord’s Gospel, in ways that will preserve the health of our communities, while glorifying His name. I remain,

Paternally yours with love in the Lord,



+ A L E X I O S
Metropolitan of Atlanta