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Archbishop Elpidophoros Holds Town Hall with National Sisterhood of Presvyteres



New York - On Tuesday, May 26, 2020, Archbishop Elpidophoros held a wide-ranging virtual conversation with more than 175 the members of the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres (the wives of clergy) addressing questions regarding their husbands, families, and parishes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

President of the Sisterhood of Presvyteres Nicole Keares moderated the nearly one-hour meeting asking questions on behalf of the members. Questions included the safety of clergy when churches reopen, concerns from parishioners regarding the pandemic, reviewing the protocol for wearing masks by clergy and lay people, procedures for Holy Communion, and reestablishing personal peace, love, patience and hope after the pandemic.

Most significantly, His Eminence addressed a central question of the minds of the Presvyteres, the health of their husbands and their families. His Eminence assured

the Sisterhood saying, “We will do whatever is necessary to protect the health of your husbands and of your families, of course, because a husband, a priest, exposed to any danger is a source of danger for his own wife and for children and for other relatives that happen to live together.”

Addressing the question of Holy Communion, His Eminence remarked, “It is not the way we receive, it is the Communion itself that saves us and gives us eternal life.” After discussing the historical point of view, Archbishop Elpidophoros implored the Presvyteres to approach this issue with love and understanding for each member of the Church: “We have to do everything possible to keep everybody in communion. If there are faithful among us who do not feel comfortable with the one Common Spoon, perhaps we can offer an alternative; not something that is imposed, or forced, but an option.”

After referring to the wives of clergy as “heroes” he encouraged them to be faithful to the Church and her teachings, and not be distracted by outside voices. “I appeal to your reason and to your mind to understand that COVID-19 is real, it is around us, it is killing people. But what safeguards the unity of the Church and the unity of the faithful is the real tradition of the Church and this is the true piety, not the piety that questions and challenges any decision that the Bishop, or the Metropolitan, or the Patriarch is making.”

Closing the webinar, the Archbishop thanked the entire Sisterhood of Presvyteres and thanked them for their honest and forthright questions. “I hope this will not be a ‘first and last’ occasion for us, as your voices are vital and I learn perhaps more from you than you do from me. We are all in this together, and I pray we will stay connected and supportive of one another!”

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