

18/06/2020

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada :Directives to Priests regarding Public Statements



Reverend Fathers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada

Beloved in the Lord:

During this difficult period of COVID-19 I think of you and of our communities, and pray unceasingly. Some clergy and lay people express their uneasiness, because the Archbishop has not given instructions for the re-opening of the churches and the distribution of Holy Communion.

On Friday, May 29, 2020, at our Holy Archdiocese, we had a small meeting with some of the priests from the province of Ontario and we discussed these matters. Three priests, members of the Presbyters' Council of Ontario, as well as some other priests, were invited to discuss these topics. Unfortunately, two of the invited did not attend. Some of the invited made public statements on the topic of the distribution of Holy Communion.

My introductory remarks were that I would not make any statement without first obtaining written instructions from the Holy and Sacred Centre of Orthodoxy, our Ecumenical Patriarchate and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with his respected letter dated 02/06/2020, to all the hierarchs of Ecumenical Patriarchate, asks from them: "Avoid making statements, comments and interviews through the use of mass media and avoid engaging in other initiatives regarding the current situation."

As I wrote above, I will continue not to make statements, without first obtaining instructions from our Ecumenical Patriarchate, because I believe that the Church is the Body of Christ. It is One and Holy. It is one family. No one should speak on their own authority (hierarchs, priests, deacons, professors or any other Orthodox Christian) regarding these very serious matters.

The fact that certain priests have used the mass/social media to express their personal opinions or the opinions of others who have concerned themselves with this matter, saddens me. I ask of all the involved persons not to do it again.

Some, it appears, would like to boast of their theological (professorial) knowledge. They should consider however, that the first thing to know is not to speak without the direction of the Church. It would be good for some of these ambitious individuals to reserve their academic knowledge on these matters for university lecture halls.

I am saddened that I had to write this letter. I hope that all of you will understand the seriousness of this matter and will act accordingly. I assure you, the COVID-19 pandemic truly aches me and I am suffering. I pray and ask that you pray as well, that the period of the pandemic will be over as soon as possible.

With fatherly love and blessings,

ARCHBISHOP SOTIRIOS

