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Coronavirus, Christmas and Holy Communion: The Coronavirus Attacks. We Counterattack



Right Reverend Bishops, Reverend Parish Priests, Honourable Presidents and Esteemed Members of the Boards of Directors, Members of the Philoptochos Societies and Youth Members of the Communities of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada

Beloved in the Lord,

The coronavirus severely attacked us. It almost managed to close the doors of our churches. Divine Liturgies with only ten (10) or twenty-five (25) Christians are allowed. It is very difficult. We should not accept it. We must go on the offensive and this is how:

Twice in the past I had requested in writing that you close examine the baptisms, weddings and funerals you have done in your church in the last ten (10) years. You need to make lists of names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.

You need to communicate with Christians regularly. This communication is needed now more than ever. Christmas is coming and our Christians must not remain without Holy Communion. This is what Satan wants. Let it not come to pass. Here is the way in which it will not come to pass.

Organize your Community. Priest, Board of Directors, Philoptochos Society and above all the Youth: all together you must work as a team in the spiritual offensive against the coronavirus.

Write to your parishioners online. Call them. Contact them in person. Meet your Christians. Did not Christ say that: "The good shepherd knows the sheep by name. He goes and finds the lost sheep?"

For us the sheep is not lost. Satan with the coronavirus managed to close our churches and to leave the people without Holy Communion. But like we said, we will not let this come to pass.

Devise a plan. Conduct more Divine Liturgies during the week. Liturgize in the morning and keep Holy Communion available. Consume the remaining Consecrated Gifts the next day, after the Divine Liturgy. Invite Christians one family at a time to come and receive Communion. Schedule a day and time. No Christian, from now until Christmas, should remain without receiving Holy Communion. It is in your hands. It depends on how you organize your Community. On many occasions you communicate with your Christians for other reasons: to attend church services, to bring their children to Sunday school, to enroll their children in Greek school, to organize the youth, and the camps and so much more. But this is the mother of all battles. Because Holy Communion is eternal life. It is medicine of immortality. This is why no one should remain without Holy Communion.

Some will say: there are so many Christians, how will we succeed? You are wrong. If your neighboring Community is smaller, ask them to help you. Did not Peter do the same? He obeyed Christ. He threw down the net. The boat filled with so many fish and was about to sink. Then he called out to the other fishermen. Call out for help as well. The Church is One. We are One Family. How many times have I said that?

Get to know your Christians. Invite them one family at a time to receive Holy

Communion. This will be the best Christmas ever. Satan will be defeated. The coronavirus will not win.

My Brother Bishops and Priests, now is the time. Do not consider the effort and the time that may be required. With true willpower and proper organization, we will win the war. Let not one Christian remain without Holy Communion this Christmas. I wish you great success. Until we meet again in the Common Chalice. Merry Christmas. May this be the most blessed Feast of the Nativity.

With fatherly love and blessings,

Archbishop Sotirios of Canada

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA