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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros will travel to Tarpon Springs for the Annual Epiphany celebration



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros will travel to Tarpon Springs this week for the 115th Annual Epiphany celebration. In light of the current pandemic, Archdiocesan officials have been in constant contact with both church and local officials in Tarpon Springs to work cooperatively for a successful, yet subdued, Epiphany celebration. The visit of the Archbishop will be limited to only the Divine Liturgy and traditional Throwing of the Cross on Wednesday, January 6 and all present will follow current COVID health and safety protocols.

In addition, the leadership of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Tarpon Springs has been in constant cooperation with the local emergency management team (Police, Fire, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office) to establish a safe and reasonable count for parishioners, clergy, divers, diver's families, and media for viewing the event from around Spring Bayou.

Working together with the Tarpon Springs Fire Rescue, Tarpon Springs Police Department, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office a plan has been finalized to safely accommodate parishioners, clergy, divers, diver's families, and media while considering all Covid-19 protocols.

A total of 860 pre-ticketed parishioners will be allowed to congregate around Spring Bayou in social distanced areas. In addition, there will be a designated area for the 110 family members of the divers.

Lastly, there will be space allocated for approximately 30 media representatives from the various news organizations, who will cover the event, ensuring that the general public will have a direct view of everything that is occurring.

Commenting on the Epiphany celebrations, the dean of Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Rev. Athanasios Haros encouraged the faithful to prayerfully participate from home: "This year, we are asking everyone to not come to the Bayou, but to join us from home. The celebration of Epiphany and the blessing of the waters is needed more now than ever before, and though we cannot be physically together, we will join together in prayer. I want to thank the city for their hard work and dedication to help this special day happen, even in the midst of a pandemic. Again, I urge all our parishioners, friends, and visitors to join us online this year as a show of respect for the wonderful people who have worked so hard to ensure that this event could happen, and in order to protect both yourselves and those you love."

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