



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
**THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA**

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The Most Reverend Dr. NATHANIEL Popp, Archbishop

*PASTORAL REFLECTIONS ON THE MOMENT*

September 1, 2020

To be read to the Faithful in Church and/or by Live Stream

Blessings in the name of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Throughout the past months, we all have undergone basic changes in the patterns of our daily lives. Persons of all ages have been and continue to be affected by these changes shaped by the rampage of the Corona Virus among members of society. For us, Orthodox Christians, the changes have been in the way of living in our immediate family, in work and school, and notably in parish life. The Church, this Episcopate, has been and remains deeply affected because of these effects on you, her faithful, your families, our parishes, monasteries and auxiliaries.

The effects of the virus are tangible. Remember that your parish financial needs and obligations have not changed. Some faithful have not given their usual financial support on which the parish budget had been approved. Thus, the parish, your parish, may be facing a “financial crunch.” Parish financial obligations continue, virus or none. We encourage you to review your giving practice and reflect on what you can do to support the parish in these trying times. Some parishes have invented or reshaped previous money-raising events as are possible under the conditions imposed by the civil authorities. Nevertheless, these temporary measures cannot sustain your parish without your personal gift of sustaining support.

The effects are spiritually tangible. Our spiritual lives are being constrained by restrictions on how we can gather together as the Body of Christ and even hinder how we may participate in the sacramental life of our Church. Therefore, the spiritual life within the Orthodox family home is of primary importance and fundamental to the good order in our Church family and to our individual

salvation. Be sure your home remains or becomes a “micro-church of family prayer.”

We exhort your family to actually pray together to our Lord and his Holy Mother and to the saints. Prayers and service are available on-line and on many Orthodox sites. Numerous parishes have services broadcast live. These restraints may be a reminder to some of our faithful from Europe who previously experienced constraints by Socialist atheist governments in their public and private worship. Current governments express concern about the spread of the Virus through public events, but the experience is reminiscent of the past experiences. We, the faithful are also fighting the “unseen battle.”

Our spiritual lives have been profoundly altered. We paternally exhort clergy and faithful: please follow the directives of your Chancery. We are in contact with the hierarchy of Canada and The United States in an attempt to create unified responses to these restrictions. There will be variations; follow the order established by our Holy Synod and the Episcopate.

Our clergy are courageous responders to the spiritual needs of the parishioners through various means. I thank our priests and deacons for all their pastoral work during these difficult times! There is the live-streaming of services; there are telephone “trees” to contact each parishioner weekly; some visits to the hospitalized are allowed; the deceased are buried and other services are performed. Our monasteries, although closed to pilgrims, have live-streaming of services and offer prayers for our well-being. Orthodox Christians also have “First Responders.” Thank you, Reverend Clergy!

Although the annual summer religious education camps were not held at Vatra, His Grace, Bishop Andrei along with a dedicated team of priests, deacons and staff organized “Virtual Camp Vatra 2020” camps with over 70 teenagers from across the North American continent participating. Many thanks to him, to the clergy on staff, to the associates, children and parents. “See you next year at Grey Tower Road!”

In the meanwhile, the Episcopate Chancery staff continues the administrative work of the diocese, so that the good order of the Church continues uninterrupted. The "New Solia/Herald" has reached the homes of most of you. The Department of Publications has received complimentary responses. We are glad to hear from you!

Dearly beloved, these few words of exhortation, "Reflections on the Moment," were meant to come into the parish, to your home and into your heart to reinforce our love and concern for one another as the body of Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd and the Physician of body and soul, and to him be all glory, honor and worship together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

With paternal blessings and love in Christ the Good Shepherd

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+Nathaniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Nathaniel" is written with elegant, connected letters.

+NATHANIEL, Archbishop