

Christian Light

Summer 2020 — Vol. 32

Fr. Philip's Summer Message

The Lessons of Coronavirus

I can't accept the notion that the Coronavirus is an "opportunity," we can't talk about opportunity in our life when so many lives are lost around us. This smacks of a commercial attitude where loss and destruction is an opportunity for profit. However, the fact that we can make use of the unfortunate events that prevail around us and in us in order to create new avenues to make sense out of life is another story. Yes, we should come out of this crisis wiser. It gives us an opportunity to understand our limits because we have become limitless, we've lost every inkling of humility in our lives and this is absolute hubris. We think we can do anything any way we like, whether ecclesiastically, medically, culturally or politically and suddenly we are confronted with the fact of our great weakness. Perhaps now is the first time in a long time where we have been compelled to stare our createdness and our limitations straight in the eye. But we should not fear for "love drives out all fear." Love will win in the end. (Interview with Chrysostom Stamoulis)

Based on these words of the theologian Chrysostomos Stamoulis, who visited our parish a few years ago and spoke to us, despite the harm the Coronavirus crisis has caused, it can teach us a few things about ourselves and our society. In Christianity all difficult situations have a silver lining that can be turned around for our benefit and, depending on our spiritual foundation, this is up to us! This, of course, is the wisdom of the Cross. We can emerge from this situation wiser precisely because our faith is not an ethical system, it is a *way of life*, a mode of existence: it is the way of Christ, which is the way of the Cross that leads to the Resurrection. Thus, we can't overcome this crisis merely by complying to sterile rules and regulations (as important as these can be); we will overcome this fully only with the internal stability that comes from a life that obtains its strength from our relationship with Christ. This applies to all crises that crop up in our life.

This is manifestly evident now that, as we have entered the fourth month of this crisis, the original crisis has caused other crises. One of these is the problem of racism, diversity and the embracing of the "foreigner" which justifiably is a major theme in current events now. Our life in Christ once again gives us the solution. Christ embraced the foreigners and identified with the down-trodden as is clear in the hymn we chant on Holy Friday evening "Give me this foreigner" (referring to Christ). The love of Christ for those who were outside the context of the "chosen

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Orthros 8 A.M. and Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

ALL CHURCH SERVICES LIVE STREAM

*****RESERVATION IS REQUIRED for Sunday Services*****

RESERVATION NOT REQUIRED for Weekday Services

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Elizabeth Lazouras

secretary@assumptionri.org

NO ACCESS TO CHURCH OFFICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

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people” was one of the main reasons that the religious leaders of Israel insisted on His crucifixion. He ruined the status quo, especially the status quo of religion, so *religion* had to kill Him. So the cross we carry for our neighbor, for those who are different and foreign to us, is the selfsame Cross of Christ, and if we do not carry this cross we cannot be called Christians. During Holy Week we see clearly how Christ dealt with diversity. He dealt with it in a way that was extremely scandalous for his time (and for our time also as is evidenced by recent current events and the declarations on the Internet of some so-called “Christians”). He accepted everyone without limits: from the Pharisees (with whom He disagreed but still dialogued with!), to the prostitutes and the tax collectors, to Judas, Pilate, and the thief beside him on the cross.

Another great lesson this crisis offers us is that it compels us to re-evaluate why we are here, what is the meaning of human life and what Christ meant when He said: “*I have come to give life and give it to you abundantly*” (John 10:10). According to His words then, what we call life is not exactly life, something is missing. Our merely biological existence and survival is not the “abundant” life Christ is talking about. Despite this we usually live out our life as if the beating of our heart is sufficient; as if we are simply a biological machine with no reference to the transcendent. And in the context of this limited view of “life” we think we are omnipotent, we think we fully define the world around us and our destiny; and God does not even enter into these grand plans! We have divinized humanity and the certainty of our control over everything.

Suddenly a tiny invisible organism comes and topples everything! In the midst of the euphoria of our supposed self-sufficiency, a microscopic being comes to curb all “certainties” of our life. This virus, we don’t even know where it came from (rather, we do know: we have abused the “very good” creation of God – and viruses are part of God’s good creation! – our super-cultivation, commercial agriculture and drugs, – all these things that distort our life – create the proper conditions for the evolution of such a virus), this virus enters the scene and suddenly throws us into a Hades from which we cannot escape. The only good that has come from this abuse of our environment is that it has forced us to remember that we are limited beings. Due to this realization many have now reconnected with God and the spiritual dimension of life.

Based on these lessons brought to us by the Coronavirus what is the solution for the future? It seems that this crisis

has made it clear that we need to once again incorporate the spiritual dimension into the structure of our life and society – the spiritual dimension which, for some reason, has foolishly been expelled from the public conversation and planning of our society. Perhaps only in this way will we be able to create structures that won't allow us to be at the mercy of an inanimate tiny virus. This little virus compels us to re-evaluate our priorities. Now we can see clearly that all these years we have in fact been worshipping the god that is called economy. With the fall of the economy due to the Coronavirus we suddenly have lost the meaning of life and this reveals to us that in practice our life revolves around nothing else but mammon.

Some will take this lesson and others will continue to worship mammon. Great vigilance is therefore required as there is a true danger that the new situation that this virus has caused will become a justification for a new political model which will control people through the economy even more. We must be ready for such an abuse of power which absolutely will be presented to us in the name of the “good of humanity.” The only solution is to have Christ as the criterion and compass of our life. Only then will we be able to confront whatever is to follow the “Post-Coronavirus era” with responsibility and wisdom that transcends the wisdom of “this world.” Thus, following the example of the heroes in the medical profession who are on the front line of our battle against the Coronavirus, we soon will all be called to the front line in order to stand up – always in Christ – against every form of oppression, coercion, and de-spiritualization of our life that the political system might produce.

**So let us stay with Christ and be careful!
A beautiful summer to all!**

Τὸ καλοκαιρινὸ μήνυμα τοῦ π. Φιλίππου:

Μαθήματα ἀπὸ τὸν Κορωνοϊό

Δὲν μπορῶ νὰ δεχθῶ τὴ φράση ὅτι ὁ Κορωνοϊός εἶναι μία εὐκαιρία, δὲν μποροῦμε νὰ μιᾶμε γιὰ εὐκαιρία τῆς δικῆς μας ζωῆς ὅταν τόσοι ἄνθρωποι χάνονται δίπλα μας. Μοῦ θυμίζει λίγο τὸ ἐμπορικὸ τοῦ πράγματος πῶς ἡ ἀπώλεια καὶ ἡ ζημιὰ εἶναι εὐκαιρία γιὰ κέρδος. Τὸ ὅτι μποροῦμε νὰ ἀξιοποιήσουμε αὐτὴ τὴ φθορὰ πού κυριαρχεῖ γύρω μας καὶ ἐντὸς μας, δημιουργῶντας τὸ νέο ὑλικὸ πού θὰ δώσει νόημα στὴ ζωὴ μας, αὐτὸ εἶναι μία ἄλλη ἱστορία. Ναί, θὰ πρέπει νὰ βγοῦμε σοφότεροι. Νὰ κατανοήσουμε τὰ ὄριά μας, διότι εἴχαμε γίνει ἄμετροι, χάσαμε τὸ μέτρο καὶ αὐτὸ εἶναι ἡ ἀπόλυτη ὕβρις. Θεωρήσαμε ὅτι μποροῦμε νὰ τὰ κάνουμε ὅλα μὲ κάθε τρόπο, εἴτε ἐκκλησιαστικὸ, εἴτε ἰατρικὸ, εἴτε πολιτιστικὸ, εἴτε πολιτικὸ, καί, ξαφνικά, ἀντιμετωπίζουμε τὸ γεγονὸς τῆς τεράστιας ἀδυναμίας μας. Ἴσως γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ ἐδῶ καὶ πολλὰ χρόνια κοιτάξαμε στὰ μάτια τὴν κτιστότητά μας καὶ τὰ ὄριά της. Ἄς μὴν τρομάζουμε, ὅμως, «ἡ ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλει τὸν φόβο». Αὐτὴ θὰ τὸν νικήσει. (Ἀπὸ μία πρόσφατη συνέντευξη στὸν Χρυσόστομο Σταμούλη)

Μὲ ἀφορμὴ αὐτὰ ἐδῶ τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεολόγου Χρυσοστόμου Σταμούλη, ὁ ὁποῖος, σὲ μία ἐπίσκεψη στὴν Ἀμερικὴ πρόσφατα ἦρθε στὴν ἐνορία μας καὶ μᾶς μίλησε, εἶναι ἀσφαλὲς νὰ ποῦμε ὅτι ἡ κρίση τοῦ Κορωνοϊοῦ, παρ' ὅλο τὸ κακὸ πού ἔχει προκαλέσει, μπορεῖ νὰ μᾶς διδάξει μερικές ἀλήθειες γιὰ τὸν ἑαυτό μας καὶ τὴν κοινωμία μας. Στὸν Χριστιανισμὸ πάντοτε οἱ δυσκολίες καὶ τὰ κακὰ πράγματα πού συμβαίνουν, ἔχουν μία ἄλλη ὄψη, μποροῦν νὰ ἀντιστραφοῦν πρὸς ὄφελός μας, καί, ἀνάλογα μὲ τὴν πνευματικὴ κατάρτισή μας, αὐτὸ εἶναι στὰ χέρια μας. Ἐξάλλου αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ σοφία τοῦ Σταυροῦ. Καὶ αὐτὸ διότι ἡ πίστη μας δὲν εἶναι ἓνα ἠθικὸ σύστημα ἀλλὰ ἓνας ὄντολογικὸς τρόπος ὑπάρξεως: ὁ τρόπος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, πού εἶναι τρόπος τοῦ Σταυροῦ πού ὁδηγεῖ στὴν Ἀνάσταση. Ἐπομένως, δὲν μποροῦμε νὰ ξεπεράσουμε αὐτὴν τὴν κρίση μόνον μὲ τὴν στείρα τήρηση κανονισμῶν,

ἀλλὰ θὰ τὴν ξεπεράσουμε μόνον μὲ τὸ βίωμά μας, ἓνα βίωμα ποὺ ἀντλεῖ τὴν δύναμη του ἀπὸ τὴ σχέση μας μὲ τὸν Χριστό. Καὶ αὐτὸ ἰσχύει γιὰ ὅλες τὶς κρίσεις ποὺ ἀναφύονται στὴ ζωὴ μας.

Αὐτὸ γίνεται σαφέστερο καθὼς, ὅπως εἶναι φυσικὸ στὰ πλαίσια τῆς ροῆς τῆς ἱστορίας, τώρα ποὺ ἔχουμε μπεῖ στὸν τέταρτο μῆνα τῆς κρίσεως, ἡ πρώτη κρίση ἔχει προκαλέσει ἄλλες κρίσεις ἐν τῷ μεταξύ. Μία ἀπὸ αὐτὲς ἀφορᾷ τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς διαφορετικότητας καὶ τοῦ ἐναγκαλισμοῦ τοῦ ξένου ποὺ δικαίως ἀπασχολεῖ τὴν ἐπικαιρότητα αὐτὲς τὶς ἡμέρες. Πάλι ὁ ἐν Χριστῷ βίος λύνει τὸ πρόβλημα. Ὁ ἴδιος ἐναγκάλιαζε τοὺς ξένους καὶ ταυτίστηκε μαζί τους ὅπως λέει ὁ ὕμνος ποὺ ψάλλεται τὸ βράδυ τῆς Μεγάλης Παρασκευῆς, «δὸς μοὶ τοῦτον τὸν ξένον». Ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ γι' αὐτοὺς ποὺ βρίσκονται ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ ὅρια τοῦ περιούσιου λαοῦ στάθηκε ἓνας ἀπὸ τοὺς κυρίους λόγους ποὺ οἱ θρησκευτικοὶ ἡγέτες τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὸν σταύρωσαν. Σαφῶς «χάλασε τὴν πιάτσα», ἰδίως τὴν πιάτσα τῆς θρησκείας. Ὅποτε, ὁ σταυρὸς ποὺ κουβαλᾷμε γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους, τοὺς διαφορετικούς, τοὺς ξένους, εἶναι ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἂν δὲν τὸν κουβαλᾷμε ἀπλῶς δὲν πρέπει νὰ ὀνομαζόμεστε Χριστιανοί. Μέσα στὴν Μεγάλη Ἑβδομάδα βλέπουμε ξεκάθαρα πῶς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀντιμετώπιζε τὴν διαφορετικότητα. Τὴν ἀντιμετώπιζε μὲ ἓναν τρόπο ἐντελῶς σκανδαλώδη γιὰ τὴν ἐποχὴ του (καὶ γιὰ τὴν ἐποχὴ μας, ὅπως ἀποδεικνύουν τὰ πρόσφατα γεγονότα στὴν ἐπικαιρότητα καὶ τὶς δηλώσεις μερικῶν «Χριστιανῶν» στὸ διαδίκτυο). Δεχόταν χωρὶς περιορισμὸ τοὺς πάντες: ἀπὸ τοὺς Φαρισαίους (μὲ τοὺς ὁποίους διαφωνοῦσε ἀλλὰ εἶχε διάλογο μαζί τους!), μέχρι τὶς πόρνες καὶ τοὺς τελῶνες, τὸν Ἰούδα, τὸν Πιλάτο, καὶ τὸν ληστῆ.

Ἐνα ἄλλο μεγάλο μάθημα ποὺ μᾶς δίνει ἡ κρίση αὐτὴ εἶναι τὸ ἐξῆς: μᾶς δίνει τὴν εὐκαιρία νὰ σκεφτοῦμε γιὰτὶ εἴμαστε ἐδῶ, τί σημαίνει ὄντως ζωὴ καὶ τί ἐννοοῦσε ὁ Χριστὸς ὅταν εἶπε: «ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσι καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν» (Ἰωάνν. 10:10). Σύμφωνα μὲ αὐτὰ τὰ λόγια αὐτὸ ποὺ ἔχουμε τώρα ποὺ λέμε ζωὴ δὲν εἶναι ἀκριβῶς πλήρης ζωὴ, κάτι λείπει. Ἡ καθαρὰ βιολογικὴ μας ὑπόσταση ἀπὸ μόνη της δὲν εἶναι τὸ «περισσὸν» ποὺ δίνει ὁ Χριστὸς. Συνήθως ὅμως βιώνουμε τὴ ζωὴ μας ὡς νὰ ἐπαρκεῖ

τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι ἀπλῶς κτυπᾷ ἡ καρδιά μας ὡς νὰ εἴμαστε μία μηχανὴ μὲ καμμία αἴσθησι τοῦ ὑπέκεινα, ἀρκούμεστε ἀπλῶς μὲ τὴν βιολογικὴ μας ἐπιβίωση. Καὶ μέσα σ' αὐτὰ τὰ στενὰ πλαίσια ποὺ ὀνομάζουμε «ζωὴ» νομίζουμε ὅτι εἴμαστε παντοδύναμοι, ὅτι ὀρίζουμε τὸν γύρω μας κόσμον καὶ τὴ μοῖρα μας πλήρως, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς δὲν ἐμφανίζεται κἂν σ' αὐτὰ τὰ μεγαλεπήβολα σχέδια. Ἐροποιήσαμε δηλαδὴ τὴν ἀνθρωπινότητα, καὶ κυρίως τὴ βεβαιότητα τοῦ δικοῦ μας ἐλέγχου στὰ πάντα.

Ὅμως, ξαφνικὰ ἔρχεται ἓνας ἐλάχιστος, ἓνας τιποτένιος ὀργανισμὸς, καὶ ἀνατρέπει τὰ πάντα! Δηλαδή, μέσα στὴ μέθη αὐτῆς τῆς αὐτάρκειας ἔρχεται ἓνα μικροσκοπικὸ ὄν καὶ μᾶς ἐλέγχει ὅλες τὶς βεβαιότητες τῆς ζωῆς μας. Ἐρχεται αὐτὸς ὁ ἰός, ποὺ δὲν ξέρουμε ἀπὸ ποῦ ἦρθε (ἢ μᾶλλον ξέρουμε: διαστρεβλώνουμε τὴν «λίαν καλή» κτίσι τοῦ Θεοῦ - καὶ οἱ ἰοὶ εἶναι κτίσματα τοῦ Θεοῦ! - οἱ ὑπερκαλλιέργειες, ἡ ἐμπορικὴ γεωργία, τὰ φάρμακα, ὅλα αὐτὰ ποὺ βιάζουν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, δημιουργοῦν συνθῆκες γιὰ νὰ ἐξελιχθεῖ πιὸ εὐκόλα ἓνας τέτοιος ἰός) καὶ μᾶς βυθίζει ξαφνικὰ σ' ἓναν ἄδη ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖο δὲν μπορούμε νὰ βγοῦμε. Τὸ καλὸ ποὺ μᾶς ἔχει κάνει ὅμως αὐτὸ τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς δικῆς μας καταχρήσεως τοῦ περιβάλλοντός μας εἶναι ὅτι μᾶς ὑπενθυμίζει ξανά ὅτι εἴμαστε ὄντα μὲ ὅρια καὶ γι' αὐτὸ μερικοὶ ξαφνικὰ ἔχουν ξαναθυμηθεῖ τὸν Θεὸ καὶ τὴν πνευματικὴ διάστασι τῆς ζωῆς.

Μὲ βάση αὐτὰ τὰ μαθήματα ὅμως ποὺ μᾶς παρέχει ὁ Κορωνοϊὸς ποῖα εἶναι ἡ λύσι γιὰ τὸ μέλλον; Μήπως πρέπει νὰ ξαναβάλλουμε στὶς δομὲς τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς κοινωνίας μας τὴν πνευματικὴ πλευρὰ ποὺ γιὰ κάποιον λόγο ἔχει βλακωδῶς ἐξοβελιστεῖ ἐντελῶς ἀπὸ τὴ δημόσια συζήτησι καὶ τὸ σχεδιασμὸ τῆς κοινωνίας μας; Μόνον μ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπο ἴσως νὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ φτιάξουμε δομὲς, οἱ ὁποῖες δὲν θὰ ἐπιτρέψουν νὰ σύρεται ἡ ζωὴ μας πίσω ἀπὸ ἓνα ἄψυχο μικροσκοπικὸ πλασματάκι. Δηλαδή, εἶναι εὐκαιρία νὰ ἐπανα-ἀξιολογήσουμε τὶς προτεραιότητές μας. Τώρα ἴσως συνειδητοποιοῦμε δειλὰ-δειλὰ ὅτι ὅλα αὐτὰ τὰ χρόνια ἡ ζωὴ μας ἔτρεχε πίσω ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνον τὸν Θεὸ ὁ ὁποῖος λέγεται οἰκονομία. Μὲ

τὴν πτώση τῆς οἰκονομίας σήμερα λόγω Κορωνοϊοῦ ξαφνικὰ χάσαμε τὸ νόημα τῆς ζωῆς καὶ αὐτὸ ἀποδεικνύει ὅτι στὴν πράξη ἡ ζωὴ μας δὲν βασίζεται σὲ τίποτα πέρα ἀπὸ τὸν μαμωνᾶ.

Μερικοὶ θὰ συνηθειποιοῦν ὅτι ἔτσι ἔχουν τὰ πράγματα καὶ ἄλλοι θὰ συνεχίζουν νὰ λατρεύουν τὸν μαμωνᾶ. Ὅποτε χρειάζεται ἐγρήγορη ἀφοῦ ὑφίσταται πραγματικὸς κίνδυνος τὰ καινούργια δεδομένα πού ἔχει φέρει ὁ ἴος νὰ ἀποτελέσουν δικαιολογία νὰ δημιουργήσῃ ἡ πολιτικὴ ἐξουσία ἓνα νέο μοντέλο ἐξουσίας πού νὰ ἐλέγχει τὸν ἄνθρωπο διὰ μέσῳ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἀκόμη περισσότερο. Πρέπει νὰ εἴμαστε ἔτοιμοι γιὰ μία τέτοια κατάχρηση, ἡ ὁποία ὅπωςδήποτε θὰ παρουσιαστεῖ δῆθεν στὸ ὄνομα τοῦ “δικοῦ μας καλοῦ.”

Ἡ μόνη λύση ἐπομένως εἶναι νὰ ἔχουμε τὸν Χριστὸ ὡς κριτήριον καὶ πυξίδα στὴ ζωὴ μας. Μόνον τότε θὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ ἀντιμετωπίζουμε ὅ,τι θὰ ἀκολουθήσῃ στὴν «μετα Κορωνοϊοῦ ἐποχὴ» μὲ εὐθύνη καὶ μία σοφία πού πάει πέρα ἀπὸ τὴ σοφία τοῦ «κόσμου τούτου.» Ἐτσι ἀκολουθῶντας τὸ παράδειγμα ὄλων τῶν ἡρώων τοῦ ἱατρικοῦ τομέα πού εἶναι τώρα στὴ πρώτη γραμμὴ στὸν πόλεμον ἐναντίον τοῦ ἰοῦ, θὰ εἴμαστε ὅλοι στὴ πρώτη γραμμὴ αὔριο, γιὰ νὰ σταθοῦμε - ἐν Χριστῷ πάντοτε - ἀπέναντι σὲ ὅποιαδήποτε διάθεση καταπίεσης καὶ ἐξαναγκασμοῦ καὶ ἀποπνευματοποίησης τῆς ζωῆς μας θελήσῃ νὰ γεννήσῃ τὸ πολιτικὸ μας σύστημα.

Ὅποτε νὰ μείνουμε μὲ τὸν Χριστὸ καὶ νὰ προσέχουμε!

Καλὸ καλοκαίρι σὲ ὅλους!



WATCH LIVE STREAM OF OUR CHURCH SERVICES

Visit the home page of our Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church website:

<https://www.assumptionri.org/>

You will find the following options on our website homepage:

1. To watch live stream of church services, click large button that says: **"WATCH NOW"**
2. To light a red glass candle, click the button that says: **"VIRTUAL CANDLE"**
3. To make an offering, click on the button that says: **"VIRTUAL TRAY"**

These contributions are crucial to the survival of our church. Despite the pandemic, this year these kinds of contributions can still take place thanks to new options made readily available on our website. On the home page of our website, there are buttons that make such donations very easy. Please avail yourselves of this opportunity while following the services online or any time you wish so that this year can be just like any other year despite the pandemic.

Thank you to our Parishioners for your continued support.

July 2020

Live Stream of all Church Services continues. A limited number of parishioners will be allowed to attend church in person. To attend SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES, you must first make a reservation and receive a confirmation email in return. Email the Church Office to request a reservation at secretary@assumptionri.org. Reservation not required for weekday services.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 7 P.M. Parish Council	3	4
5 4th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 5th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	20 THE GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS (ELIJAH) 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	21	22	23	24	25
26 7th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	27 ST. PANTELEIMON 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	28	29	30	31	

August 2020

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	3 7 P.M. SMALL PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	4	5	6 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	7 7 P.M. SMALL PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	8
9 9th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	10 7 P.M. SMALL PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	11 7 P.M. GREAT PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	12 7 P.M. SMALL PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	13 7 P.M. GREAT PARAKLESIS LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	14 7 P.M. GREAT VESPERS OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE THEOTOKOS with guest homilist Fr. Nicholas Lanzourakis LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance	15 THE ASSUMPTION (DORMITION) OF THE THEOTOKOS 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance
16 10th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 11th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	24	25	26	27	28	29 THE BEHEADING OF JOHN THE FORERUNNER 8 A.M. Orthros 9 A.M. Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and In-Person Church Attendance
30 12th Sunday of Matthew 8 A.M. Orthros 9:30 Divine Liturgy LIVE STREAM and Limited In-Person Church Attendance - Reservation Required Email Church Office	31					

Church Partial Re-Opening Guidelines

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Upon reviewing the directives of our Metropolitan and our local governor and after discussions with the Parish Council, we partially reopened Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church on June 7, 2020. We will continue with the appropriate principles of social distancing and the governor's directive that only a limited amount of people gather in closed spaces.

We have estimated that 48 parishioners is an appropriate number to start with due to the size of our church building. In order to keep to this limit, participation in services will be by reservation only. Please send an email to secretary@assumptionri.org to reserve a place for Sunday church services. A reservation is not required for weekday services. Reservations will be granted on a first come first serve basis which will be determined by the reception time of the email to the office for each liturgy.

Whoever does not make the cutoff point for a specific liturgy will not lose his/her place and will be included in the next scheduled liturgy – in this way as many people as possible will get a chance to participate.

Families should please indicate clearly how many family members will be coming.

Adult children of the elderly who do not use email are asked to inform their parents and send an email to the church office on their behalf if they wish to participate.

Fr. Philip will attempt to call certain elderly who do not have email or children to help them in order to incorporate them on the list if they so wish because they have no other way of making a reservation.

The weekly reservation sign-up period will be from Monday at 9 A.M. until Friday at 2 P.M. which is the deadline to send an email to the church office to make a reservation for the upcoming Sunday.

The office administrator Beth will send you an email verifying your reservation and indicating which liturgy you will be participating in.

If you are scheduled to attend liturgy but become ill in the meantime, please do not come to liturgy.

Please do not appear at the Church without a reservation.

Please respect the following directives:

- 1) All worshippers must wear a mask or face covering.
- 2) For children between ages 2 and 5, the wearing of a face covering or mask is at the discretion of the child's parent or guardian. Children under the age of 2 should not wear a face covering or mask.
- 3) Hand sanitizer will be provided in the narthex and will be used upon entering and exiting the church.
- 4) To appropriately venerate the icons, gospel and cross, please limit yourselves to a reverent bow of your head.

- 5) When entering the Church, a Parish Council Member serving as an usher will direct you to the designated pews to seat you.
- 6) Attendees who are not part of the same immediate household must be seated at least 6 feet apart – there will be markers on the pews and the designated Parish Council members will help you with this.
- 7) Families may sit together in the same pews with no social distancing between them.
- 8) The Church's main door will remain open during services to allow airflow.
- 9) Tape will be placed on the floor to provide for spacing for social distancing for the communion and antidoron lines.
- 10) Holy Communion and Antidoron will be handed to you by Fr. Philip according to normal Orthodox Church practice during an epidemic as directed by our Metropolitan. The main difference in practice is that you are asked not to wipe your mouth on the communion cloth after receiving communion.
- 11) Fr. Philip or any priest communing the people will be wearing a face mask during distribution of Holy Communion and the distribution of the Antidoron for the protection of the parishioners.
- 12) Fr. Philip will distribute the Antidoron at the end of the service. Please do not kiss his hand or place your hand into the Antidoron basket so we may comply with State directives.
- 13) To comply with the aforementioned State regulations, please refrain from handshakes, hugging or kissing in general.
- 14) We will not have communal gathering pre or post service (e.g., coffee hours or other food services).
- 15) There will be no access for any reason to the hall area, church offices and/or the kitchen.
- 16) There will be no circulation of the tray at the end of the service. The tray will be in the narthex and parishioners are welcome to place their offering in the tray as they pass through the narthex or offer their donation online through the "virtual tray."
- 17) Our services will continue to be available by live stream.
- 18) People over the age of 65 and people who have underlying health conditions – who are at high risk for COVID-19 – are advised by the state authorities to stay home.
- 19) The Church shall be cleaned and disinfected between each service, including disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, microphones, shared instruments).
- 20) We ask for your patience and that you respect these directives and strictly comply. These directives and restrictions are necessary to protect the health and safety of all.

God bless you all,
Fr. Philip Zymaris, George Foussekis and the Parish Council

Dormition of the Theotokos

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15th each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in Greek *kimisis*) or "falling asleep" of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, "Woman, behold your son!" and to John, "Behold your mother!" (John 19:25-27). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the Theotokos in his own home. Along with the biblical reference in Acts 1:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed.



At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.

Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.

Icon of the Feast

The Icon of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos shows her on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles. Christ is standing in the center appearing in His Glory, looking at His mother. He is cradling a small child clothed in white representing the soul of His Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. With His golden garments, the angels above His head, and the mandorla surrounding Him, Christ is depicted in His divine glory.

The posture of the Apostles bow their heads in reverence to the Theotokos and their posture direct attention toward the Theotokos. On the right Saint Peter censes the body of the Theotokos. On the left the Apostle, Saint Paul, bows low in honor of her. Together with the Apostles are several bishops and women. The bishops who are traditionally represented are James, the brother of the Lord, Timothy, Heirotheus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. They are shown wearing episcopal vestments. The women are members of the church in Jerusalem.

The Theotokos lies in the center of the icon surrounded by the Apostles and a candle in front of her bed that helps to form a central axis in the icon. Above the candle is the body of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Standing over His mother is Christ holding her most pure soul. Above Christ the gates of heaven stand open, ready to receive the Mother of God.



This great Feast of the Church and the icon celebrates a fundamental teaching of our faith — the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the Theotokos, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come. We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love.

Orthodox Christian Celebration of the Feast of the Dormition

The commemoration of the Dormition of the Theotokos and the preparation for the Feast begin on August 1 with a period of fasting. A strict fast is followed on most of the days (no meat, dairy, oil, or wine), with the exceptions of fish on the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6) and the day of the Dormition. Oil and Wine are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays. On the weekdays before the Feast, Paraklesis services are held in most parishes. These consist of the Great Paraklesis and the Small Paraklesis, both services of supplication and prayer for the intercessions of the Theotokos. The Feast of the Dormition is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom which is conducted on the morning of the Feast and preceded by a Matins (Orthros) service. A Great Vespers is conducted on the evening before the day of the Feast. Scripture readings for the Feast of the Dormition are the following: At Vespers: Genesis 28:10-17; Ezekiel 43:27-44:4; Proverbs 9:1-11. At the Matins: Luke 1:39-49, 56. At the Divine Liturgy: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28.



AHEPA, A121 Pawtucket, RI Chapter Cares!

Dear friends, we need your help!

In these times of great need, uncertainty, and of many challenges ahead, our AHEPA A121 Pawtucket Chapter is taking initiative to help and give hope. We are part of the fabric of this land and we will join the effort against the pandemic to bring hope to those who need it most. We have selected two very worthy charities and request your donation.

- ***Support for Covid-19 Research and Treatment!***
- ***Support for Our Neighbors in Need!***

Please know that 100% of collected funds will be distributed. For more information and to securely donate, visit our site at: ahepa121.square.site

Alternatively, you can mail a check to AHEPA A121 marked with the note AHEPA A121 Cares to:

***Ioannis Apostolakis
770 Ware Street
Mansfield, MA 02048***

AHEPA Family in Action

AHEPA strives to be a resource for its members and the community. As stated below, we will ensure our mission is being fulfilled during the coronavirus pandemic. We are beginning to see that to be true. The AHEPA family is answering the call. Ahepans, Daughters, Sons and Maids are springing into action by:

- providing meals to health care professionals, to the elderly, and to the homeless,
- donating blood,
- handcrafting face masks for health care professionals, and
- facilitating affordable access to COVID-19 tests.

Also, we cannot forget patients are being treated at AHEPA Hospital in Thessaloniki and in the AHEPA Wing of Evangelismos Hospital in Greece. We are pleased to share examples of "best practices" of what our regions, districts, chapters, and individual AHEPA family members are doing while staying safe by following stay-at-home orders or adhering to proper government guidance and regulations if they are providing a service to the community.

AHEPA Bolsters Hellenic Police with Protective Gear

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA) will provide the Hellenic Police with protective equipment valued at \$27,250 (25,000€), announced Supreme President George Horiates. "Our donation of protective gear is timely, especially given the Greek police is increasing its presence at the Evros border in anticipation of another surge in migrant flow," Horiates said. "Their presence there is appreciated and needed as Turkey continues to threaten with its systematic and forced migration policy."



The protective equipment will re-supply fully one battalion of the Hellenic Police's border guards. AHEPA Hellas District 25 will deliver the equipment. "Thank you to the Ahepans on the ground who helped to fact-find and facilitate the delivery of the protective equipment," Horiates said. "Our Global Headquarters appreciates the contributions received from our districts, chapters, and individuals." Following a March 2020 visit by AHEPA Hellas District 25 to the border, Supreme President Horiates issued an appeal to assist the border guards as their equipment, specifically helmets and visors, appeared to be in disarray.



AHEPA Trenton, NJ Honors First Responders

The AHEPA family of Trenton, New Jersey, successfully delivered meals and face masks handcrafted by the Sons and Maids for 10 nurses who worked the unit during Easter at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Hamilton. AHEPA thanks Broad Street Diner, Trenton, N.J. for donating the homemade turkey dinners.

We Must Preserve the Legacy We Inherited! We need you to join our AHEPA A121 (Pawtucket) Chapter!

We ask all of you to join and support your AHEPA Pawtucket chapter. You can get as much involved as you have time or desire. Please keep in mind, that just by becoming a member and through your yearly membership fee you help us to . . .

- ***Support AHEPA activities and publications***
- ***Support our Chapter's activities and representation***
- ***Give strength to our Pawtucket chapter though membership counts***
- ***Provide academic and athletic scholarships***
- ***Make our voice heard for things that matter***
- ***Make a difference in every community and in the country as well***

This is an invitation to everyone – we need all of you! Your opinion will always count whether you are attending our meetings in person or you are submitting your ideas via email, phone, text or personal conversation. For membership information and/or applications, please see Yianni Apostolakis, Tom Andrikopoulos or Nick Bitsakis.

For more information, please visit www.ahepa.org.



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At IOCC, we've helped people in more than 60 countries across the world.



IOCC

It is amazing what creativity, dedication and faith can produce!

Here are some of the things our volunteers are doing. Thank you to the IOCC volunteers across the country who support our mission every day!



Pittsburgh, PA — Although the 2020 Pittsburgh Marathon was cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis, on May 2, IOCC volunteers Chris Weber and Dean Stambolis ran a virtual race to show their support of IOCC's ongoing humanitarian work. Special thanks TEAM IOCC and everyone who supported their virtual run!



Cleveland, OH — On May 3, the Cleveland Metropolitan Committee pioneered in organizing the very first online IOCC event. Participants from near and far joined to hear a keynote address from Gregory Manzuk, IOCC's Safety and Security Manager, who shared personal stories from his 20-year career with IOCC. Fr. Alexander Garklavs offered prayers, and Connie Zimmerman, IOCC Cleveland Committee Chair, welcomed everyone and presented a brief message from the committee.

IOCC Development Officer Lou Zagami emceed the evening, and IOCC Executive Director and CEO Constantine Triantafilou spoke before fielding a Q&A session with questions from the audience. Thanks to the IOCC Cleveland Committee who worked hard to make our first ever virtual event a success!



Growing the Church's Reach — Locally grown, house-milled whole-grain flour is bringing new hope for the expansion of Gračanica Monastery's community in Kosovo. Two new production lines are facilitating an opportunity for added capacity, allowing the Church to extend its reach and provide additional support for its ministries. IOCC's long-term projects continue to be a driving force in equipping self-employed farmers to build their enterprises, while spreading hope and light to surrounding communities.



Delivering Simple Necessities — For a single mother working hard to provide for her family, a good night's sleep is a simple but valuable necessity. LaShae is one of more than 80 Baltimore residents who found herself in desperate need of new mattresses. Through IOCC's partnership with Good360 which delivers donated items to those who need them, LaShae's family received this gift of treasured proper rest.

Here is How YOU Can Help More!

- Become a monthly donor to IOCC
- Send a donation to IOCC for a cause that touches your heart!
- Give a donation to Ioannis Apostolakis, payable to IOCC, for any occasion you would like to make a difference!

Help Us Provide for Those in Need!

And remember, 92 cents of every dollar you give goes to our humanitarian work. The other 8 cents is for administration and fundraising costs. Charity Navigator gives IOCC a 4-star rating (highest possible) for financial health, accountability and transparency. Plus, every dollar you give helps us secure \$7 more in support from governments, foundations, and other sources. Yiannis Apostolakis

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Mr. & Mrs. Peter Zervas
Rev. Fr. & Presbytera Philip Zymaris and Family

Cemetery Fund

Our Church is currently having work performed by landscapers on our grounds at Walnut Hill Cemetery. It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider making a donation to help with the upkeep and beautification of the grounds where so many of our deceased loved ones are buried. We would like to take a moment to thank those who have already donated to the Cemetery Fund. Special thanks are expressed to the following parishioners for their generous donations:

Mrs. Angela Sukatos
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Andrikopoulos
Mr. John Lyssikatos
Miss Anastasia Vellopoulou
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge
Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Amfilo
Ms. Elaine Sioras
Mr. Paul Microulis

FROM STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, Tom Andrikopoulos:

Now more than ever, it is time to show our dedication and commitment to our Church and be responsible stewards. Through your generosity and the grace of God, we have managed to keep our Church operations functioning throughout these difficult months. I want to personally thank everyone who has stepped up to demonstrate what good stewardship means for our parish. Remarkably, stewardship contributions have continued to come in at a steady pace. Through creative methods and varying degrees of effort, many of you have accelerated or increased your contributions. THANK YOU!!! It is astounding to see the profound results of such generous efforts many of you have taken. As a parish, we have sustained the Church thus far through your generous and continued support. Congratulations! Our work, however, is not over. We have the second half of the year to contend with, which remains unpredictable.

In past years during the summer months, stewardship tends to drop as attention turns to our annual festival. I think we all acknowledge that this year, with the statewide restrictions placed on large gatherings and festivals, we have special challenges ahead. Now more than ever, stewardship will be even more important to continue smooth operations for our parish.

Together, we can be successful as long as we all continue our diligent support of our Church. I trust those who may have forgotten to make stewardship contributions will remember to do so now. Now more than ever, it is critical that EVERYONE participates so the burdens are not placed on only a few. For those in a financial position to make greater contributions, know that collectively, a small increase has a profound impact on results.

Once again, thank you for your continued support. May God bless you and keep you and your family safe throughout this pandemic.

Respectfully,
Tom Andrikopoulos

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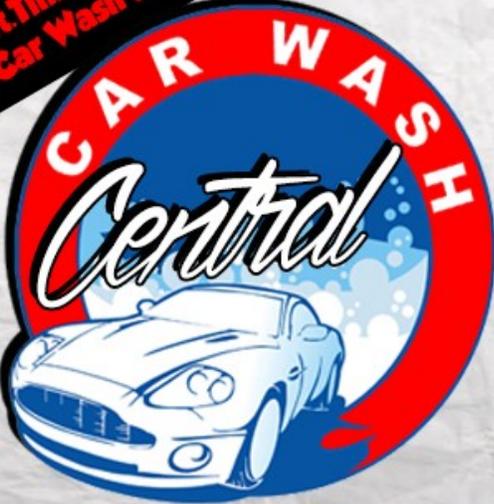


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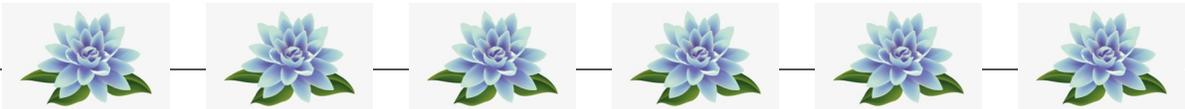
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Church Grounds

You can help to beautify our church grounds. Donations towards our church grounds are always very much appreciated. Please bring any donations to the Church Office so that our grounds will remain beautiful year round. Many thanks to Roula Vellopoulos, Nick Vellopoulos, and Ioanna Wright who are our church gardeners spending endless hours planting, watering, and trimming our beautiful flowers and shrubs surrounding our premises.



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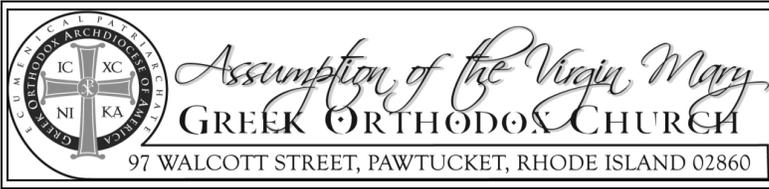
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LINCOLN APPRAISAL

George T. Panichas, Jr.
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer

LINCOLN ABSTRACT

George K. Demopoulos, MRICS, RA, SRA
President/Chief Valuations Officer



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