

## Announcement Regarding Church Services

As we all navigate these uncharted waters of the COVID-19 Pandemic, our ecclesiastical authorities - His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople and His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada – has sent out Directives with regard to Church Protocols that they have asked all Greek Orthodox Churches in their jurisdictions to adhere to.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew states: “we entreat you as your spiritual father to respond faithfully and patiently to all the difficult but necessary measures proposed by our Health Authorities and Governements. Everything is being done for our protection, for our common good, in order to contain the spread of this virus. Our liberation from this distress depends entirely on our own cooperation. Perhaps some of you have felt that these drastic measures undermine or harm our faith. However, that which is at stake is not our faith – it is the faithful. It is not Christ – it is our Christians. It is not the God-Man – but human beings.”

Today, Friday March 20<sup>th</sup>, we have received a new Directive from His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios that states: “from this point forward, all of our Church Services and Divine Liturgies will be conducted in Church **behind closed doors** by the Priest, the Cantor and the Altar Assistant. No Church Service or Divine Liturgy can be omitted for two main reasons:

- a) in order to praise and glorify the Thrice-Holy God; and
- b) for Church Services and Divine Liturgies to be streamed online through Church Websites & Social Media so that pious Christians can follow and pray along. In this way, we are given the opportunity to make our home and our family a “Church that is in our house”, as St Paul states. Please let us all try to truly make our home a “church that is in our house.”

I invite all of you to pray along with me by watching the Live Feed from our Panagia Church at: [www.panagia.ca/Panagia/Live\\_Feed.html](http://www.panagia.ca/Panagia/Live_Feed.html) and participate in all our Services from Home. Those of you who would like to send in the names of your loved ones, I will be glad to pray for them in the Services as always. Please send them to me at: [panagia.toronto@gmail.com](mailto:panagia.toronto@gmail.com)

Most importantly, remember to pray daily and not to allow fear or panic to overwhelm us. Let us remember the Lenten Hymn we sing in the Great Compline: "O Lord of Powers, be with us! For we have none other help than Thee, in times of sorrow & distress, O Lord of the Powers, be with us!

Prayerfully Yours,  
+ Rev. Fr Peter Avgeropoulos  
Parish Priest