

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church

305 Walnut St. Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

Thursday, April 2, 2020,
Venerable Titus the Wonderworker

“Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by.” – **Isaiah 26:20**.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak to almost everyone in our Church by telephone and I was able to feel the anxiety we are all having with the appearance of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Coronavirus) throughout the United States, Pennsylvania and the entire world. This pandemic has created fear, anxiety, and genuine concern. All of these need to be taken seriously and no one's fears should be dismissed.

The Orthodox Church has faced such challenges in the past – even devastating plagues. Today, we possess the advantage of scientific knowledge and the good common sense that can see us through this crisis. We must take every precaution that the CDC and other governmental agencies recommend concerning the coronavirus, and the Orthodox Church in America will be continuously evaluating the situation with the best interest of all our parishioners in mind.

We are all aware the mandate to “Stay in Place” has been extended by the President of the United States until the end of April. Science and our God-given reason demand that we employ every means available to protect ourselves and our families against the spread of Covid-19. In a crisis such as this, we need to exercise vigilance as a community, lest our churches become points of transmission of the disease. In obedience to the civil authorities, and with the blessing of our Bishops, we will not be having liturgical services in our Parish until the beginning of May, when we will have to reevaluate and reassess the present crisis.

After having an emergency meeting with our Church Committee this past Monday evening, March 30, it was determined we will very quickly be in a financial crisis and in order to survive as a Parish we are asking all parishioners to send in the weekly offerings, dues envelopes and contributions for the past two weeks we have missed and to continue on a weekly basis until we resume the celebration of the Divine Liturgy again in our Church. Please send the weekly offerings to St. Michael's Orthodox Church, 305 Walnut St, Jermyn, Pa. 18433.

As your Pastor, I continue to pray for every family by name in my personal prayer devotion and I will remain to be available with my sacramental visitations for those in need of pastoral care. I'm also closely monitoring the personal wellness of many of our parishioners and spending time speaking with them with regularity. I'm including a prayer card you can say every day during the Pandemic.

Thanks to the great marvel of technology, I will create a link on our Parish Website; stmichaeljermyn.org for a Sunday Liturgy live broadcast from the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. I also will be having a taped meditation and sermon every Sunday you can listen and I will resume the publication of our bulletin on line. This letter is also a good time to ask all of you to up-date your personal information. Enclosed is a card, please take time to fill it out so we can up-date our membership information. Please send this information when you send in your offerings.

We should strengthen one another, as the Apostle Paul says: *"For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."* (Thessalonians 5:9-11) As we encourage and strengthen each other, let us also offer our prayers through the intercession of His Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Herman of Alaska and our Patron Saint of our Church, Archangel Michael and all the Heavenly Hosts so this pandemic might end quickly. I remain,

With Love in Christ,
Very Rev. John Kowalczyk (Pastor)