



Metropolis of Boston

# SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

4 Appleton Street, Arlington, MA 02476

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Lord's blessing. I wish to communicate with all of you during this time of global crisis. Over the past two weeks you have received various communications from our hierarchs and from our parish, regarding the impact of the coronavirus on parish life. As you know, we had implemented various precautionary measures for everyone's health and well-being. This was done in order to safely continue offering the divine services of the Church during this holy season. Unfortunately, since this crisis has become more serious we can no longer maintain the status quo.

As you read in Metropolitan Methodios' letter of March 17, all liturgical services with the presence of parishioners are cancelled until further notice. While this has saddened all of us, we nonetheless need to take steps to prevent the further spread of the virus, as much as is humanly possible. The cessation of liturgical services is without precedent, and is something I believe none of us has ever experienced.

One important fact that I wish to emphasize, **is that the decision to suspend liturgical services has nothing to do with the receipt of Holy Communion.** Hierarchs of all Orthodox jurisdictions have emphatically clarified our belief that the Holy and Spotless Body and Blood of our Lord can never be the transmitter of disease. The only reason for the cessation of services, is for the express purpose of eliminating the congregating of parishioners that could aid in the spreading of the virus.

Although we are compelled to take these drastic measures, I am also sensitive to the spiritual needs of the flock entrusted to me. Many have expressed their need for the solace of the Church during these trying times. One way of keeping connected to the liturgical life of the Church, is through the live streaming of services which we will be providing. You may visit our website or Facebook page for the link to our live stream.

Website: <http://www.saintathanasius.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.Facebook.com/SaintAthanasiusArlington>

This is also provided by a large number of parishes throughout the Archdiocese (the link for this list is provided on our website). In addition, YouTube has a plethora of multi-jurisdictional Orthodox services. With these options, we can stay home and yet remain spiritually connected to the Orthodox Church and her divine services. We are especially concerned for our elderly brethren that they stay home at this time, being that they are at greatest risk.

During this time of service cessation, please know that as your spiritual father **I will continue to be available for all your pastoral needs.** Please do not hesitate to contact me to make arrangements by calling the church at 781-646-0705, or by e-mail at [franthy@saintathanasius.org](mailto:franthy@saintathanasius.org).

Lastly, I would like to inform you that one of our parishioners has contracted the coronavirus, which shows us how close to home this reality truly is. I've spoken with the parishioner who is slowly improving from symptoms. Please keep this parishioner in your prayers for continued restoration of health.

May God keep and protect all of you during this spiritual and emotional trial. Most importantly, keep your faith and pray for our parish and one another!

In Christ,

+Fr. Anthony