



COPTIC ORTHODOX
PATRIARCHATE



DIocese of MISSISSAUGA,
Vancouver and Western Canada



Date: Mar 13, 2020

Subject: Further Measures to Protect Against COVID-19

Dear Beloved in Christ,

As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, we must always remember what God said to His children *“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”* Isaiah 41:10

In the spirit of pastoral fatherly love, caring for the well being of our congregation and in accordance with the recent announcements by the Provincial Governments, we, the Bishop and priests of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver, and Western Canada, agreed to add the following additional measures, **until further notice**, to promote proactive safety of our beloved congregation:

- All Church activities and services (Sunday School, Hymns Classes, Prepare to Serve, Choir, Sports activities, Scouts, Bible Study, Kitchen Service) will be suspended. Only Divine Liturgies, vespers and Midnight praises will be conducted in the Church as per each Church’s schedule. As for trips and retreats, plays, celebrations, performances, etc. these will be postponed until a later date.
- To continue to nourish our faithful congregation, each church is recommended to administer spiritual programs to its congregation using electronic media to match the needs and the abilities of each Church.
- According to Health Canada, please avoid all close contact (e.g. hugging, kissing, and hand shaking) with people, don’t attend large gatherings, avoid all travel, and work from home whenever possible.
- Caring for the safety of vulnerable individuals (e.g. seniors, people with chronic diseases, immune suppressed, etc.), they are encouraged to limit their attendance of any gatherings in the Church and outside the Church.
- Congregation members, and priests, returning from a trip outside of Canada need to self-isolate for a period of 2 weeks from the date of their return.



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- Churches are required to abide by the Provincial health standard where a maximum occupancy is capped to a certain number. We ask the churches to plan accordingly to help best serve its congregation, and the congregation to co-operate.
- Congregation members are encouraged to depart from Church after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. Food services will be suspended for the time being in order to avoid unnecessary contraction.
- Congregation members with any flu-like symptoms should seek medical attention and stay home until they recover.
- If congregants are staying home because of illness or self-quarantine, kindly let the priest and/or outreach servants know of your absence and of your situation so appropriate spiritual care can be provided as needed.
- Priests' visits to sick individuals in hospitals will be limited and prioritized based on urgency and the overall situation.
- Attendance of the sacrament of baptism/confirmation is to be limited to the baptized child and his/her parents.
- Regular outreach visits will be postponed unless there is an urgent need.
- Unction of the sick prayed at homes is limited to those who are critically sick and allowed to be visited.
- No Eulogia (holy bread) will be distributed to congregation members after the Liturgy.

We will continue to pray and monitor the situation of the pandemic. Further guidance related to the services of Holy Week and the Feast of the Resurrection will be provided closer to these dates.

Let us all pray together that God will guide us and protect us in these times of uncertainty. We ask all of our clergy and congregation to pray "*Kyrie eleison - Lord have mercy*" 400 times daily at 9:00 pm, Toronto time.

"Finally, my brethren be strong in Lord and in the power of His might" Ephesians 6:10

Dioceses of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada