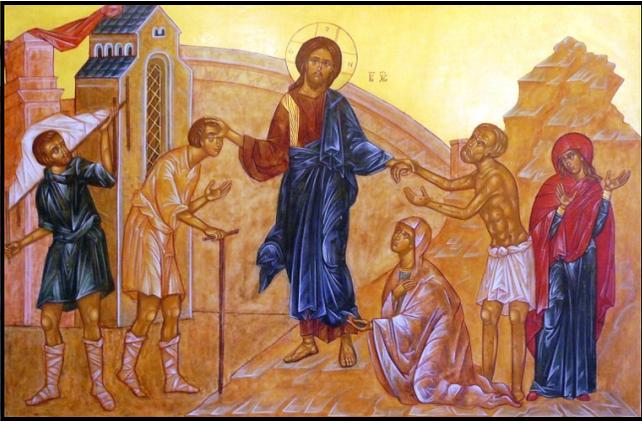


Studite & Theodora are Plato the Studite & Theodora are commemorated.

Epistle—Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel—Mark 10:32-45



Our Divine Physician

My Dearly Beloved in Christ,

I write to you, from the bottom of my heart and with much love, at this time of our country's pandemic with the Corona Virus, I minister to you with these words:

In the Sacred Scriptures, the Apostle Paul speaks of our duties to the civil authorities, ***“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God! Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinances of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves!”*** (Romans 13:1,2).

And the author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes: ***“Obey those who rule over you (bishops and priests), and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorable!”*** (Hebrews 13:17,18).

We are obligated to follow their lead in all matters concerning our pilgrimage upon this earth. With this in mind we now enact the following guidelines as faithful of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church of Warren, Ohio:

1—The Divine Services of the Church will continue to be served at this time. However, all parishioners should follow the wise counsel of the Health Department, ***“It is always better to error on the side of caution”*** as well as the ***“Safe distance”*** guidelines. For one's own safety please follow the hygienic guidelines prescribed. The Church complex will also follow these hygienic guidelines.

The Church will be open for faithful to offer their prayers, light candles, and do their private devotions according to the ***“Worship Schedule”*** of The Church Herald. There will be time before and after service. Dispensers of ***“Purell Alcohol Gel”*** will be available for usage at our Church for sanitary usage. I and the Church are available upon personal need and requests, all one has to do is call and ask.

Faithful who fall within the category of

those *most susceptible* are to stay at home until after the pandemic is in control. From now until the ***“all is clear”*** type of directive, given by the government, there will be no Church School, Coffee Social as well as the cancellation of our Ethnic Dinners. However, since our *Bible Study Class* is telecasted via our church web site and the diocesan one, these podcasts will continue! This is an excellent way of maintaining our spirituality at this time of Great Lent and the pandemic!

2—I, as the pastor of our parish, will be calling all of our parishioners on a regular basis to ***“check in”*** with them and their needs! I encourage all of you to keep in contact with each other! Let others of our family-in-Christ, know they are precious and are being thought of and cared for! If there is an emergency contact me at (330) 372-9778.

Our parish *Information Technology Committee* will be looking into telecasting divine service as well as providing other spiritual meditations and prayers during the pandemic! This will take place this coming week. Please tune into our web sight: stnicholaswarren.org!

Rest assured that all of you are precious and will be thought of and prayed for during this trying time! We pray more fervently than ever before!

3—Please remember that staying away for any reason is not a *weakness of faith*, but a way of preserving ourselves, so that we can continue to live, and pass on our faith to the next generation! Let us not allow the evil one to tempt us to thing any other way! As the famous Greek saying: ***“The devil is now dancing”*** (Quote from Metropolitan Gregory) is true, realize that God will be the intimate victor! By way of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord, evil and the world has been defeated! He may be dancing now but will be destroyed soon! This too will pass away and we will be the ultimate victors, with the strength and grace of our Lord and His Holy Cross! My brothers and sisters, let us *bunker down* while keeping our faith intact! The Apostle Paul wrote: ***“When sin abounds, God Grace abounds even more!”*** (Romans 5:20).

4—I remember an old Slavic saying from my Grandmother, ***“Noting bad happens that good cannot come out of it!”*** Our Holy Orthodox Christian Faith teaches us that ***“God wills that all be saved and come to the Truth!”*** which is a part of our hymnography found in the worship of our Church!

It is my firm conviction that this pandemic is a time of testing and trial being given to us. And this is not to weaken our faith but rather to strengthen it! Sometimes we have to just let out a scream or cry, to get out our frustration and fear. But don't stop there, continue on in faith, prayer and repentance. Let us trust in the saving power of our Lord and His Holy Cross! Maybe this is why this temptation was given to us during this Lenten Season! The Apostle encourages us by saying: ***“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!”*** (Romans 8:37).

With much faith and love in Christ,