

# ALBANIAN ARCHDIOCESE – ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

**The Most Blessed TIKHON**

*Archbishop on Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada  
Locum Tenens of The Albanian Archdiocese*

**Archpriest Arthur Liolin**  
*Chancellor*

## Toward the Gradual Opening of Parishes in the Albanian Archdiocese

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy of the Albanian Archdiocese:

Christ is Risen!

I pray that you, your families, loved ones and parishioners are well and safe.

As you know, on May 1, 2020 the Holy Synod of Bishops issued both a Pastoral Letter and a set of New Directives to guide the OCA as whole in the gradual reopening of its parishes. Both documents underscore the responsibility of the diocesan hierarch for the well-being of his diocese and of the importance of input from the clergy and parish leadership, especially with regard to the gradual opening of the parishes that have been closed because of the pandemic.

To that end, I am asking each rector, together with the leadership of his parish or mission, to carefully study the Holy Synod's most recent Pastoral Letter and Directives and to submit their community's plan for moving toward opening to me for my approval. I am asking each of you to complete the form below and submit it to me ([metropolitan@oca.org](mailto:metropolitan@oca.org)) with a copy sent to the Archdiocesan Chancellor, Fr. Arthur Liolin, and the Orthodox Church in America Chancellor, Archpriest Alexander Rentel ([arentel@oca.org](mailto:arentel@oca.org)).

Please note that you cannot begin serving Sunday Eucharistic services with a minimal crew until you have my formal approval. Any particular questions or concerns about this process should be directed to Father Arthur, to Fr Joseph Gallick, or to Fr. Alexander Rentel. If they cannot answer your question, then you can follow-up by contacting me. Of course, all plans must be within the bounds set by local authorities as well as those of the Holy Synod.

Assuring you of my continual prayers and with Love in the Risen Lord,

**+Tikhon**

Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada  
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### **Some requirements:**

- 1) Sign-in Sheet – the date and type of service and a list of persons attending (including children) shall be provided and kept on file in the parish office each time your temple is opened for services. Each household shall provide a telephone number to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.
- 2) Those coming to church should take their temperature at home that day. Those with a temperature of 100.4 or above should not enter. If it is not possible for one to take one's temperature at home, using a no contact infrared thermometer, one should have his or her temperature taken at church before entering.
- 3) Choir – should you have more than one person sing the responses, those singing must maintain social distancing and stand wherever possible towards the front of the temple, closest to the iconostasis.
- 4) Collection plate – a plate for offerings shall not be passed, but one placed by the doors of the temple or candle stand.
- 5) Candles shall not be handled by worshippers. Instead, someone may light candles for those present in the temple and online to prevent contamination.
- 6) Those who are symptomatic or ill should not attend.
- 7) If it is discovered someone who is ill with the coronavirus has been in church, services may not be held in the temple for at least two weeks.
- 8) Those who are compromised with regard to their health or elderly should be encouraged to stay home.
- 9) A sign shall be posted on the doors of the Temple stating one enters at one's own risk and only those persons who have the permission of the rector to be present may enter.

# **TOWARD A GRADUAL REOPENING OF OUR PARISHES**

(to be completed by Rector)

**Name of Parish:**

**Date:**

## **YOUR SITUATION AS IT STANDS TODAY**

What is the state of your (the rector's) health?

Do you have any concerns about your health (age, existing conditions)?

What are the current restrictions imposed by the state and local government in the place where your parish or mission is located?

How have you been meeting the needs of your parish from Sunday of the Cross until the present?

Have you been conducting any religious education, discussion groups, Council meetings, etc via conference calls, Zoom, or other similar on-line services?

How many persons (maximum) may gather while observing social distancing in your temple?

Do you have the ability to live-stream services?

If not, are you pursuing this?

Do you have a sufficient quantity of sanitizer, masks and disinfecting wipes?

Who cleans your bathrooms and how often?

Is there an adequate amount of hand soap?

## MOVING TOWARD OPENING

Do you think it prudent at this time to begin a process of gradual reopening of your parish and, if so, when?

Have you formulated any thoughts as to how you might want to do that?

What do you think your minimal crew will consist of?

How do you propose to clean and sanitize your temple?

How do you propose to decide who can attend a given service?

What are your plans for families with children?

Do you intend to live-stream your services?

As we progress beyond Stage 1 (Sunday Liturgy with a minimal crew) would you be willing or able to serve the Divine Liturgy more than once a week to accommodate more congregants?

I authorize release of the above information to appropriate authorities within the Albanian Archdiocese for their using in determining our readiness in progressing through the various stages of reopening our parish.

**Name (typed):**

**Date:**

**Signature:**

