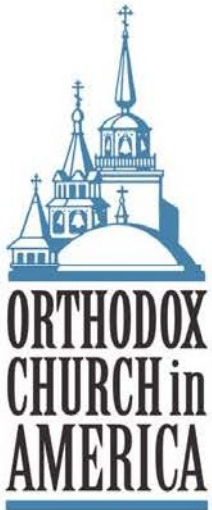


November 3, 2020

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

Christ is in our Midst!

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



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In recent days, there have been upswings in COVID cases throughout different regions of the country. The areas where the parishes of the Albanian Archdiocese are located have been no exception. Pastorally, this situation requires us to carefully assess the status of our parish openings. As you recall, the Directives of the Holy Synod of Bishops of May 2020 ([link](#)) were designed with a series of phases and stages that operate on a scale of more restrictive to less restrictive, and parish communities are to go either up or down this scale as their local health situations warrant.

At this time, I now strongly encourage all of the parish priests to meet with your parish councils and discuss and reassess the current status of your opening plan and the changing COVID environment around you. As warranted by a worsening local health situation, parishes should consider going down a stage or two of their current plans, lowering the limit of attendees to Liturgy if needed, lowering the number of services, or even, if the local health situation becomes severe enough, a complete closure. It is important that you also emphasize that no one is forced or obliged to come to services, and that everyone should be extra vigilant in their personal activities during the week if they want to be able to come to church services.

In all cases, you are required to check frequently the Department of Health website of your state to monitor the trends in your area and to ensure you are following all of the updated and current civil requirements and restrictions.

Any questions with regard to particular concerns should be directed to the Chancellor, Protopresbyter Arthur Liolin, and then subsequently to my office as needed.

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

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada
Locum Tenens of the Albanian Archdiocese