



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

June 25, 2020

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

Dear Fathers,

It is with thanksgiving to God that His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod, who met from June 23-25 at the Patriarchal Orthodox Center in Chambésy, Geneva, Switzerland, discussed the most important and significant issue concerning the manner with which the Sacrament of Sacraments, Holy Communion, is offered to the faithful. The decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod also considered the responses of the other Autocephalous Churches as requested by His All-Holiness. The official Communiqué which is attached in Greek and English in paragraph 2 states the following:

“As to the mode of distributing the ineffable Mysteries to the faithful, the Church, respecting Holy Tradition that is interwoven inextricably with the daily ecclesiastical practice and kenotic experience, and as the guardian and vigilant watchman of those traditions handed down from the Holy Father, finds no need for a change of this mode, especially under pressure from external factors.”

Therefore, the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod is clear insofar as there is to be **no change to the traditional practice** of offering/receiving Holy Communion as it has been for centuries. In addition, paragraph 3 of the Communiqué states:

“At the same time, the Mother Church, mindful of the special needs of Her children in the Diaspora, urges the Chief Shepherds who serve in the Diaspora that with a pastoral sensitivity, responsibility, and consciousness, to temporarily make, by *economia*, accommodations to problematic situations that arise from local laws of the State for the greater spiritual benefit of the Christian people, always in coordination with the Sacred Center at the Phanar.”

We, in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, have been abiding and conforming to the local, state, and federal laws and we will continue to do so. Thankfully, **no restrictions have been placed by any of the states** which comprise our beloved Metropolis pertaining to the distribution or reception of the Holy Eucharist.

We thank His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his Patriarchal and Archpastoral decision. Let us also continue to pray and entreat the Lord our God that He may bestow upon us His grace especially during these unsure times as the devout faithful and our country have both directly and indirectly endured the devastating effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Praying that our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ continues to guard and protect each of you, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

† E V A N G E L O S
Metropolitan of New Jersey

Communiqué of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ

Ανακοινωθέν

Μεταξύ 23-25 τ.μ. Ιουνίου (2020) συνήλθεν ἐν τῷ ἐν Σαμπεζύ Γενεύης Ὁρθοδόξῳ Κέντρῳ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου ἡ Ἁγία καί Ἱερά Σύνοδος αὐτοῦ εἰς τήν τακτικήν αὐτῆς συνεδρίαν τοῦ τρέχοντος μηνός. Τήν πρώτην ἡμέραν παρέστησαν καί συνειργάσθησαν μέ τούς συνοδικούς παρέδρους καί οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν λοιπῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ Ἱεραρχῶν τοῦ Θρόνου.

Κατά τήν σύσκεψιν ταύτην ἀνεγνώσθησαν καί συνεζητήθησαν καί ὅσα ἐλήφθησαν μέχρι σήμερον Γράμματα τῶν Μακ. Ὁρθοδόξων Προκαθημένων, ἀπαντητικά εἰς τό πρός αὐτούς Γράμμα τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου τῆς 17ης Μαΐου τ.ἔ., διά τό θέμα τοῦ τρόπου μεταδόσεως τῆς Θείας Κοινωνίας, τό ἀνακῦψαν μετά τήν ἐμφάνισιν τῆς πανδημίας τοῦ κορωνοϊοῦ, διεπιστώθη δέ μέ ἱκανοποίησιν ὅτι ἡ γνώμη αὐτῶν συμπίπτει πρός ἐκείνην τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου. Αὕτη συνίσταται εἰς τά ἑξῆς:

α) Τό Μυστήριον τῆς Θείας Εὐχαριστίας εἶναι ἀδιαπραγμάτευτον, διότι πιστεύομεν ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ μεταδίδεται εἰς τούς πιστούς αὐτό τοῦτο τό Σῶμα καί τό Αἷμα τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ «εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καί εἰς ζωῆν αἰώνιον» καί εἶναι ἀδύνατον διά τοῦ Μυστηρίου τούτου τῶν Μυστηρίων νά μεταδοθῆ εἰς τούς μεταλαμβάνοντας ὅποιαδήποτε νόσος. Δι' αὐτό καί ἡ Ἐκκλησία παραμένει σταθερά καί ἀμετακίνητος εἰς τήν διδασκαλίαν αὐτῆς ὡς πρός τήν οὐσίαν τοῦ Μυστηρίου τῆς Θείας Εὐχαριστίας.

β) Ὡς πρός τόν τρόπον μεταδόσεως τῶν ἀχράντων Μυστηρίων εἰς τούς πιστούς, ἡ Ἐκκλησία, σεβομένη τήν Ἱεράν Παράδοσιν, τήν συνυφασμένην ἀρρήκτως μέ τήν καθ' ἡμέραν ἐκκλησιαστικήν πρακτικήν καί κενωτικήν ἐμπειρίαν, διακρατεῖ τά ἀπό αἰώνων καί μέχρι σήμερον ἰσχύοντα, ὡς φύλαξ καί φρουρός ἀνύστακτος τῶν παραδοθέντων ὑπό τῶν Ἁγίων Πατέρων, καί οὐδεμίαν ἀνάγκην εὐρίσκει δι' ἀλλαγῆν τοῦ τρόπου τούτου καί μάλιστα ὑπό τήν πίεσιν ἐξωγενῶν παραγόντων.

Συγχρόνως, ἡ Μήτηρ Ἐκκλησία, μεριμνῶσα διὰ τὰς ἰδιαιτέρας ἀνάγκας τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ Διασπορᾷ, προτρέπει τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ διακονοῦντας Ποιμενάρχας ὅπως, ἐν τῇ ποιμαντικῇ αὐτῶν εὐαισθησίᾳ, εὐθύνη καὶ συνέσει, οἰκονομοῦν προσωρινῶς τὰ ἀνακύψαντα ἐκ τῶν τοπικῶν νόμων τῆς Πολιτείας προβλήματα, πάντοτε ἐν συντονισμῷ μέ τὸ ἐν Φαναρίῳ Ἱερόν Κέντρον, διὰ τὴν μείζονα πνευματικὴν ὠφέλειαν τοῦ χριστωνύμου λαοῦ.

Ἐν Γενεύῃ, τῇ 25ῃ Ἰουνίου 2020

Ἐκ τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς
τῆς Ἀγίας καὶ Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Communiqué

Between June 23 - 25 2020, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was convened for its regular meeting of the current month at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Geneva. On the first day, the chairmen of the synodal committees were engaged in their cooperative work. Many of the Hierarchs of the Throne in Europe were present as well.

During this meeting, the Official Letters of Their Beatitudes the Orthodox Primates that had been received thus far in response to the letter of the Ecumenical Patriarch to them of May 17th of this year, on the issue of the mode of distribution of Holy Communion that emerged after the appearance of the coronavirus pandemic, were read and discussed. It was satisfactorily determined that their opinion coincided with that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This consists of the following:

a) The Mystery of the Divine Eucharist is non-negotiable, because we believe that through it it is transmitted to the faithful the Body and Blood of the Savior Christ "unto the remission of sins and life eternal" and it is impossible that through this Mystery of Mysteries any disease might be communicated to those who partake. For this reason, the Church remains steadfast and immovable in its teaching towards the essence of the Mystery of Holy Communion.

b) As to the mode of distributing the ineffable Mysteries to the faithful, the Church, respecting Holy Tradition that is interwoven inextricably with the daily ecclesiastical practice and kenotic experience, and as the guardian and vigilant watchman of those traditions handed down from the Holy Father, finds no need for a change of this mode, especially under pressure from external factors.

At the same time, the Mother Church, mindful of the special needs of Her children in the Diaspora, urges the Chief Shepherds who serve in the Diaspora that with a pastoral sensitivity, responsibility, and consciousness, to temporarily make, by *economia*, accommodations to problematic situations that arise from local laws of the State for the greater spiritual benefit of the Christian people, always in coordination with the Sacred Center at the Phanar.

In Geneva, 25, June 2020
From the Chief Secretariat
of the Holy and Holy Synod