Dear Brother Concelebrants,

Each year our Orthodox Church, in her wisdom, provides for us the Lenten Season as a means for us to step out of our routine lives and our everyday world. Through this holy season we are given the opportunity to recognize our dependence on God, and to strengthen our relationship with Him and with others.

What a Lenten Season we have been given this year! Perhaps it is not the Lent that we envisioned or hoped for, but it is the one we have been given.

My sincere hope and prayer is that each one of you approaches this Lenten period, especially with all of its unique challenges, as a time to recommit to your priestly calling, your devotion to Christ, and your service to His faithful. I am confident that through all the trials and tribulations of this present pandemic, the Church, our parishes, and you as clergy will come out on the other side stronger and more dedicated to the Lord.

For the good order of the Metropolis of Denver, I am providing to you the following directives. They are not ideal, but given the circumstance in which we find ourselves, they are prudent. As Orthodox Christians we treasure our pious traditions, however, we must be mindful that at their core, they are intended for the salvation of the faithful. Let us all approach these temporary *kat oikonomia* measures with that goal and focus.

Until further notice in the Metropolis of Denver:

- The Sunday Divine Liturgy may be celebrated where possible and prudent.
- In parishes with multiple clergy, the Liturgy should be celebrated by one priest only.
- In parishes that are able to celebrate the Sunday Divine Liturgy, all precautions which have been previously sent regarding personal hygiene, limited contact, and vulnerable individuals should be adhered to.
- In parishes that do not have a Sunday Divine Liturgy, the following procedure should be followed:
  - Available times should be communicated to the faithful when the priest will be at the church to distribute Holy Communion
  - Parish Council members should be on hand to monitor the number of people that enter the church at any given time, as well as to open and close doors to limit transmission
  - A method of washing or sanitizing hands should be provided outside or in the Narthex
  - An altar server should assist the priest by holding a communion cloth below the chin of the communicant being careful not to touch them, but present to prevent spilling of the Eucharist
• The Pre-Sanctified Lamb which you consecrated during this past Sunday’s Divine Liturgy should be preserved and used for the distribution of Holy Communion for those who seek it.

• Lenten services of Vespers, Compline, Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, and Salutations should be cancelled. In parishes with audio or video capabilities, the priest and one or two chanters may conduct the Vespers, Compline, and Salutations services for internet streaming purposes.

• Parishes with streaming capabilities, please email or text the parish name and web address of your streaming page to Syndesmos President, Father George Gartelos (frgeo@htgoctulsa.org or 307-286-7773) so that he can compile the list for distribution back to all of our brothers.

• Confessions and home visitations are to be done taking precautions to avoid transmission of the virus.

• Funeral services are to be sung with immediate family members of the deceased only in attendance.

• All non-liturgical gatherings of parishes are to be postponed/cancelled.

• If you are not feeling well, or believe that you have been exposed to the coronavirus, please contact Deacon Paul immediately.

While I fully understand the intent of today’s “social distancing,” I am very much opposed to the term. Rather, I prefer physical distancing, because the pandemic requires us to be physically spread out. Our social community, the Church family which constitutes the very Body of Christ should not, or better yet cannot be distanced. As these temporary accommodations physically separate us for a time, may our loving and merciful God preserve His people as He has done for almost two thousand years, and ultimately draw us closer to Him and one another in the very near future.

With paternal blessings,

+ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver