



**Office of the Metropolitan Archbishop
The Archdiocese of the Southeastern States and Missionary Dependencies
The Evangelical Orthodox Catholic Church in America**



**Presiding Archbishop-Abbot
Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos
"Benedictines of Mary, Old Catholic Marianists"**

Most Reverend Doctor Robert Francis Jangro, O.S.S.T., O.C.R.

March 15, 2020
Third Sunday of Lent

To: All the Faithful in Christ

SUBJECT: Response to the Coronavirus

With fear of the coronavirus outbreak on a global scale, many are turning to faith leaders to see how they respond.

Several bishops, priests, and other pastors around the world have tackled the new virus in their sermons and through services, encouraging washing of hands and disinfecting common areas while cutting back on communal contact during greetings, communion, and offering times.

What is my response? Rather than live in fear, I encourage everyone to actively receive His love and protection personally. Be wise to take the necessary precautions, but at the same time, pray the prayer of protection found in Psalms 91 daily. I encourage all believers to speak the promises of God's protection over yourself and your entire household and church.

Don't worry about it, pray about it, God is bigger than the coronavirus. Don't be afraid. From the Catholic Church in Rome to smaller churches throughout the United States, many congregations have gone online, swapped hugs and handshakes for other types of greetings, and stopped serving Communion and passing offering plates to prevent the spread of the virus.

Personally, I plan on preaching and celebrating Mass as I have always done. I have chosen not to close the chapel doors. I shall continue with the celebration of all our rites, customs, Divine Services and above all the offering and receipt of the Holy Mysteries in precisely the same manner as I have always done. This is an easy decision for me.

No genuinely believing Christian can for one moment accept that the Holy Mysteries might bring or be the source of sickness or ill-health: by no means! The Mysteries of Christ are the true medicine of our souls and bodies, and bring nothing but life — and life eternal.

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Hundreds of times in the Bible, God tells his people to not worry; to stop their fears; to be brave and courageous. When everyone else is running for cover, we choose to follow God into the fire. Jesus told his followers not to worry about tomorrow, but to focus their mental energy on the problems of today. We're following the command of Jesus and choosing not to engage in fear. Instead, we choose to worship, to give time, attention, and gratitude back to God.

What is my response to the coronavirus? I urge faith over fear!

Faithfully and Fondly Your Servant in Christ through Mary,

Dom ++ Robert

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