



Ἱερά Μητρόπολις Γ.Ο.Χ. Τορόντο

The G.O.C. Metropolis of Toronto

Ἐκκλησία Γ.Ο.Χ. Ἑλλάδος / Under The Church of the G.O.C. of Greece

Ὁ Τορόντο Μωϋσῆς His Eminence, Moses, Metropolitan of Toronto

313 Helen Ave, Unionville ON L3R 1J9

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Great Martyr Irene

*Trust ye not in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation.
His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return unto his earth. In that day all
his thoughts shall perish. Blessed is he of whom the God of Jacob is his
help, whose hope is in the Lord his God. –Psalm 145*

Beloved sons, fellow pastors of the flock of Christ:

Beloved children, rational sheep of the rational flock: I greet you once again with spiritual joy in the invincible hope of the Resurrection:

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

Beloved Children in Christ,

As we pass the halfway mark between the Radiant Resurrection and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, partaking of the joy of both the Feasts at Mid-Pentecost, I hasten to address you again, to encourage you to hope in Our Risen Savior's abundant care for us, as the present crisis continues. God willing, I hope to keep speaking to you often as this emergency in the life of the Church and our country continues. Day to day, it seems, new challenges arise as our parishes continue to endure coerced closure and our families face the temptations caused by economic uncertainty and social isolation.

When we interact with authority figures we should show respect to them because of their office and act with the deportment proper to Christians, using language appropriate to children of the Church. Bearing this in mind, however, we also recall that it is not only the right but also the duty of heads of household, who have the moral obligation to provide for their families, to speak out when they perceive that unjust government threatens the welfare of those whom God has entrusted to their care.

Here is what St. Paul says about caring and providing for our families:

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (I Timothy 5: 8)."

Commenting on this verse, St. John Chrysostom teaches the following:

If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, that is, those who are nearly related to him, he is worse than an infidel. And so says Isaiah, the chief of the Prophets, You shall not overlook your kinsmen of your own seed (Esaias 58:7). For if a man deserts those who are united by ties of kindred and affinity, how shall he be affectionate towards others? Will it not have the appearance of vainglory, when benefiting others he slights his own relations, and does not provide for them? ... Will it not be said, These Christians are affectionate indeed, who neglect their own relatives? He is worse than an infidel." - Homily 14 on I Timothy

Saint John Chrysostom praises care for one's family, and one way to do this is to hold elected politicians accountable. They are not infallible, and it can be said that during the present crisis they err on the side of extreme measures out of fear of making a mistake. Even though we may have sympathy for them on some level, we cannot allow the present taking away of our rights to become permanent. To believe in God's providence does not preclude vigorous action in practical matters. To vigorously defend our rights in time of need and necessity is not idolatrous or against God's will for us.

Please be assured that we the clergy suffer with you while we see your rights of assembly as citizens in your parishes abrogated and the welfare of your families threatened. We do not dismiss your concerns.

It is an indisputable fact that the scientific bureaucracy has been grossly wrong in their predictions of mortality, and their policies to quarantine the healthy and close the economy has caused damage to our way of life. These policies have been refuted and condemned by doctors in Germany, Sweden, Iceland and Israel, etc., as decisions not driven by data but by other motives. The present policies have inflicted fear and harm unnecessarily.

I have been asked to write a few words regarding news sources. It is most certainly **not true** that the corporate media provide "fair and balanced" information, while no alternative media sources can be trusted. The truth of the matter is, in fact, the opposite. In the recent past even *Forbes* accused the mainstream media of "fake news." No matter where one looks for information, one needs to seek for real data and weigh facts, especially in the context of Covid-19 reporting. We cannot allow ourselves to be beguiled by opinion pieces written by journalists who have no medical training.

In our pursuit of the truth, at times we must love our neighbor so much that we are willing for him to be upset with us. Constant emotional peace at the cost of truth and goodness was never seen as a virtue by the bold and manly teachers of Orthodoxy. The Church is an ascetical arena in which we, sinners all but Orthodox nonetheless, burn out each other's vanity and sinful self-regard in that crucible of saving conflict which constitutes any truly loving family.

In this regard, St. Gregory Palamas says the following:

"Forthright examination is the grantor of peace." (III Epistle, to Akyndinos)"

Forthright examination grants that true peace which is firmly established on the basis of shared truth. If we unintentionally hurt one another in the course of our shared struggle for the truth, let us forgive one another, and our love will grow stronger.

To return to the subject of our relations with the civil authority: As citizens and residents of

Canada, we are most certainly not forbidden to question the decisions of the government, to speak against them in public, and to seek redress through constitutional means. We live under a constitutional monarchy, not the tyranny of pure majority rule. Therefore our majority or minority status is irrelevant. The right to redress of grievances is enshrined in British political tradition going back at least to Magna Carta. Magna Carta also guarantees the freedom of the Church.

As I stated in my last encyclical, any of our clergy or laity who wish to openly dispute the measures that are still being imposed on us in a public forum have my blessing to do so, as long as they use reliable sources and make a rational argument. We acknowledge that Covid-19 is serious, and the death of anyone is a cause for sorrow. Yet, there are many who say that the medical bureaucrats were not qualified to make a proper risk assessment for the death rate from other causes and the suffering that inexorably followed from unprecedented unemployment numbers and the breakdown of the supply chain. The Bank of Canada's recent review of the country's financial system indicates that household debt and defaults are likely to increase for those whose income has been affected by the Coronavirus shutdown.

As you all know, we have already sent emails to our elected officials, and yet our churches are still closed. I seek your help to find other ways to work within our system of government and make our voices heard. We cannot shirk the duty of trying to find appropriate ways to make our government respond to us and reinstate our rights.

One way we can work to make our voices heard by the Canadian government is to sign a petition that has been started by "Citizen Go," an online family values group that operates worldwide. They have started a petition that will be sent to the Premiers of each Province in Canada. You can find this petition at this link:

<https://citizengo.org/en-ca/179260-support-churches>

Please consider signing this petition. If you have any other ideas regarding how we can influence our government officials for the good, please share them with me.

St. John Chrysostom, in commenting on a passage in Acts chapter nine, in which the disciples were trying to decide where to send St. Paul in order to escape death at the hands of those who had killed St. Stephen, remarks that the Lord did not inspire the disciples directly with this knowledge but rather left them to discover it for themselves:

"But observe, I pray you, how far it is from being the case that everything is done by (miraculous) grace; how, on the contrary, God does in many things leave them to manage for themselves by their own wisdom and in a human way; so to cut off the excuse of idle people: for if it was so in the case of Paul, much more in theirs." - *Homily XXI on Acts*

If these supremely holy men, so great in the power of the Spirit, had to use "their own wisdom...in a human way" to make critical decisions, and did not always wait for divine inspiration, how much more is this the case with us! We cannot wait for some imaginary time in the future when we have all attained passionlessness before acting according to conscience. Informed by prayer and the mind of the Church, common sense, and above all trusting in Divine Providence, we must strive

to do what we can. God never abandons those who live according to Faith, though they be mere earthen vessels beset by many passions and sins.

Let us, therefore, trusting in God's care for us, seek the truth together in love, and speak the truth in love, even when it hurts. God is with us. Let us not despair, but rather proceed in the joy of our risen Lord, for as Saint Paul wrote:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8: 35-39

In Christ,

+ *Moses, of Toronto*

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