

**A letter to members regarding the Wuhan Virus
- shared with the community for encouragement**

It can hardly have escaped anyone's attention that the world around us is in a state close to panic about this virus.

Ours is certainly a situation that calls for caution and care for our own health as well as for that of others. We are responsible for each other and owe it to God and each other to deal responsibly with each other. This obligates us, as always, to think twice about needlessly exposing others to infection by poor personal hygiene, or by unnecessary social contact with others although we have reason to suspect that we might very well be carrying an infectious disease.

Worship, on the other hand, is by no means an unnecessary activity. Not only is worship what the Church of Christ owes her Master, it is also the source of her life with Him, and is, in fact, her life with Him whom she cannot and must not be without. Only to a culture that has forgot the true nature of worship, because it has forgot the nature of the salvation of God, will cancelling worship be the default and first response to any kind of crisis.

Such is not the culture of the Church of Christ. To her, giving up worship can only come into question as the last resort in the face of obviously clear and present necessity - sometimes not even in face of such!

The Church of Christ cannot and will not expect evil to come from receiving salvation from her Saviour - which is what authentic Christian worship is - even though it might seem so to the world, and to the flesh. She trusts His promise to work only good for His Church and His Christians, even through sickness and death.

Nevertheless, should some among us feel uncomfortable about continuing their regular worship practice in the current situation, in light of particular vulnerability or for other reasons, neither words nor thoughts of judgement shall come their way.

A such decision, however, is not for others to make, certainly not for their Pastor, nor for the Church. Accordingly, we will continue to make the salvation of God available to those who desire it in regular worship.

And as Christians who find themselves compelled to temporarily abstain from public worship continue their devotions by themselves at home, they are encouraged to take comfort in knowing that they are still partakers of the worship of the congregation with which they are one body in Christ, and that their congregation is still carrying out her worship also on *their* behalf, and in communion with them.

It should go without saying, but shall nevertheless be stated, that members who prefer, in light of the present situation, to abstain from public worship, are not only welcome, but also encouraged to make arrangements with their Pastor for receiving the Sacrament in a more private setting, either in their home or elsewhere, as it may seem most comfortable and prudent.

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