



## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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TO: All Clergy of the Direct Archdiocesan District

FROM: Bishop Andonios, Chancellor

DATE: March 15, 2012

RE: Directives

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Dear beloved Brothers-in-Christ,

As mentioned during our Clergy Retreat and DAD Assembly last week, I am sending this directive to you regarding our discussion related to certain liturgical practices during our gathering in Huntington. As always, ALL clergy are expected, as per church protocol, to abide by the items below so as to assure the cohesive and harmonious life of the Church in the Direct Archdiocesan District, as well as to not create issues for those brothers and parishes who are appropriately responsive to these requests:

**NO LONGER is Holy Unction to be distributed to take home on Holy Wednesday.** As in many of the Metropolises of our Archdiocese, the time has arrived for the District to implement this policy, recognizing the sanctity of the sacrament, which like the other “mystereia” of the Church, is not one administered by the laypeople. As I emphasized last year and at our recent meeting, you have hopefully prepared your faithful for this change in a long-standing practice. To minimize reaction, they should have been adequately informed about this change so that they and their family members can plan accordingly to attend the service. Moreover, they should have been properly educated as to the significance of the Holy Oil which is unlike Agiasmos (which is sanctified and then distributed for home usage) or holy oil from a kandyli, etc. It should have also been stressed that participation in the Service is part and parcel of the significance of being anointed with Holy Unction and that exceptions are only made under extenuating circumstances. The key to successfully implementing this practice, without too much resistance/reaction, is contingent on adequately informing, preparing and educating our people.

May I also take this opportunity to reiterate the policy which we had instituted two years ago that **Holy Communion NOT be distributed outside of the context of a Divine Liturgy.** Hopefully your faithful now realize that the practice of “drive

through” Communion no longer exists and that they will find the occasion to attend and receive at one of the at least 5 Eucharistic services during Holy Week. Of course, we must continue to be vigilant in observing this policy until it is fully embedded in the minds of communicants.

At our retreat, I forgot to bring to your attention something which has been mentioned to me by some of our clergy. The request was made that when any of you prepare a verification of “good standing” for a parishioner to serve as a sponsor (in another church) that if they are married, you ONLY include the name of the Orthodox partner. It appears that some well-intended clergy have included on those documents a non-Orthodox wife/husband so as to be “inclusive” not realizing that his brother priest when reading the certificate assumes that the person is Orthodox and invites him/her to participate in the sacrament.

Lastly, a reminder that **no Memorial Services (Mnymosena) are to be celebrated from and including the Saturday of Lazarus until AFTER the Sunday of Thomas** (please see page 269 in the 2012 Archdiocese Yearbook).

In closing, it was as always a special joy and blessing to join with many of you at our District Clergy Retreat and heartfelt thanks to all who made the effort to be there. On behalf of all, I once again express appreciation to our President, Fr. Nick Anctil, to our Retreat organizer, Fr. Dimitri Moraitis, and to Dr. Tony Vrame for all they did to assure an uplifting and enjoyable event. No doubt, all of us greatly benefited from the presentations, the discussions which ensued and above all, the fellowship!

On behalf of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, I also convey heartfelt appreciation to all the clergy and delegates who participated in our DAD Assembly last Saturday. We had 56 parishes represented with a total of 155 clergy and delegates participating.

May the balance of the Lenten Season be a blessed one for you and your parishioners. Kali Dynami especially during the many services of Holy Week and may you, your loved ones and all the faithful members of our communities have a blessed and joyous Pascha!

Conveying the paternal agape and blessings of His Eminence, I remain

Καὶ  
Ταῦτα

Bishop Demetrios