TO: All Clergy of the Direct Archdiocesan District  
FROM: Bishop Andonios, Chancellor  
DATE: April 14, 2011  
RE: Directives

Dear Brothers-in-Christ,

As always, it was a special joy and blessing to join with many of you this past Tuesday at the District Clergy Retreat. Heartfelt thanks to all who made the effort to be there and also to Fr. Nick Anctil and Fr. Dimitri Moraitis for organizing this retreat in such a magnificent setting. It was most apparent that the brothers greatly enjoyed and benefited from this time of fellowship!

As per my presentation on Tuesday, I am sending you this directive regarding certain issues/liturgical practices which I shared with you. Needless to say, ALL clergy are expected, as per church protocol, to abide by these directives and thus also assure the cohesive and harmonious life of the Church in the District as well as not create issues for those brothers who are appropriately responsive to these requests:

1. This year will be the LAST in which you are to facilitate the faithful taking home Holy Unction on Holy Wednesday. As in many of the Metropolises of our Archdiocese, it is time for the District to now adopt the same policy, recognizing the sanctity of the sacrament and that as with the other “mystereia” of the Church, it is not one administered by the laypeople. As I stressed at our meeting, it is imperative that you share this change in practice with your faithful this year so that they are prepared next year and equally important, please educate them to the significance of the Holy Oil. This is unlike Agiasmos which is sanctified and then distributed for home usage by the Church or holy oil from a kandyli, etc. I have enclosed something which one of the brothers includes in his community’s Holy Week program. You are certainly welcome to use it as a template for preparing your own written announcement to your communicants. So as to avoid too much turmoil and reaction next year, you should begin preparing your parishioners for this dramatic change in practice which has been in place regrettably for too many years and to which they have grown accustomed. It should also be stressed that participation in the Service is part and parcel of being anointed with Holy Unction and that exceptions are only made under extenuating circumstances.
2. No doubt, all of you, as I myself, for as long as one can remember, thought that having the same godparent/sponsor was an impediment to marriage. Recently, we received a notice from the Patriarchate, clarifying that this is not the case and that there are indeed no canons which prohibit a wedding between two individuals with the same godparent. If you would like a copy of the Patriarchal communiqué in the original Greek (it has not been translated) please contact my office.

3. It has come to the attention of the Archdiocese that some Fathers have taken it upon themselves to initiate the practice of celebrating a Divine Liturgy in conjunction with the baptism of a baby/individual. Anyone doing so is asked to immediately discontinue that practice and return to the prevailing one of celebrating only the sacrament of Holy Baptism. In addition to causing confusion amongst the faithful and problems for those clergy not celebrating the Liturgy, no such initiative should be taken without first discussing it with your presiding hierarch, the Archbishop, or myself.

4. While most clergy abide by the following practice, there are some exceptions and I would ask that from this time forward we all follow the policy that eulogies/comments at funerals will be offered ONLY by clergy. Laypeople (family/friends) wishing to say something on such occasions should be offered the option of speaking at the Trisagion at the funeral home, at the interment or at the makaria. No laypeople should speak within the content of the funeral service in the church proper. ONLY the Archbishop has the prerogative to make exceptions to this policy.

5. Lastly, during Artoklasies and Mnemosenea please refrain from reading names NOT directly associated with that service. Many times while officiating at Great Vespers, during the artoklasia, some of you have come out with a stack of papers with names to be read. This is not the “prothesis” and only those people who have brought the 5 arotous are to have their names read. The same holds true for the memorial service. Only the name of the person for whom the 3 month, 6 month, 1 year or 5 year (etc.) memorial service should be commemorated in the petitions of the service. All others at the prothesis. Doing otherwise dilutes both the artoklasia and the mnemosena which have specific reasons for being celebrated. Of course, to implement the proper practice necessitates educating your faithful to what the proper practice is and that it is more significant to read the names at the prothesis when you are preparing the gifts and that a “particle”, associated with each name you read, will be added to the holy Challice with the Body and Blood of our Lord.

In closing, thank you for your immediate attention to these directives and I am confident that we will all work towards their immediate implementation. The key to their success is properly preparing the faithful for their implementation and through educating them. May I take this opportunity on behalf of His Eminence to wish you Kali Dynami during the many services of Holy Week and may you, your beloved parishioners and all your loved ones enjoy a blessed and joyous Pascha!
GUIDELINES

During the LITANY OF THE ICON OF THE NYMPHIOS, the faithful are asked to kneel reverently making the sign of the cross.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY UNCTION: All members should attempt to attend this service and be anointed with the blessed oil of Holy Unction. As the Priest anoints the forehead, cheeks, chin, and palms and back of hands, we should ask God's forgiveness.

The Laity is not permitted to administer this Holy Sacrament – it is a Sacrament! However, there is one exception – which is when a member of the family is seriously ill, then a lay person may administer the anointing. It must be understood that this is not a take-home Sacrament. Therefore the practice of taking Holy Unction home for all the other members who have not attended the Service must be dismissed.

Those unable to attend on Holy Wednesday evening may be anointed from the same Holy Unction by the Priest on another day of Holy Week.