



ORTHODOX BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN AMERICA
ПРАВОСЛАВНИ ЕПИСКОП ЗАПАДНОАМЕРИЧКИ
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESES IN THE U.S.A.

Ep. No. 20 / August 1, 2020

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7)

Dear Beloved in Christ,

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting all of our lives, we pray for the health and well-being of you and your loved ones.

At this time of year plans for our Diocesan Days Gathering are well underway. Unfortunately, the pandemic has caused us to put a pause on all social gatherings to help prevent the spread of this serious virus. We do, however, anticipate that before the year-end things will improve and we will enjoy one combined social gathering encompassing Diocesan Days, the Annual Assembly, and the Sts. Sebastian and Mardarije Orthodox Institute together with our annual Clergy Retreat! If social gathering is not possible, it will be a Virtual event!

In the meantime, as our Diocese adapts to today's challenges, we continue to serve our clergy, parish councils, and faithful in other new, creative, and exciting ways! To share just a few... since April we have produced a well-received Catechesis & Daily Inspiration e-publication bringing a positive and encouraging message into the homes of our faithful each day. We have also provided a unique and successful Almsgiving opportunity to raise funds to help those impacted by Covid-19 both here in the USA and in Serbia. Our Diocese, in partnership with Serbica Americana, has produced several educational videos presented by our own Diocesan clergy. Our Diocesan Council members have been busy as well, assisting parishes by providing live online webinar guidance on the PPP application process. Camp St. Sava went Virtual with a week of music classes, faith topic discussions, and a virtual zabava! Our St. Sebastian Press Bookstore has seen an increased demand among its readership, has hosted its first live online Zoom Retreat, and has designed and provided decorative covid-19 face masks and floor decals.

As you can see, we are working hard during these trying times to meet the needs of our church parishes and faithful. We are also doing what we can to meet our daily operating expenses and cover the expense of our regular missionary work. Each year, to help us meet our budget, we rely on your Christmas, Easter, and Diocesan Days donations. Even though the social aspect of Diocesan Days is unsure, we are preparing to publish the *Annual*, a beautiful Diocesan Days commemorative yearbook that reflects on the past year in our Diocese and provides inspiration for both the present and future.

Through your support we can, together, continue to provide what is needed for our churches and faithful! Please consider becoming a 2020 Sponsor. The submission deadline is September 20th.

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We thank you for your generous support and thoughtful consideration of this appeal. May the grace, love, and the communion of the Holy Trinity be with you and your loved ones as you continue your good works of stewardship in the Diocese of Western America. Every donation, in any amount, will be accepted with our heartfelt gratitude.

With Love in Christ,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN AMERICA