



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΒΟΣΤΩΝΗΣ

PRESS RELEASE

On October 8, 2009, The Metropolis of Boston issued the following statement:

“The Center of Disease Control (CDC), fearing an H1N1 Pandemic, strongly discourages participation in group activities, recommending individuals, (especially children) with colds or the flu remain at home and follow the instructions of their medical doctors. Many faithful have approached our Parish Priests expressing concern about their participation in worship services, especially in the sacramental life of the Church. While the warnings of the medical community should be heeded by persons with colds and flu-like symptoms, people, in general, should not panic but carry on with their usual activities, including going to church and receiving Holy Communion.

“It should be noted, that the Church has always been clear in its belief that diseases are not transmitted from the Holy Chalice which we believe contains the very Body and Blood of our Savior. Hence, the distribution of Holy Communion was never a question even when various diseases ravaged the world. As is well known, Priests consume what remains in the Chalice at the end of the Divine Liturgy, regardless whether it was celebrated in a parish church, a hospital or hospice chapel.

“Orthodox Faithful have always acted responsibly. As we face the reality of the present flu pandemic fears, Orthodox Christians are urged to use discretion as they follow the directives of the medical community.”

Regrettably, a priest serving in New England — surely pressured by well meaning parishioners concerned with the outbreak of the H1N1 flu pandemic — utilized plastic spoons to distribute Holy Communion. This unacceptable violation of Church order was addressed in accordance with Ecclesiastical procedure.

The Metropolis expresses its regret that this lapse of judgment resulted in widespread controversy, and is appalled that some individuals questioned whether this practice was authorized. It

expresses its fervent prayer that those who arrive at rash judgments— hurling paranoid condemnations in the press and on the internet— will rather invest their time in prayer and self examination during the Great Lent. They should reflect on the countless passages in the New Testament which urge the followers of the Crucified Lord to avoid gossip and the sin of judging others. Let us all etch in our hearts and souls the prayer of St. Ephraim,

**O Lord and Master of my life,
Give me not the spirit of laziness,
curiosity, lust for power, and idle talk.
But give to me your servant a
spirit of prudence, humility,
patience, and love.
Yes, Lord and King grant me to see
my own faults and not to
judge my brother.
For You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.**