



A GUIDE TO OUR BELOVED PARENTS

# TURNING YOUR HOME INTO A LITTLE CHURCH THIS SUNDAY



ΕΥΝ ΘΕΩ ΙCΧΥΡΟC  
In the name of God the Almighty

28 March, 2020

*All are nourished by the same Body....When you see [the Body of Christ] lying on the altar, say to yourself, 'Because of this Body I am no longer earth and dust, no longer a prisoner, but free. Because of this Body I hope for heaven, and I hope to receive the good things that are in heaven, immortal life, the lot of the angels, familiar conversation with Christ.*

- St John Chrysostom

Dearest Parents,

Tomorrow we will all experience something unlike anything we have previously experienced. We will wake up on a Sunday morning and against our will we will be unable to make our weekly pilgrimage to the Church for the Divine Liturgy. What a day! However, thankfully, with great debt to God, we have been provided with other means of tasting the grace and love of God in other means when it is out of our hands and we are unable to approach His most holy table and partake of His gifts to us, the Body and Blood of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the medicine of immortality, the Fruit of the tree of life and the Bread of the Heavenly Banquet.

Through God's great love to mankind He has given us to recreate the sweetness of His presence in our home when we gather together, husbands, wives and children, a **little church**, around His Word and around Himself as when we gather, Christ is in our midst! (Matt 18:20)

Of course this is not a replacement to our regular attendance at Church and is not a replacement for the deep spiritual need we have to gather together as the parish to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, or to put into action our life with Christ through our service to one another in the parish, but rather what we do in our homes is a way for us to extend what it is that we have already received and already tasted of which is the goodness and love of God.

Moreover in these trying times when we are unable to approach the table and eat, what we do in our homes will ignite with us the remembrance of the sweetness of the food and drink we received from the hands of Christ himself every week. It will continue to engrain within our children a desire participate in the heavenly worship.

What follows is a short guide to what to do with your children tomorrow as we attempt to navigate these uncertain time with maximum benefit and least disruption for our children. Let us work together to till the hearts of our children, safeguarding the talent presented to us by Christ, to return to him hearts overflowing with fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold and members of His eternal Kingdom, living branches in the Tree of Life.

May the Lord grant us always His living and life-giving presence in our lives!

In the ever abounding love of Christ,

Your servants,

**Fr Alexander Aziz**

**Peter Foukaih**

**Mariam Gadalla**

28 March 2020 - 19 Baramhat 1736

Saturday of the Fifth Week of the Great and Holy Fast

Martyrdom of St Aristobulus, one of the 70 Apostles

Martyrdom of St Alexander, St Agabius and their companions

# WHAT TO DO COME SUNDAY MORNING

## 1. Prepare a place in your home for prayer

In order to allow your children to get into the atmosphere of prayer you must prepare a place in your home which is used only for prayer. If you already have an icon corner or a prayer room then that will be the perfect place to take your children on Sunday morning for prayer. Surround them with the familiar sights, smells and sound of the Church. Fill the space with icons, light candles and burn some incense if you have them at home.

There will be live-streaming of the liturgy in English via Zoom via this link <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/857300708>, the Arabic will be on the Church's YouTube page so do not forget to take your devices with you so you can participate in the Liturgy in your pre-prepared prayerful place.

## 2. Keep your Sunday holy

Do not forget that Sunday is the day of the Lord, regardless of where we are and therefore we must treat it as such. Make sure that you keep the same rituals you would on a normal Sunday morning. Wake up at the same time, shower, brush your teeth, get your children ready, as you wouldn't allow them to come to church in their pyjamas, change them into something befitting the House of God and come quietly into your prayer space or icon corner, ready for prayer as if you were coming into the church. You must do everything that you can to keep this day feeling like Sunday and this family prayer as the Liturgy.

## 3. Structure of the Prayer

Since the liturgy will be live-streamed the structure for prayer will incorporate elements of participation and also elements of personal engagement based on the age of your children. It would be impractical to expect younger children to watch the entire liturgy with no sense of participation. Therefore we suggest that with younger children, or possibly for all of your children that you do the following:

- Participate in the Live stream singing along with the congregational responses from the beginning of the Liturgy, the Offertory, until the beginning of the readings.
- While the readings are being read this may be a good time for you as a family to discuss the readings rather than expect the children to follow and absorb everything through the livestream. Take the opportunity to read the gospel of the day with them and explain it to them focusing on the main message and working to allow them to come away from this experience with a lesson.

- Once the readings are complete return back to the live stream and listen to the Gospel being read again together and listen to the sermon for your own edification. You may attempt to find something for your children to do in this time which is spiritual, keep them within the prayer space and do not allow them to leave.
- Once the sermon is completed bring back their attention to the livestream and participate in the remainder of the Liturgy together, singing and praying with all the parts of the congregation. It is of utmost importance to say the Our Father after the Fraction out loud together as a family.
- Once the Liturgy is completed have breakfast together, breaking bread as the conclusion of your prayerful morning, make yourself available for your children because they will have lots of questions about this new experience.

#### 4. Set a Holy Example

Parents, it will be your job in this coming period to set a holy and proper example for your children. Do not stay in bed longer than necessary just because you are at home. Do not neglect the process of preparing yourself and your children for this prayer as if they are going to the Liturgy. All these things, which might not make a difference for us as adults are of utmost importance to your children and their experience, children as visual and kinaesthetic learners **NEED** these routines, structures and visual reminders to be able to engage and connect to what is happening. Remember to do the sign of the cross when appropriate, to bow and worship, just as you would at church. Stand and sit when appropriate, you are not watching a livestream but you are participating in prayer!

