



THE BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ЕПИСКОП ИСТОЧНОАМЕРИЧКИ
СРПСКЕ ПРАВОСЛАВНЕ ЦРКВЕ

E. No. 505
September 19, 2020

**TO THE BELOVED PARISHIONERS
OF THE HOLY TRINITY SERBIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
PITTSBURGH**

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven . . .
I have seen the burden God has laid on men.
He has made everything beautiful in its time.
He has also set eternity in the hearts of men;
yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end . . .
I know that everything God does will endure forever;
nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it.
God does it so that men will revere him.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1, 10-11, 14)*

Most beloved Faithful,

Every change and any change in life is always difficult to accept, regardless of the nature of that change. Yet, if we are true believers, we understand that it is our Lord and Savior alone, Who always secures our path in life. As such, we come to understand, both individually and collectively, that it is precisely He, Who is the only true Newness in life, for “*...He who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, **I make all things new.**” Also, He said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true”* (Rev. 21:5).

As your Archpastor and father in God, it is now We who write to you concerning the recent clerical changes in the Pittsburgh Deanery. Most unfortunately, others have chosen to misrepresent the truth of the matter, by issuing abrupt and disruptive announcements, intended to cause dismay and confusion. Yet others, seizing upon this lack of information, have chosen to write, well beyond the decency of protocol, concerning that which is permitted to any faithful of our Church, and hastened to post, as such, on social media – one of the great collective sins and burdens of our day. All of this is so deeply regrettable. We have a saying in our beautiful Serbian language, „**Стрпљен, спашен!**“ (The one who is patient, is saved).

As it is written, Christ “*desires all men to be saved and to come to **the knowledge of the truth***” (1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore, “*you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will make you **free***” (Jn. 8:32). The truth? After prolonged months of agony, deliberation, consideration and mostly prayer, as a father, equally responsible for all of his God-given children, his parishes and his clergy, a careful choice was rendered that would serve in the best interest, equally, for each parish and their faithful, as well as their clergy. Most importantly, this decision was not made in a void, but in consultation with those who have been entrusted with serving in our Diocesan administrative bodies, commissions and clergy, Fr. Rajko Kotic, himself, notwithstanding. **The final decision was rendered only after having spoken *ad length* with Fr. Rajko**, achieving concurrence, and having taken into positive consideration his

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request for an extension of time. Once the decision was rendered, it was and remains, with God's help, as such.

Now, beloved Faithful, it is time for all of us, without exception, to pray earnestly and to accept the will of God and thank Fr. Rajko, together with his family, for his long pastorate at the Holy Trinity Cathedral. We are certain that his manifold experience will help the faithful of the Holy Resurrection Parish in Steubenville, who have experienced the newness of parish life and ministry, to move forward in their life in Christ. In like manner, with the joy of anticipation, pray fervently for your new pastor and spiritual father, Fr. George Veselinovic and his family. Welcome him into your homes and hearts, as he, too, will receive you in equal measure.

For all of us, most especially those who have given themselves unto the Service of the Lord, ours is to follow the prophetic example from of Old, as emulated by the Theotokos and Mother of God – when summoned to His Service, to say, simply and earnestly: **Here I am, Lord!**

Therefore, Beloved, *“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thess. 5:16-19).

With Archpastoral blessings and paternal love,

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