



SERBIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF CANADA
ST. ARCHANGEL GABRIEL
SERBIAN ORTHODOX PARISH, RICHMOND HILL, ONT.
СРПСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЕПАРХИЈА КАНАДСКА
СРПСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ПАРОХИЈА
СВ. АРХАНГЕЛА ГАВРИЛА, РИЧМОНД ХИЛ, ОНТ.



Issue 5, May 2020.

Upcoming events:

14th of June at 3pm

AGM, invitation packages were mailed out to current members

Father Ljubo's note

Dear parishioners, brothers and sisters,

If someone had told us just a few months ago that we would not be able to travel this spring, go on vacation, go out with friends, eat, drink, we would have laughed at him. If anyone had told us that we would not go to work, that the children would not go to school, that we would have our medical check-ups done over the phone, we would have told him that he was mad. If we had been told in February that we would not be allowed to go to church for Pascha, that we would not be allowed to celebrate St. George's Day, we would have asked: who can forbid us to do that! Now we know that all this is possible. All of this happened to us. Hitherto such troubles would have befallen other regions, some other people and nations. Now the same trouble has befallen the entire world and all people.

I would not want to assess and arbitrate what is true and what is not related to the corona virus. But I am free to say and share the following with you: Infectious diseases are not a new phenomenon. Mankind has dealt with leprosy, the bubonic plague, tuberculosis and various other plagues. There was no media, as there is today, to keep telling us the same story twenty-four hours a day. They provide us with instructions from authorized persons and institutions. They frighten us with some statistics on the number of infected and deceased. On the other hand, we have social networks from where we hear about and read something completely different. One simply does not know where to turn and whom to obey. As a priest, I am in a different situation from most of you, my parishioners. I have not cut off contact with people for as long as the state of emergency lasts. Whoever invites me into their home, I go to them. Who is not afraid, comes to my house and church. I have had many sacraments, slavas, consecration of homes and funerals. I know of people who ignore all of the instructions about personal isolation and claim that the whole story about the virus is fabricated. I also know of some who live in fear, with masks, gloves, disinfectants. My neighbors, a married couple, are just walking in circles on their parking lot. And they have not set their foot on the street. They just wave in place of greeting and do not take off their mask. When their groceries and goods ordered through the Internet arrives in front of their house, they spray it diligently with alcohol, and leave it to stand before they bring it into the house. What is encouraging for me, and I want to share that with you, is the fact that I do not know of anyone who has fallen ill, nor have I heard from anyone that they know of such a case. It is discouraging, however, how those in power have compiled a list of businesses and trades that are necessary. The so-called: Essential Businesses! In this context, I would translate the word "essential" with "supersubstantial". That list includes grocery stores, of course, beverage stores,

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garden centers, and even marijuana stores. The list has recently been expanded with several more businesses of "supersubstantial" need, but churches and places of gathering for prayer have not been added. That should bother us Christians. It should help us to open our eyes and mind, so that we can see the situation we are in. Let us remember how the Lord answered the tempter: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:4)

In the temples of God, His Word is heard and interpreted. Those who go to church because of that Word, strive to live by the commandments of God. How then is it possible that the government in a Christian country does not see the church as an supersubstantial need for many of its citizens? May God grant that those upon whom our liberty depends will come to their senses. We pray to God to end this tribulation that has befallen us as soon as possible and that we may come out of this as wiser and better people.

Archpriest-stavrophore Ljubomir Rajic

Presidents Note

Christ is Risen!

Dear brothers and sisters, we have all found ourselves in a strange situation caused by the appearance of a new virus.

Some of us work from home, which may suite some, while for others it is a problem. Many have lost their jobs. There are many questions: what about children and their school obligations? At this time we come to the Church through the side door or follow the services over the Internet, and all because of some ordinary virus about which we really know little. One thing is for certain: never in these 10 years since the purchase of the parish property have we missed more our chapel graced by the Holy Spirit and blessed by God! By God's will our eyes have opened overnight - so He showed to us all that walls do not make a Church, but people do. We did know that! We even heard that from our Patriarch Irinej during his visit, but we have not fully understood it till now. Every day I get calls from the faithful inquiring when and how can they come to Church. No one now minds that everything in our old building is creaking and that it easily leaks. We don't mind anymore that the monastery candles are sooty. Nor when the sump-pump in the basement turns on in the middle of the service to drain the water, sounding like a small airplane taking off. We all yearn for our chapel to be officially reopened as soon as possible so that we all can offer prayers to the Lord together.

We were and remain dignified, complying fully with all state laws, but found ways to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ as Orthodox Christians! Sister Biljana Gašović, only God knows which time by now, with love took up upon herself to summon many of you to help-out the Church. Her sacrifice and love cannot be described in words. If it weren't for her persistence and perseverance, the financial survival of our parish would be brought into question. Thanks to everyone who responded to Biljana's appeal and helped raise our Parish financially from its knees. I appeal to all of us to continue with the contributions, since we have no indication of just

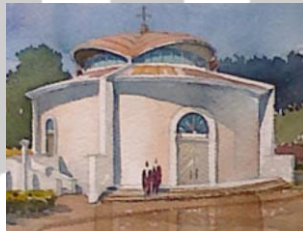


how long the chapel will remain closed, though we do see that some restrictions are slowly being lifted.

You can send your contributions electronically to: treasury@arhangelgavrilotoronto.com, or you can mail checks to the Parish address. By the Grace of God, our Parish keeps surviving financially through the years. Just three weeks ago, I watched a video footage where in front of the iconostas we currently use, which was then in the chapel in Mississauga, our Patriarch Paul of blessed memory was serving! We did not know about this, so we weren't even aware that this great blessing has been with our community! As Patriarch Pavle used to say "Let's not forget to be men": I think that in this crisis we have organized ourselves well, have professed our faith, and have not lost ground!

Thank you for your love and selfless help!
Hadji Dejan Jokanović

Site Plan Update



Dear brothers and sisters,
Christ is Risen!

These strange times with the ongoing "covid-19" epidemic have confused us a bit with regards to the submission of documents, but it also helped us in our efforts to prepare the final documentation for the "Site Plan Agreement" phase. Since the people involved with this project mostly work on it in their free time from home, now they have had more time to dedicate to it.

The architectural part as well as the engineering part (which is the most critical at this stage) are ready to be handed to the Planning and Regulatory Services Department of Richmond Hill. We need to wait for the "Servicing Report" and the "Erosion and Sediment Control Report", which is handled by Eng. Ninković's associate, as well as for the harmonization of the "Landscape Plan" and the "Exterior Lighting Plan". We expect this to be completed by the end of May. Therefore, sometime by the end of May or in early June, we should be able to submit the completed documentation for the "Site Plan Agreement" to the Richmond Hill City Planning Department, and we expect their approval of the same, followed by the signing of the "Site Plan Agreement" with the City.

For that occasion, we will need to have money ready for the deposit that will be required when signing the agreement. The City requires this deposit in order to oblige us to complete the exterior works (e.g. traffic accesses, parking, drainage and landscaping) for our facility according to the specifications of the approved project. Once this work has been completed satisfactorily, that amount will be returned to us in full. The Richmond Hill City Planning Department will be giving us the exact amount of the deposit based on the estimation of works. For now we anticipate this to be between \$200,000 and \$250,000.



As you know very well, we do not have that amount money at our disposal, so we should all start to work hard to collect those funds if we wish to build a church.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, it is time for each one of us to reconsider how much we are able to contribute in order to overcome this obstacle.

All the best to all,
Vladimir Brkić

Serbian School and Religious Education

Every Sunday at 11am Zoran Radisic: Orthodox Youth Reading Club via ZOOM meeting.

Events in our Parish



The Parish Governing Board would like to thank all supporters of St. Archangel Gabriel Serbian Orthodox Parish!

Your donation, monetary or in time volunteered, unselfish efforts and work with organizing events, is what helps us reach the next step in getting the building permit, maintaining the existing building and grounds and with God's help building of our church.

We need your ideas for events, discussions, fundraising and others.

You are very welcome to send it to office@arhangelgavrilotoronto.com

For additional information you can visit our Parish Facebook page at  or on our website www.arhangelgavrilotoronto.com.

IMPORTANT:

- Update your e-mail address or your friends to receive this Newsletter.
- Ask for your Tax Receipts to be e-mailed to you instead of being mailed.
- Confirm your mailing address and phone number, including mobile phone number if any changed in last 5 years.

Thank you for considering the environment and saving money for papers, envelops, stamps etc.

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