



## Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

Rev. Fr. Robert J. Archon, Protopresbyter

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July 20, 2020

Dear Beloved St. Nicholas Family,

This is the most difficult letter I have ever had to draft. I wish to first respond to the recent letter you received from the Parish Council. What the letter failed to state is my reason for leaving St. Nicholas. In the coming days, you may hear various reasons why I am leaving, such as another parish opportunity, opportunities with my Ph.D., or being re-assigned by His Eminence. All of these are untrue.

Unfortunately, in light of recent events, my continued tenure at St. Nicholas is not possible. Five months ago, when this pandemic arrived it caused and continues to cause much fear and disruption to our lives, and more importantly affected how we understood reception of Holy Communion. The Ecumenical Patriarch and His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios have made it abundantly clear that the Eucharistic practice of the Church is to remain unchanged through the use of one spoon. During this time, I have had many discussions with the Parish Council with regard to this issue. I have demonstrated great love, compassion and patience while instructing and educating them as to the teaching of the Church on the reception of the Holy Eucharist, but to no avail. Consequently, for the Parish Council of St. Nicholas this issue still remains unresolved. This is a theological issue, and not up for debate for the Parish Council or the congregation to decide. Our Church is hierarchical in nature and all of us need to comply with the directives of our Spiritual Leaders. I have demonstrated great compassion towards those who feel uneasy and wish not to receive at this time. However, fears, health concerns, and even legal recommendations do not change our two-thousand-year Church tradition.

Please understand that I hold no malice towards anyone especially the Parish Council. I love all of you as my spiritual children. There is a difference between a healthy and respectful exchange of ideas and the compromising of our theological dogmas and traditions. This decision to use one Communion spoon was not mine, but I am merely a faithful servant of His Eminence and the Church following her directives.



METROPOLIS  
OF BOSTON

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As a Priest, I have always placed my life and my decisions in God's hands. Oftentimes fulfilling God's will is much broader than what is before us. Previous to these months of deliberation I have had no intention of leaving St. Nicholas. Poppy and I bought a home and were planning to retire here. As your Priest for the last 10 years I have addressed many issues. Unfortunately, this issue has caused me to re-consider my position at the Church. God has given me the strength to leave in order to fulfill His will allowing my gifts to be used elsewhere.

I leave behind a ministry of 10 years of faithful servitude to Christ and to all of you my beloved families and spiritual flock. Above all, I have offered ministries enhancing the life of the Church. I have created an atmosphere where the Church became a second home for everyone, a family. As such, no other Church I have visited has resonated with such a love for one another and had the potential for such success. God has blessed St. Nicholas with many loving families, who desire a place they can call home. I created a Church where everyone was welcomed. I established ministries which further outreached to those unchurched. I honestly feel I am leaving the Church better than I found it.

Last, I wish all of you to know how sincerely saddened I am by my decision to step away. I can only pray that your lives were blessed by my ministry as my life was blessed with your love. I hope the next spiritual father will build upon what I have done and further enhance the Church's Body of Christ. Poppy and I love all of you, and will most sincerely miss you as an extension of our spiritual family. I have received the blessing of his Eminence to remain until the Feast Day of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15<sup>th</sup>. After which I will take some vacation time in preparation for leaving.

In our Savior's Passion,

*Rev. Fr. Robert J. Archon*

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