



**COPTIC ORTHODOX
PATRIARCHATE**



**DIOCESE OF MISSISSAUGA,
Vancouver and Western Canada**



Date: January 2, 2021

Subject: Funeral Services During Pandemic

“Bless, O Lord, the crown of the year with your goodness!”

Dear Beloved Fathers,

Wishing all the beloved Reverend Fathers across the diocese a happy New Year. We thank our Lord Jesus Christ for all conditions and for a new year that renews our hope in Him. “Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:23)

As your reverences are probably aware, recently the number of COVID-19 cases have been exponentially growing. This has significantly impacted the safety of our beloved congregation and clergy. Therefore, the COVID Committee, headed by H.G. Bishop Mina, had met recently in order to set guidelines for conducting funeral services during this difficult time. The COVID-19 committee agreed on the following:

General funeral service guidelines:

- Continue to vigilantly maintain ALL Public Health Safety Regulations during the entire service.
- Continue to observe the number of attendees to be according to provincial guidelines.
- **Attendees** should follow Canadian Public Health rules:
 - Anyone who is COVID-19 confirmed or suspected (having symptoms or waiting for COVID-19 test results) **SHOULD NOT** attend.
 - Anyone who has a household member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, **SHOULD NOT** attend.
 - If family members are impacted by COVID-19 and wish to attend, funeral service may be postponed for two weeks until they are well and able to do so (must be cleared by their Regional Health Office).
- It is preferable that the funeral prayers are conducted at the cemetery/funeral home chapel.
- Whenever possible, arrange for streaming funeral service prayers.
- Compile a list of attendees before funerals to screen members and for contact tracing.
- Encourage the use of virtual technology instead of in-person for wake services.

Specific guidelines during lockdown period:

- Limit funeral service time to 15 minutes.
- Only one priest may pray the funeral service.

Always remember that “those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint”. (Isaiah 40:31)

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