



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA

The Most Reverend Dr. NATHANIEL Popp, Archbishop

December 18, 2020

Dear Fathers,

We offer some pastoral guidelines for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord:

The Service of the Blessing of the Water:

1. The sanctification of water is performed in the church or even outside where the climate permits, maintaining social distance and respecting the regulations of the civil authorities.
2. Bless the water and sprinkle the already filled plastic bottles, which can then be distributed to the faithful by the members of the parish council at the exit of the church, and even by drive thru for those who come later on.

House blessing:

3. The blessing of the houses should be done only at the invitation of the parishioners. Inform the faithful about your availability, about the recommendations in place from the authorities (mask, distance, disinfectant), and keep their written responses in the parish records.
4. The priest should wear a mask for the duration of his presence in the house and maintain the appropriate distance. Inform the parishioners that you will not be able to socialize as in other years, with meals or snacks, etc., which will make you take off your mask. No exceptions.
5. If the priest is accompanied by a helper (cantor, etc.), these instructions also apply to this person. But our recommendation is for the priest to go alone.
6. For those who do not already have holy water at home, you can leave a plastic bottle with holy water (avoiding the exchange of water from the plate on the table as it is sometimes practiced).
7. Use your pastoral discernment and care for your health and the health of your parishioners; if you cannot or consider it more prudent not to go house blessing this year, you have our blessing not to go at all at this time. At the request of the faithful, you can reschedule for later.
8. If you choose to go house blessing, always maintain an active level of communication, informing the parishioners of your health, but also ask the faithful to keep you informed of the health conditions of all those in the house that you will visit.

With hierarchal blessings,

+ Nathaniel

+ NATHANIEL, Archbishop