

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We wanted to send you an update on this year's Festival. Due to continued "Shelter at Home" measures, we have not been able to follow on our normal schedule of festival preparations. We continue to assess what communication we are receiving from both State and Archdiocese to determine what is the best course of action for our festival.

We recently heard from the Archdiocese, advising us that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all upcoming events and conferences are cancelled – including the Antiochian Village, other camps and the Clergy Symposium. Additionally, they are asking each Parish to review their expenditures to ensure that we are fiscally responsible during these challenging times.

Many festivals and events throughout Syracuse have already been cancelled or postponed. To ensure the safety of both our parishioners and attendees from the community, we will be doing the same and not holding a Festival this year. Nabeel Al Ghattas, Rami Khoury and others will continue to assess the situation to determine what we as a community might be able to do later in the year – but will be scaled back with safety and social distancing in mind.

Because we have already started selling raffle tickets, we will continue to sell them since this can be done without the Festival. Continuing with the raffle will offset some of the revenue that we will lose from not holding the Festival this year.

To quote Metropolitan JOSEPH "The enormous impact of this pandemic is going to be felt for months to come. We will rise to the challenges imposed upon us but it will take the cooperation and help of all of us, working hand in hand." We pray that you and your family continue to be safe and healthy and if you need anything, please reach out to either Father or the parish council members for help.

Yours in Christ,
Father Elias Nasr
Nabeel Al Ghattas, Festival Co-Chair
Rami Khoury, Festival Co-Chair
Mai Makhlouf, Parish Council Chair