



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
**THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA**

The Most Reverend Dr. NATHANIEL Popp, Archbishop

19 April 2021

RE: Camp Vatra 2021

Dear Clergy & Faithful,

We pray that you and your loved ones are in good physical and mental health, having endured more than a year of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 virus. While different parts of the United States & Canada (and indeed the entire world) have responded in various ways, all of us have endured to at least some extent the separation and frustration brought on by its effects and those measures deemed necessary to keep our communities safe. But we must not grow weary in our faith! We can and must do what is within our power to use the talents and tools given to us by the Lord to continue our ministry and good works as followers of Christ amidst even a pandemic! As St. Paul writes to Apostle Timothy, "But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2Tim 4:5)

As you know, last year we made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person Camp Vatra summer programs. The foremost concern of our camp administration, working with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, is always the safety of the students and staff entrusted to our care. Our limited facilities and resources simply do not allow us to safely implement living conditions and activities observing the necessary distancing precautions mandated by the State of Michigan. With that in mind, we must again cancel the in-person programs of Camp Vatra for this upcoming 2021 season.

However, in the spirit of St. Paul's encouragement mentioned above, we have been blessed to offer our young people the opportunity for religious education and spiritual nourishment with a **Virtual Camp Vatra** online via Zoom. While we know it is not the same as being together as a "camp family" at our Vatra, the online sessions were well-received by those who participated, and we will offer similar activities this year. (Details will be shared in the coming months.) We anticipate resuming our regular Camp Vatra programs in the Summer of 2022.

Please be assured of our continuous prayers for all of you as we live in hope of overcoming this pandemic and in gratitude to our good God for all of His blessings which He has given to us!

With love in Christ,

+ ANDREI

Auxiliary Bishop / Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries