

LET NO ONE FEAR
DEATH

LET NO ONE FEAR DEATH

Copyright © 2022
Uncut Mountain Press

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions.

uncutmountainpress.com

Cover Artwork: Icon of the Resurrection, 15th century, Monastery of Chora, Constantinople.

Scriptural quotations are primarily taken from the King James Version unless otherwise stated. The authors may have emended some quotations to better reflect the original Greek text.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Let No One Fear Death—1st ed.

Edited by Webster, Fr. Alexander F. C., PhD and Heers, Fr. Peter D.Th.

ISBN:

978-1-63941-007-1 (print)

978-1-63941-016-3 (ebook)

I. Orthodox Christianity

II. Current Events

LET NO ONE FEAR DEATH

EDITED BY:

Fr. Alexander Webster
and
Fr. Peter Heers



UNCUT MOUNTAIN PRESS

CONTENTS

Publisher’s Note	7
Preface	8
Chapter 1	11
The Orthodox Church and the COVID-19 Crisis	
<i>Metropolitan Jonah (Paffhausen)</i>	
Chapter 2	19
A Pandemic Observed	
<i>Presvytera Katherine Baker</i>	
Chapter 3	33
To Prevent Death, Please Stop Living: An Orthodox Physician Reflects on Death, Fear and the Public Health Measures During COVID-19	
<i>Irene Polidoulis, MD, CCFP, FCFP</i>	
Chapter 4	47
Is Cheating Death Worth It? Reflections on Medical Assistance in Dying, Tolstoy, and COVID-19	
<i>Irene Polidoulis, MD, CCFP, FCFP</i>	

Chapter 5 63
The COVID-19 Panic: A Lost Opportunity for
Palliative Care
Irene Polidoulis, MD, CCFP, FCFP

Chapter 6 81
In Whom Do You Put Your Trust? An Orthodox
Analysis of COVID Science
Deacon Ananias Erik Sorem, Ph.D.

Chapter 7 119
The Moral Peril of Taking Most COVID-19 Vaccines
Archpriest Alexander F. C. Webster, Ph.D.

Chapter 8 177
The Demonic Methodology of the Coronavirus
Narrative
Protoperbyter Peter Heers, D.Th.

Notes on Contributors 204



St. John Chrysostom

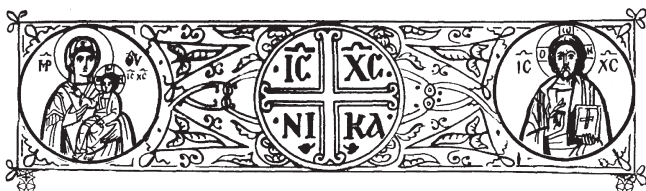
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

One of the roles of an Orthodox Christian publisher is to provide a platform to faithful and enlightened members of the Church to communicate to their fellows the hope that is within them (1 Peter 3:5). The urgency to meet this need was intensified by the sudden en masse, indiscriminate appropriation and promotion of a message of fear, the fear of death, during the recent “pandemic” of 2020-2022. This state of things thus further amplified the call to fulfill our role, and do our duty to the faithful.

It is, then, an honor and a privilege for Uncut Mountain Press to be the publisher of this aptly-titled volume of essays, *Let No One Fear Death*, by which the authors aim to encourage and equip their brethren with a right understanding of fear and to what it must be directed — and not directed. The importance of properly discerning matters here cannot be overstated. Missing the mark in this case is no simple error; rather it indicates that one is generally disoriented and eternity is not the aim.

May all the pious readers of these essays gain much strength from on high to enjoy the “fountain of life” which is the fear of the Lord and to thus “depart from the snares of death” (Proverbs 14:27), attaining that “perfect love” which “casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18), that they may chant with the angels, “O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him” (Psalms 34:9)!

Archpriest Peter Heers
May 14, 2022
Feast of Saint Therapon of Cyprus



P R E F A C E

The co-editors owe the main title of this book and the idea of the project itself to Protodeacon Patrick Mitchell at St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, DC. When he chose to withdraw from the project in August 2021, we decided that this project was too important to die a premature death. After a turbulent half year of other prospective chapter authors bowing out and the recruitment of new contributors, including the generous consent of a renowned Orthodox hierarch to write a chapter, we arrive finally at the present volume.

The final group of contributors is, we are convinced, blessed by our Lord to work together and share our thoughts, insights, questions, suggestions, and judgments concerning the vexing problems that have swirled around the COVID-19 crisis (we hesitate to call it a true “pandemic”), above all the fear of death and panic. The grace, humility, and collegiality of the four other participants—Metropolitan Jonah (Paffhausen), M.Th., Presvytera Katherine Baker, Irene Polidoulis, M.D., and Deacon Ananias Erik Sorem, Ph.D.—each one highly qualified in his or her own field of study or endeavor, has been a joy to behold. We hope that spirit shines forth from each of the chapters in this book.

The six contributors to this project have produced, we hope, an inspirational and useful collection of essays that attempt to address many of the questions and concerns arising

from the COVID-19 crisis during the last two years. All of us share a deep and abiding faith in our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, a profound love for the Holy Orthodox Church throughout the world and our fellow Orthodox Christians, and a firm commitment to good citizenship and the public interest in the United States of America or Canada.

Our mission is both academic and personal. We hope that the scholarly expertise that we—each of us from our chosen fields of medicine, philosophy, moral theology, or spirituality—offer in this slim volume will contribute to the ongoing discussions of the COVID-19 crisis that have beset our two nations and the world longer than anyone expected. We hope also that the personal experiences and perspectives we share herein will touch souls deeply troubled by the recent course of events and encourage everyone to keep the faith and to stay the course in this fight.

For we know full well that this crisis entails a battle against powerful persons and forces working with all their might to instill in us fear, panic, and submission instead of hope, serenity, and self-determination. We know, too, that we must also confront the spiritual “principalities and powers” behind the earthly variety. We know, most of all, and trust the divine wisdom displayed by St. John Chrysostom in his inimitable Paschal Homily: *“Let no one fear death, for the death of the Savior has set us free.”*

Archpriest Alexander F. C. Webster, Ph.D.

Protopresbyter Peter A. Heers, D.Th.

February 10, 2022



St. Paul the Apostle



CHAPTER 1

The Orthodox Church and the COVID-19 Crisis

Metropolitan Jonah (Paffhausen)

The past two years have been dominated by the COVID-19 crisis—the pandemic that has afflicted the world and caused immense suffering, death, and demoralization. We fully acknowledge the tragedies and suffering caused by this virus, and how it has reshaped society on a worldwide basis, from the personal and family level, to churches, social and political life, and international relations. We extend our compassion to those who have lost loved ones, to those who have suffered from the virus or co-suffered to care for them, to those who have lost their livelihoods, and to many who have lost hope.

The Church has also suffered through these trials with the deaths of many clergy, elders, monastics, and lay members, and with the many who became ill from the virus. The senior clergy of the Orthodox Church in Russia were particularly hard hit, as were those in other Orthodox Churches. A spirit of fear gripped large parts of the population, both those in authority as well as the lay people. Churches were closed, Liturgy was cancelled or prohibited to many, mask mandates were imposed, and even vaccination cards were required