

Constantine Coclin

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Bio: I am a member of the Church of the Annunciation in Cranston, RI. I recently completed my freshman year at the University of Rhode Island. I am double majoring in Ocean Engineering and Marine Biology. This upcoming year I will be President of URI's Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) group. I serve as an acolyte at my parish and have served throughout the pandemic. In my free time I enjoy fishing, woodworking, hiking and kayaking.



“We have very little faith in the Lord, very little trust. If we trusted the Lord as much as we trust a friend when we ask him to do something for us, neither we as individuals nor our whole country would suffer so much.” Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

The Covid-19 Pandemic has strengthened my faith. I had a unique experience in that I remained heavily involved in the parish. Together with a skeleton crew, I helped to keep services delivered to the congregation. I served in the altar both as an acolyte and live stream monitor. Even though I was the one helping, I felt as though I was the one being helped. I was helped in that I was able to witness the faith of Father Nick and Father Andrew as they struggled to face the challenges of the Pandemic. Also, having me at church helped keep me connected with my family who were participating from home. Somehow, my being in church connected us in a way that I felt they were in the pews watching me like any other service. I was able to bring home the Pascha light and andithron. For this reason, I feel my faith and my resolve in Orthodoxy was strengthened and serving will always be a very special part of the Pandemic for me.

I do believe we may see some practical changes in the way we worship. For example, I believe there will be a continuation of live streaming for people who can't get out, especially elderly. I know my yiayia was so happy to participate in services from home that because of later evenings, bad weather etc. were impossible for her. Also, other physical changes may remain such as bagging andithoron, not kissing the icons or other social distancing measures. However, I believe we will see a more significant change. People will want to come to church. I believe people will have a new appreciation for services since it was stripped away during the pandemic. Perhaps as a community we will come back with a new appreciation of the worship and fellowship we once took for granted. Perhaps as in the words of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, the Pandemic has taught us to trust just a little more in the Lord.