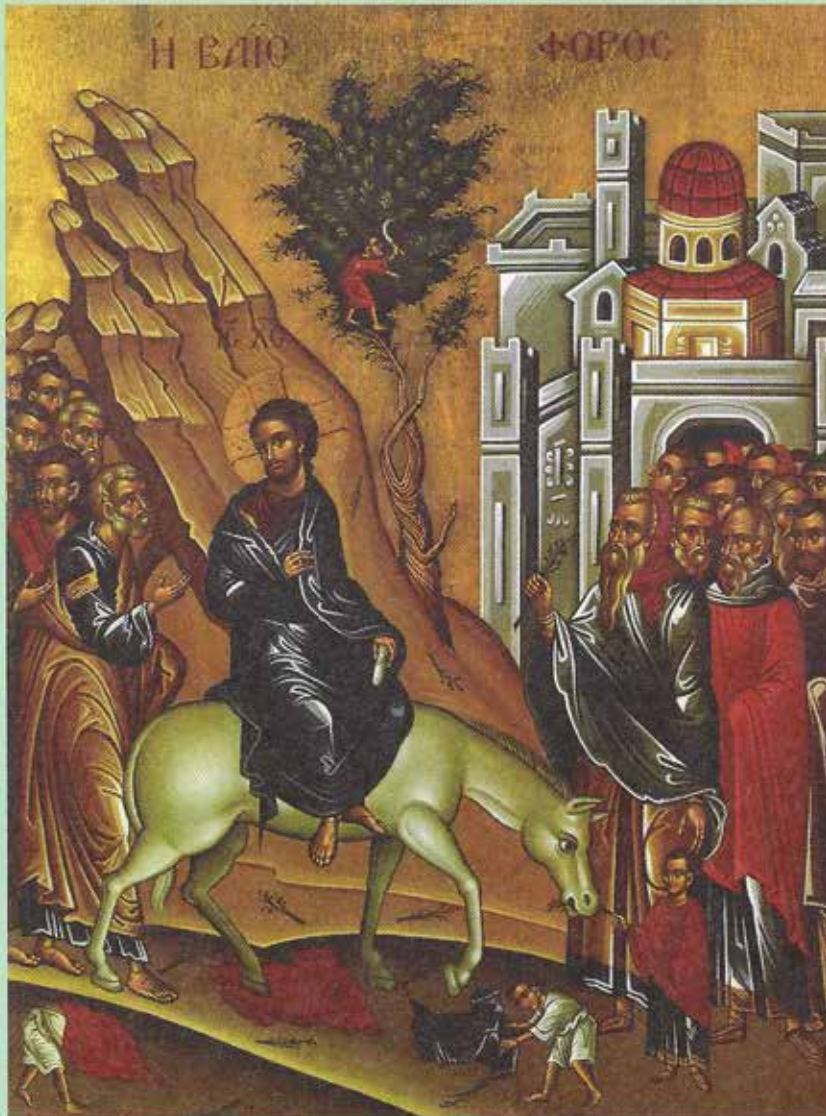


ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM
(PALM SUNDAY)



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

Flowery (Palm) Sunday

April 5, 2020

MEMORANDUM OF THE BISHOPS OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REGARDING PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER CELEBRATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear beloved clergy, religious, and faithful!

Christ is among us!

In order to help curb the spread of the Coronavirus the civil and health authorities in our country have extended the “Stay at Home Order” until the end of April 2020. Out of deep concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of all persons—we the bishops of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in America urge you at this crucial time to enter more deeply into the very heart of our Christian faith while following the directives of civil authorities. We ask you to celebrate the great mysteries of our salvation in Christ’s Death and Resurrection at home. Together with you, we recognize the sacrifice we are

all called to make by being physically distanced from the Holy Week and Pascha services in church and from one another.

Trusting in the graces flowing from the celebration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord, we remain mindful that paschal joy has its source in a personal encounter with the Risen Christ. What did it take for Mary Magdalene’s tears to give way to Easter joy? Nothing less than meeting the risen Christ! The Easter Gospel is not only about Christ’s passage from death to life, but also about the encounter Mary has with the Lord. Jesus meets us – calls us by name, opens our eyes, and invites us to see him and be with and in Him in the Resurrection. No matter where we are or what may be happening in our lives, precisely in

the midst of a deathly crisis such as the present pandemic, we are called to spiritual joy through the love of God who conquers death by death and gives eternal life.

We encourage you to participate as fully as you can in Holy Week and Pascha services by way of radio, television or live-streamed broadcasts. We encourage all the faithful to turn to the Church's treasury of prayer, praying individually or as a family in the domestic church. Christ is truly among us!

We request the clergy to continue Holy Week and Pascha services without the physical presence of the body of the faithful:

1. The faithful can participate in the celebration of Divine Liturgies and the Blessing of Willows and Easter Baskets via live-streamed services. The blessing pronounced in our churches will extend to the respective items in our homes. The prayer of blessing is the key element in these sacramental rituals. The faithful who have holy water in their homes may sprinkle it on these items while participating in the prayer via internet or by saying the prayers of blessing alone or together as a family or household.

2. The Great Friday Vespers with the placement of the Holy Shroud and Resurrection Matins services ought to take place within the church with no processions. The procession with the Holy Shroud can take place around the holy altar, and the opening rituals of Resurrection Matins can be conducted in front of the royal doors of the iconostasis instead of at the outside church doors.

3. The faithful can continue to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession on an individual basis. Priests should indicate to parishioners when and where they are available for confessions maintaining the prescribed safe distance between priest and penitent. When confession is not possible, faithful are encouraged to make Acts of Perfect Contrition, when a penitent sincerely regrets his or her sins, not merely out of fear of God's just punishment, but because of having offended our Loving Lord. This year, the canonical obligation of going to confession in the season of Easter can be fulfilled in the time period extending to the feast of Pentecost.

Our beloved faithful, one day soon, an announcement will be made that we can celebrate the Divine Liturgy and

other services all together again. We look forward to that joyous day. We will appreciate seeing each other more than ever, giving thanks for God's gift of communion in the Church, the Body of Christ of which we are members!

Our fervent prayer is that our Resurrected and Living Lord may bestow his peace and grace upon you and your loved ones, upon our community, our nation and the world! Please join us in praying for all who

are suffering from the Coronavirus, for all health care workers and first responders, and for an easing of the anxiety and tension caused by this pandemic. Relying on the care of the Mother of God and the Mother of us all, we unite our sufferings to those of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we place our hope and trust in His glorious Resurrection.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!

+ Borys Gudziak
Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians
Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+ Paul Chomnycky, OSBM (Eparch of Stamford)

+ Benedict Aleksiychuk (Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago)

+ Bohdan J. Danylo (Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma)

+ Andriy Rabiw (Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia)

*Given on April 1, 2020
Metropolitan Cathedral of Immaculate Conception in Philadelphia, PA*

OUR BISHOPS ON SUPPORTING YOUR PARISH

Glory to Jesus Christ!

In our Philadelphia Archeparchy, most of our church communities are

small in the number of parishioners but overflowing with generosity, love of God and neighbor, and mutual

sacrifice.

During the present pandemic you witness concern for family and friends, love of God and neighbor, and mutual sacrifice. Each of you is to be commended for your care and cooperation during this unprecedented situation. Together we are all listening to what the Lord is communicating to us. It is clear that this crisis is a spiritual wake-up call.

The nation and the world are following the lead of our highest government and church authorities to safeguard each and every one of you in body and soul. With the precautionary cancellation of public services, our clergy, religious, and faithful have responded with understanding. We all experienced the loss of coming together as a parish family for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Although public services are not being held, liturgical prayer in church for your intentions continues. Our priests continue to celebrate Divine Liturgies and other services. The clergy are intensifying their outreach in creative and caring ways.

While you are not able to come to church, our Parishes must continue to pay their bills. It is common knowledge that many of our parishes rely solely on

the weekly collections and fund-raisers to meet their expenses. Presently, there are no weekly collections, and fund-raisers have been canceled. As you can imagine, our parishes need your financial support now, more than ever. None of us will avoid financial difficulties completely. Some of you already are experiencing great challenges personally and in your families. To get through these hard times we will all need to make sacrifices.

We appeal to you to please mail your weekly offerings to your parishes until public services are resumed. Your sacrificial giving as needed to help your parish meet its financial obligations in order to maintain pastoral stability.

In doing so, let us recall the words of St. Paul: “whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Thank you for your generous offerings and may the blessings of our Lord be upon you and your families, now and always.

+ Borys (Gudziak)

+ Andriy (Rabiy)

MEDITATION FOR FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY

Have you ever felt alone even when surrounded by people? You feel that no one really knows you for the person you really are. Jesus knows how you feel. The Flowery Sunday Gospel story tells of one such occasion in the life of Jesus. Jesus knew the crowds singing 'hosanna' was hollow. They had hoped that Jesus would deliver them from political domination by Rome. Jesus had not come to give them political freedom. He had come to give them something more. He had come to Jerusalem during the Passover to be their sacrificial lamb. He had come to give them eternal life with God. Even the disciples did not comprehend the significance of that ride into Jerusalem. No one seemed to be aware that Jesus had come to Jerusalem to die. He would not set up an earthly kingdom, but he would establish a spiritual kingdom by

sacrificing himself. How lonely Jesus must have felt. Jesus carried the weight of loneliness. Jesus survived Flowery Sunday because he had hope and faith in his heavenly Father. Next time you feel alone or think that no one really understands your secret thoughts, take heart. Someone does know how you feel. He is waiting for you in the calm lonely eye of the stormy crowd. He went through his Flowery Sunday experience alone, so that you will not have to go through yours the same way. Even when those around you will not, or cannot understand you, God does! Reach out to Jesus Christ this Holy Week in special prayer, meditation and through Holy Confession. You will come to know Him more personally in His resurrection on Easter Sunday! A Blessed Holy Week!

LITURGICAL SERVICES ONLINE

At this time, we are planning on streaming the following Liturgical Services:

- Presanctified Liturgy on Monday
- Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday
- Vespertal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on Thursday

- Vespers on Good Friday
 - Vespertal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on Holy Saturday
 - Divine Liturgy for Easter on Easter Sunday
 - Divine Liturgy on Bright Monday
 - Divine Liturgy on Bright Tuesday.
- These services can be found on

Facebook or through a link on our website <https://stcyrils.weconnect.com>

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion which is a source of grace. Spiritual Communion means uniting one's self in prayer with Christ's sacrifice and worshipping Him in His Body and Blood. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend the Divine Liturgy. Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive

Holy Communion worthily. When unable to receive Holy Communion, pray the following prayer:

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

PRAYER IN TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS

Almighty and all Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray to you through Christ the Healer, for those who suffer from COVID-19 in the United States, Canada and across the world.

We pray for all who reach out to those who mourn the loss of each and every person who has died as a result of contracting the disease.

Give wisdom to the policy makers, protection and skill for healthcare professionals and researchers, comfort to everyone in distress and a sense of calm to all in these days of uncertainty and distress.

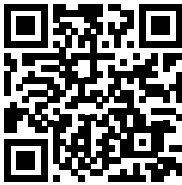
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Rejoice at His Coming!

Let us say to Christ: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel.* Let us hold before Him like palm branches those final words inscribed above the cross. Let us show Him honor, not with olive branches but with the splendor of merciful deeds to one another. Let us spread the thoughts and desires of our hearts under His feet like garments, so that entering us with the whole of his being, He may draw the whole of our being into Himself and place the whole of His in us. Let us say to Zion in the words of the prophet: *Have courage, daughter of Zion, do not be afraid. Behold, your king comes to you, humble and mounted on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.* He is coming who is everywhere present and pervades all things; He is coming to achieve in you His work of universal salvation. He is coming who came to call to repentance not the righteous but sinners, coming to recall those who have strayed into sin. Do not be afraid, then: *God is in the midst of you, and you shall not be shaken.*

Receive Him with open, outstretched hands, for it

was on His own hands that He sketched you. Receive Him who laid your foundations on the palms of His hands. Receive Him, for He took upon Himself all that belongs to us except sin, to consume what is ours in what is His. Be glad, city of Zion, our mother, and fear not. *Celebrate your feasts.* Glorify Him for His mercy, who has come to us in you. Rejoice exceedingly, daughter of Jerusalem, sing and leap for joy. *Be enlightened, be enlightened,* we cry to you, as holy Isaiah trumpeted, for the light has come to you and the glory of the Lord has risen over you.

And what is this *glory of the Lord*? Clearly it is the cross on which Christ was glorified, He, the radiance of the Father's glory, even as He said when He faced His passion: *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him, and will glorify him at once.* The glory of which He speaks here is His lifting up on the cross, for Christ's glory is His cross and His exultation upon it, as He plainly says: *When I have been lifted up, I will draw all men to myself.*

St. Andrew of Crete