



**Chancery Office
Eparchy of New Westminster**

April 1, 2020

Glory to Jesus Christ!

My Dear Parishioners,

Re: Holy Week and Easter Services

I pray that you and your families are safe and healthy. As we endure the COVID-19 Pandemic, we are evermore united as one global family - God's family - in our efforts to battle this disease, protecting in particular our seniors and those with medical conditions. In Christ, all things are possible. We will overcome.

Over these past several weeks, I have been moved by the love and pastoral care expressed towards you by our clergy. To them, I express my heartfelt gratitude. They are praying for you daily, celebrating the Lenten liturgical services and the Divine Liturgy for your intentions, visiting the sick and dying, celebrating funerals, hearing confessions upon request, phoning and keeping in touch with you - in particular, the elderly and shut-ins - providing counselling, and so on. They have also been sending you their weekly bulletins and homily reflections, with the Sunday epistle and gospel, and changeable parts, so that you pray and reflect upon the word of God at home, alone or with your family. Although our buildings are closed, the Church continues to be open - because we are the Church!

Holy Week and Easter Services

As we prepare to mark Holy Week, Our Lord's passion, crucifixion, death upon the cross, and then Easter and his glorious third-day Resurrection, our celebrations will be very different this year owing to the coronavirus. We simply continue doing what we're already doing, that is, stay home to prevent the spread of the virus, and to follow the Holy Week and Easter services from home through livestream.

Easter Sunday, April 12 at 8AM - Holy Eucharist Cathedral, New Westminster:
www.facebook.com/holyeucharistcathedral or www.nweparchy.ca

Easter Sunday, April 12 at 8AM - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker parish, Victoria:
www.facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria or www.nweparchy.ca

When following the livestream liturgical services, it is important to stay prayerful and focused, avoiding all distractions. Set up a prayer corner in your “domestic church.” Place yourself in front of an icon. Light a candle. On the appropriate day, download a copy an icon of the Holy (Last) Supper, the Holy Shroud of Our Lord (plaschanytsia), and the Resurrection of Our Lord (see attached). Meditate upon them.

Be assured that all our pastors will celebrate the Holy Week and Easter services for your intention, either in church by themselves or with the assistance of a cantor, or privately in their home.

Palm Sunday and Pussy willows

Blessed pussy willows will not be distributed on Flowery (Palm) Sunday. Some parishes who have already pre-ordered pussy willows, may bless and distribute them once the pandemic has passed.

Easter Basket-blessings

Easter baskets will be blessed via livestream, following the celebration of Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy. Alternatively, in these extraordinary circumstances, the faithful may recite the prayers of Easter-basket blessing yourself (see attached), sprinkling them with Holy Water, where available.

Easter Confessions

As it is not possible to celebrate our “Easter” confession at this time, nor receive the Divine Eucharist on the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, pray by yourself or as a family the “Prayer of Spiritual Communion,” which can be found below.

Financial Support

At this critical time, your financial support is greatly appreciated. Our eparchy and parishes continue to incur expenses as we strive to fulfill the mission which God has entrusted to the Church. Please contact your local parish as to how you can make a donation.

Continued Prayer for you and your family

Please know that your bishop and your clergy are praying for you, for family and friends; for the shut-ins and elderly; for the sick and the dying; for government leaders and officials; and for the doctors, nurses, researchers, for all care givers, and for all who provide essential services.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, I pray that God's grace and love fills your heart, and that of your family and friends, and brings joy and peace to all people.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop David Motiuk
Eparchial Bishop, Eparchy of Edmonton
Apostolic Administrator, Eparchy of New Westminster

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in these Holy Gifts!
I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot receive You now,
I place before You my whole life and hope, O loving Master;
and I ask, pray, and entreat You: Make me worthy to partake in a mystical way
and with a pure conscience of Your awesome and heavenly Mysteries:
for forgiveness of sins, for the pardon of offenses, for communion of the Holy Spirit,
for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, for confidence before You,
and not for judgment or condemnation.
I embrace You as You enter and abide in me, and I unite myself completely to You.
Permeate my soul and body, and never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.