



Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles
Office of the Bishop

Prot. 31/01/20

April 2, 2020

**DECREE FOR THE PARISHES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE EPARCHY OF
OUR LADY OF LEBANON OF LOS ANGELES
CONCERNING PASSION WEEK**

Having consulted with the members of our Eparchial Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors, I have issued the following instructions concerning the celebration of the days leading up to the Feast of the Resurrection on April 12, 2020. This includes Hosanna Sunday, April 5, the weekdays following (known as Passion Week) and including Saturday of the Awaited Light, April 11 and Sunday of the Resurrection, April 12.

There are to be no public celebrations (that is, open to the public) of any of the rituals prescribed on those days. This includes the public celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the special liturgical rituals for the days of Passion Week and the liturgical service prescribed for Saturday, April 11 as well as celebration of the Feast of Resurrection. This prohibition of public gathering at our churches, halls or other gathering places will last until April 30, 2020. It will then be reviewed.

As the Holy See has already announced, "Easter is at the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast among others...[and] cannot be transferred to another time." Therefore, while the Church will celebrate the feast days on the calendar days as prescribed there will be no congregation.

I am issuing the following guidelines:

1. The obligation for the faithful to attend the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is suppressed through and including Sunday, April 26.
2. Opportunities to receive the Mystery of Penance individually by penitents should be provided in a manner that is consistent with safety for all concerned. While the opportunity for general absolution is also allowed along with all the requirements in church law (e.g., intent to confess one's sins privately when the opportunity presents itself), given the prohibition of the gathering of people it is not recommended to you. However, in all cases federal, state and local demands regarding the congregating of people must be followed strictly.

3. Pastors are asked to keep in touch with parishioners via social media, email, phone and texting or other means that are at their disposal.
4. Baptisms/Chrismations should be postponed unless the danger of imminent death is present; weddings should be rescheduled if possible. If not, observing the prohibition in your community on the number of people that may gather must be observed (that number includes counting the priest, deacon or other minister as part of the total number). Social distancing should be observed as far as possible. Funerals should be in accordance with local restrictions. This may mean no church service, only a graveside service (with or without immediate family). A public memorial service should be scheduled at the earliest opportunity.
5. All services should be live-streamed in each parish and institution. To maintain as much as possible a sense of normalcy, they should be celebrated at the usual times common to each parish. Pastors should must ensure that the faithful be advised of the times for the broadcast celebrations, so that they can pray at home at the same time.
6. All services should be conducted in the manner in which the liturgical books and rubrics require. For example, the priest and assisting deacon (if available) may process through the church on Hosanna Sunday and in the procession surrounding the removal of the Eucharist on Thursday of Mysteries, April 9 and the Burial of the Lord on April 10 and conduct the Resurrection Service and Blessing of the four corners of the earth. These processions may be modified appropriately to reflect the lack of a congregation and assisting ministers.
7. **April 9, Thursday of Mysteries:** The Service of the “Washing of the Feet” is to be omitted. Emphasis is placed on the establishment of the Holy Eucharist and the ordained priesthood on that day.
8. On Thursday of the Holy Mysteries, I will bless the Holy Oils at St. Raymond Cathedral at 10:30 a.m. Central Time.
9. **April 10, Friday of the Crucifixion:** This day is to remain a day of fast and abstinence, prayer and the giving of alms for the poor. This should be celebrated by the faithful in their homes and each parish should provide appropriate resources including the prayers, psalms and hymns surrounding the burial service. An electronic means for assisting in the needs of the Church and poor should be provided to the faithful.
10. Since we live in difficult times, the first Divine Liturgy of Easter is permitted on Saturday Evening.

11. Since the reception of the Eucharist cannot be provided to the faithful, I urge you to remind them about the traditional practice of spiritual communion.
12. I will review demands of this decree prior to **April 30**.
13. Please make sure to update your voice messages, emails, websites, and social media pages to reflect the updates and changes to Holy Week and Easter services and to remind your parishioners of the live-streamed services available.

With my best wishes and prayers for your well-being, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ A. E. Zaidan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning and a flourish at the end.

+ A. Elias Zaidan
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles

Louis Peters
Deacon Louis Peters
Chancellor