07/04/2020

Fourth Encyclical of Archbishop Sotirios for the Coronavirus (Holy Week and Easter)



Reverend Fathers, Honourable Presidents and Esteemed Members of the Boards of Directors, Members of the Philoptochos Societies, Teachers, Students and Youth Members of the Communities, and to the Entire Plenitude of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada

IN RELATION TO HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Beloved in the Lord,

In all my previous encyclicals regarding the problems caused by the coronavirus, I unequivocally affirmed that: “Our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and its Communities will precisely observe the directives and instructions of the Canadian government authorities.”
We will continue to do this even now. For Holy Week and Pascha, Church Services and Divine Liturgies must be normally conducted and in conformity to the order

prescribed by the Typikon of the Church. As I previously explained, this must happen:

a) In order to praise and glorify the Thrice-Holy God; and

b) For Church Services and Divine Liturgies to be streamed online through social media so that pious Christians can follow and pray along.

Church Services and Divine Liturgies will be conducted in Church behind closed doors by the priest, the chanter and the sexton. No one else is allowed to be in Church.

Unfortunately, the faithful will not be able to receive Holy Communion, or even Holy Oil, branches of palm trees, flowers from the Epitaphion or the light of the Resurrection. According to the authorities' directives and instructions, contact between people is prohibited, as well as any gathering of more than three persons.

I ask that you all precisely follow these instructions. I am sorry that we are forced to take these measures, but God knows and understands much more and much better than we do.

I pray and ask that you also pray with faith, repentance and sincerity so that God may help us get through this ordeal as soon as possible. I hope and pray that we all can experience the period of Holy Week and Easter in "our Church at home" with health and in a spiritual uplifting manner. To feel the Passion of our Christ in our heart and soul. To live His agony and His sorrow. To sense His companionship. Let us ask Him, like the thief, to forgive our sins and to hear His voice within us: "My child, I am with you, I love you and I forgive you. Together we will walk the difficult path. We will climb the steep hill together. And we will reach the top."

WISHING ALL OF YOU A BLESSED RESURRECTION IN THE LORD!

With fatherly love and blessings,

ARCHBISHOP SOTIRIOS
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA