09/04/2020

His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey issues Archpastoral Message regarding Holy Week 2020



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The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the

Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

I pray this message finds you all well physically and spiritually during these difficult times. As we approach the Sacred days of Holy and Great Week, we find ourselves in a situation in which none of us have ever experienced before. This is normally a time in which families gather together to prayerfully participate in the Divine Services of the Church with their local Ecclesiastical Communities. With the events of the COVID-19 virus, however, friends and neighbors have been separated from one another and devout Orthodox faithful everywhere are unable to physically attend the Divine Services in their Parish Communities. There is no doubt that this separation is painful to endure, but we must never forget that, although we are physically distant, we are united spiritually in prayer.

We will soon be entering a week of intense preparation and prayer. It is a week wherein we will witness our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the institution of the Eucharist, His betrayal, His Passion, and ultimately, His Resurrection. We experience deep darkness with the crucifixion and burial of our Lord, but we are filled with unfettered joy and light when our Lord rises from the dead. It is this hope and joy that we must look forward to and continually express in our everyday lives, especially during the present difficult times. As we see more people including family, friends, and neighbors contending with the viciousness of this virus, we must remain hopeful and faithful that the Lord will guide and protect us through these turbulent times. Let us remain prayerful that those who are struggling with this illness are restored to the fullness of their health. Furthermore, let us pray for the souls of the victims of this virus who have departed this life, praying that the Lord grants their souls rest and their families comfort during these trying times.

Though we find ourselves in dark and dismal times, being unable to gather together in worship, we can nevertheless unite in common prayer as we celebrate the Divine Services of Holy and Great Week. Therefore, I appeal to each and every one of you to gather prayerfully together as a family and to follow the Divine Services so that you may participate in

the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection with Christ. Let your prayers as a family be lifted up together with the prayers of your communities so that you may offer your spiritual sacrifice to the Lord together.

My beloved, the present circumstances are indeed challenging and anomalous, but we should not allow our attention to be diverted from the fact that Christ, in His love for mankind, is preparing to offer Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins and transgressions. Let us walk with Him triumphantly into Jerusalem. Let us pray with Him solemnly in our spiritual Gethsemane. Let us walk with Him to Golgotha. Let us endure His sufferings and His crucifixion in spirit with Him. Above all, however, let us rise with Him in His Resurrection so that we may experience the day that has no end and the most precious of gifts – everlasting life. Praying that you and your families prayerfully participate in the Liturgical life of our Orthodox Church through the Divine Services I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,
† E V A N G E L O S
Metropolitan of New Jersey