



THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PARMA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Prot. No. 58/2020 L
May 1, 2020

DECREE

I, Bishop Milan Lach, S.J. **dispense all the faithful of the Eparchy of Parma from the obligation of attending Sunday Divine Liturgies effective today through, and including, May 17, 2020.** You are not dispensed from prayer on Sunday, the day of prayer and rest.

After a very difficult few weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak and now further developments towards the reopening of businesses, my hope and desire is that we will be able to reopen our churches for public liturgical celebrations on Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2020. With the understanding that our Eparchy encompasses the territory of twelve states, I will be considering the situation in each region respectively and thus some churches may not reopen until a later date.

Every joyful celebration is anticipated with good preparation and so I would like to encourage you, knowing that soon we will be able to joyfully celebrate together again, to prepare yourselves for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and reception of the Holy Eucharist. Even during this pandemic, God is inviting us to think more deeply about ourselves, about Him, about our spiritual life, and about the spiritual meaning of our lives. During this time, God is giving us a great opportunity for a new beginning, a fresh restart. I encourage you and invite you to prepare yourselves by making arrangements with your priest to receive the Mystery of Holy Reconciliation. Please take advantage of this time of grace to spiritually prepare yourselves (an examination of conscience is available at www.parma.org).

For now, liturgical services will continue to be livestreamed at <http://parma.org/live> or may be available through your parish website. All Sunday and weekday services and activities remain suspended for the public. Please know that the priests are celebrating these services privately and praying for you. Baptisms, funerals, and weddings can be celebrated with the immediate family only. Churches may be open for personal prayer only at the dedicated time allotted by your pastor.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, today on May 1, 2020 I entrust the whole Eparchy of Parma to the protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, along with the Bishops of the USA and Canada. Please continue to pray during this month of May with your families, especially praying the Moleben, Akathist, and Paraklesis to the Theotokos (texts are available at www.parma.org) for the protection of Mary, and for those who are infected and dying from this virus in our country and throughout the world. Please also pray for health care workers and our government, as they work to protect our lives.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Milan Lach, S.J.
Bishop of the Eparchy of Parma

Notary