



Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Glory to Jesus Christ!

As we near the end of the Great Fast and head into Holy Week, I bring you greetings from our parish community! I hope you have found our various forms of communication over the past few weeks informative and helpful. It's important that we stay connected during this time, so towards that end, I've invited members of our parish council to call our parishioners on the phone over the next few days as a means of building and sustaining community. I hope that you will appreciate the underlying 'communal' intention of these calls rather than seeing them as an invasion of your privacy!

Thank you to everyone who helped our Women's League sell out their online Easter food orders! It was edifying to see such creativity at work in developing a response to the personal distancing requirements which prohibited our usual Tea & Bake Sale format, and the overwhelming generosity of so many of you to help with deliveries and details.

As we enter into the Holiest week of the year, Bishop Bryan has issued a [Pastoral Directive for our Eparchy](#). I invite you to read it carefully, and then the information that follows specific to our Pastoral District.

1. Holy Week and Easter Services – All our liturgical services continue to be '**closed to the public**', but this doesn't mean that we cannot pray and celebrate the joy of Christ's Resurrection at home. Towards that end, in addition to your own personal prayers and with your family, you are encouraged to participate in the following services:

April 5 Palm Sunday	9:30AM - Sunday Divine Liturgy	Closed to the public - Livestreamed
April 8 Holy Wednesday	6:30PM – Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	Closed to the public - Livestreamed
April 9 Holy Thursday	6:30PM - Vespers & Divine Liturgy	Closed to the public - Livestreamed
April 10 Good Friday	3:00PM - Good Friday Vespers	Closed to the public - Livestreamed
April 11 Holy Saturday	10AM-Noon - Confessions	(outside church; weather permitting)
April 12 EASTER SUNDAY	8:00AM - Resurrection Matins & Liturgy	Closed to the public - Livestreamed

A note on praying the Liturgy remotely: Some have found it helpful to create a prayer space around the device they use to watch the Livestreamed Liturgy, occupying a different space or posture than they would if they were using the same device to do work or watch a movie on Netflix. With that in mind, consider lighting a candle and placing it next to your computer or tablet, enthrone your favourite icon(s) and have other religious objects (like a prayer rope or rosary) at hand to help you to enter more fully in the prayer. Dress like you would as if you are going to church (i.e. not in pyjamas); sit and stand as we usually do in church.

2. At-Home Willow & Easter Basket Blessing

In his [pastoral directive](#), Bishop Bryan stresses that “though your blessing is not sacramental...God is calling laity to experience this, given the circumstances. Try to discover your dignity and worth when Christ, through you, blesses your family and items for your home. Share in Christ’s priesthood since you have been baptized in Christ.”

With this in mind, and as expected, there will not be any in-person blessings of Willows or Easter Baskets at our churches this year. Instead, you are encouraged to bless yours at home, by formulating your own prayer, or using the following:

[Blessing of Willows/Branches/Palms](#)

[Blessing of Easter Food](#)

You can pray these blessings on your own time, but are encouraged to have these prayers on hand while participating in our livestream liturgy on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, following these suggestions:

For **Palm Sunday**, if you don’t have access to a willow tree, I encourage you to find some sort of branch from your house or back yard (or your neighbour’s backyard with their permission) and have that at the ready when you tune in for the Livestreamed Liturgy @ 9:30AM. As has become our custom, at the beginning of the Liturgy we will bless the branches together (me at the church/you at home, following the same blessing text), so that we can have those in-hand for the reading of the Gospel (similar to the Hebrew people who welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem).

On **Easter Sunday** morning, please prepare your basket as if you were coming to church, and then tune in to the Livestreamed Liturgy @ 8:00AM. At the conclusion of the Easter Liturgy, we will bless the baskets together (me at church/you at home, following the same blessing text). In a spirit of charity, please consider preparing a second basket of food to share with your neighbour – bless others by sharing what you have!

[What’s in an Easter Basket?](#)

If you have Holy Water at home that you brought from the church, feel free to use that to sprinkle on your branches and Easter foods. In a small but significant way, that blessed water is another sign of our spiritual Communion these days. Alternatively, you can prepare some ordinary water at home and pray a [Simple Blessing of Water](#). Above all, as Bishop Bryan also mentions: “Discover how Christ wants to use you in more at-home ways to bless; your belongings and gifts from God; your brother, your sister, your parents by your actions and words. When you forgive you bless! Through your love, kindness and compassion you bless (and not just with water). You are empowered to express your baptismal priesthood in Christ!”

For further reflection: [Our homes as Domestic Church](#). Here are some suggestions for praying with your kids and family during Holy Week & Easter: [Easter from Home in Quarantine](#) and [Resources for Holy Week Pascha in your Domestic Church](#) (my favourite is the Good Friday ‘Fort’ Tomb suggestion).

3. Helping Those in Need – Food Banks of Saskatchewan have launched a province-wide Crisis Response Fund. Donate at: <https://lnkd.in/gAPDyP8>. Our friends at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish (426 Avenue J South) have seen an increase in the number of people accessing their food pantry, so they would be grateful for any contributions of food. Contact them directly at ologsaskatoon@rcdos.ca or 306-653-4945 if you can help.

You might also consider donating to Development and Peace – Caritas Canada’s Share Lent campaign online at <https://bit.ly/2Wu11Yy> or by phone at 1 888 664- 3387. Each year, their Share Lent campaign raises funds to support millions of people in the Global South, whose needs will be even greater this year.

4. Supporting your Church

Our parish council is grateful to those of you who have continued to support Dormition Parish financially by leaving donations in the church mailbox, on the parish website, or through our pre-authorized debit (PAD) program. THANK YOU! Please continue to use these donation methods or sending your gifts by mail your to the church (120 105th Street West).

In an effort to simplify the registration process for PAD, especially in these days when it’s not advised to pick up a form from the church, we’ve developed a [online application](#) which is both secure and convenient. You might also consider making a donation via e-transfer to treasurerdomitionucc@gmail.com.

5. Pray for people who are infected with COVID-19 or facing quarantine:

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

6. Pray for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers responsible for fighting the new coronavirus:

God, as more people get sick, healthcare workers and first responders are working longer hours with fewer supplies and with more risk of contracting the new coronavirus themselves. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring Your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job.

Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease’s spread.

7. Pray for the deceased, especially those who will die alone.

8. Finally, for those of you helping to homeschool your kids these days, and/or if you could use a good laugh, check out [A Desperate Mothers’ Prayer](#).

I continue to pray for all of you and your families. Let us find our encouragement these days from the Psalmist: “Wait for the Lord; be strong; and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” (Psalm 27.14)

Peace be with you,
Fr. Andre