



THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PARMA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Prot. No. 64/2020 L

May 12, 2020

DECREE

I, Bishop Milan Lach, S.J. **dispense all the faithful of the Eparchy of Parma from the obligation of attending Sunday Divine Liturgy as well as Divine Liturgy for Holy Days of Obligation effective today and until further notice.** You are not dispensed from prayer on Sunday, the day of prayer and rest.

After discussion with the College of Consultors of the Eparchy of Parma, and in consideration of the situations in all three regions of our Eparchy, I give permission to resume the public celebration of Divine Liturgies and other liturgical services effective Monday, May 18, 2020, for the parishes of the Ohio Region and the Great Lakes Region.

I also give permission for the parishes of the Mid-West Region (Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa) to resume the public celebration of Divine Liturgies and other liturgical services. However, this must be handled at the discretion of the pastors and administrators who, after monitoring the situation in their respective states, believe it is safe for the public to attend.

I ask all pastors and administrators to discuss with their respective parish councils the more detailed instructions that will be sent to them, and that these instructions be communicated to all parishioners via parish bulletins, websites or any other parish social media.

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).

I believe that due to the effort of our parishes to prepare our churches in the best way possible our churches are safe places in which to worship. However, out of respect for the fact that some people may not yet feel safe attending services at church, divine services will continue to be livestreamed at <http://parma.org/live> or may be available through your parish website. All other non-liturgical activities, fundraisers, and social gatherings remain suspended for the public. Baptisms, funerals, and weddings can be celebrated with precautionary measures.

Brothers and sisters, I as your father and bishop continue to offer every Sunday Divine Liturgy and pray to the Most Holy Theotokos for all of you, the faithful of the Eparchy of Parma. Please continue to pray with your families during this month of May, especially praying the Moleben, Akathist, and Paraklesis to the Theotokos (texts are available at www.parma.org) for her protection, and for those who are infected and dying from this virus in our country and throughout the world. Please also pray for the 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