



EPARCHY
OF ST. MARON
CANADA

Bishop's Office

Prot. 77/2020

Montreal, March 27th, 2020

INSTRUCTIONS

To the clergy and laity of the Eparchy of Saint Maron - Canada About temporary measures in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**Reverends Monsignors and Fathers,
Dear brothers and sisters, faithful parishioners,**

I greet you in the peace of Our Lord,

With the clergy of the Eparchy, I want to reassure you of our continuous efforts to serve you both spiritually and pastorally, as you have not been able to participate in person at your parishes.

We will continue to accompany you and celebrate masses for your intentions and pray with you and for you, especially for those infected with the Coronavirus as well as the people caring for them.

Due to the situation in the country, and in certain provinces in particular, in light of this pandemic,

based on the statement issued by the Maronite Patriarchate in Lebanon on March 21, 2020,

and the recommendations of the Congregation of Eastern Churches at the Vatican on March 26, 2020,

in line with the instructions of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec and Bishops of other provinces,

in accordance with decisions made by the federal and provincial governments,

I am sending you these instructions to be applied until further notice.

TEMPORARY LITURGICAL MEASURES CONCERNING THE SACRAMENTS

- **Dispensation from participation at masses on Sundays and public holidays**

The faithful parishioners, with the exception of the clergy of the Eparchy, are exempted from participating at masses on Sundays and festive holidays. You can instead participate by following the Eucharistic celebration and receive the Holy Communion "with longing" on social media or television, or by allocating time for individual and/or family prayers and Bible reading (possibility to follow the Rosary prayer, the daily and Sunday Masses on the Eparchy website (MaronitesCanada) and most social media pages or parish websites).

- **Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation**

Postpone Baptism and Confirmation ceremonies scheduled during this period to later dates, except in cases of extreme necessity.

- **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Arrange for confession by contacting the parish priest. A room shall be allocated, where the confessor and the candidate can respect social distancing in accordance with the security measures in place (precautionary measures must be followed to prevent transmission of the Coronavirus during this time).

- **Celebration of the First Communion**

Postpone celebrations of the First Communion in all parishes until September or October, but no later than the beginning of the new liturgical year in November 2020.

- **Sacrament of Marriage**

Postpone celebrations of the sacrament of Marriage scheduled for this period to later dates, and if necessary, refer to the Chancery office of the Eparchy.

- **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick**

Administrate the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to those in need, while taking all preventive measures during the anointing (priests are authorized to put their hands above the patient's head and not on it, to use a new cotton pad and put on protective gloves during the anointing, providing to dispose of them immediately after use).

- **Funeral and Burial Ritual**

Funerals are limited to the Cabela of the cemetery (exclusively), in the presence of 5 people only, or according to the measures and decisions made by the provincial governments and without condolences.

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER PROGRAM

- **Palm Sunday**

Celebrate the Eucharist without a procession nor the presence of the faithful parishioners. The celebration shall be diffused on social media.

- **Holy Wednesday (candle ritual)**

Celebrate the Eucharist with the ritual of candles without the presence of the faithful parishioners. The celebration shall be diffused on social media.

- **Holy Thursday**

Celebrate the Eucharist with adoration to the Blessed Sacrament without the ritual of washing of the feet nor the presence of the faithful parishioners. The celebration shall be diffused on social media.

- **Good Friday**

Celebrate the ritual of prostration of the cross without the presence of the faithful. The celebration shall be diffused on social media.

- **Easter Sunday**

Celebrate the Eucharist and the blessing by the cross without procession nor the presence of the faithful parishioners. The celebration shall be diffused on social media.

As we go through these uncertain circumstances, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we are faced with the fact that humans are subject, at all times, to uncertainties that undermine their peace and security. Only the Lord remains the bridge of salvation: we believe that the death and resurrection of the Son of God, the greatest act of His love for humanity, his hand making, are really our gateway from this world to the glory of Heaven.

Be reassured of my prayers and best wishes.

