

***Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic Parishes of St. George, Prince Albert,
All Saints, Nipawin, and Holy Spirit, Melfort***

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PRINCE ALBERT LITURGICAL SCHEDULE: No services until further notice

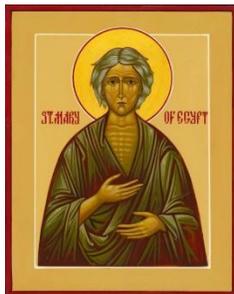
Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Слава Ісусу Христу! Слава на Віки!

I hope you had a safe and healthy week! In these unusual times, let us continue to give thanks to God and to pray for our world, our loved ones, and for our own health. In particular, continue to pray for health-care workers who are caring for the sick and suffering. May they be blessed with health and safety!

Continue to pray for our parish as we weather this pandemic. May we trust in the goodness of God! May our faith continue to be a priority in uncertain times. Let's begin our spiritual reflection for this week.

April 1st



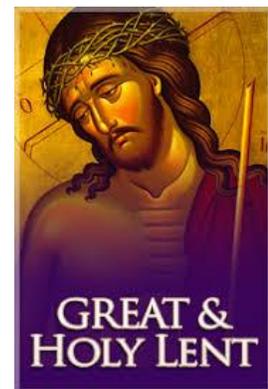
In addition to the tradition of playing pranks on people, April 1st is also the feast day of St. Mary of Egypt, the person whom we commemorated on the fifth Sunday of Lent.

(Image accessed from <http://damascenegallery.com/shop/icon/classic-icons/st-mary-of-egypt/>)

April 4th

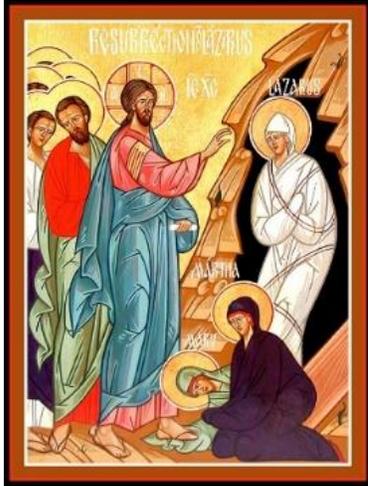
The start of Lazarus Saturday marks the end of a 40 day fast for Byzantine Catholics. However, that doesn't mean we can start celebrating. Because we like to fast, Byzantine Catholics have another special fast during Holy Week, so your 40 day fast is over just in time for you to begin a new fast! But take heart, when you end your Holy week fast, we can celebrate the Risen Christ!!!

(Image accessed from <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2019/04/20/19-the-raising-of-lazarus-lazarus-saturday>)



More about Lazarus Saturday

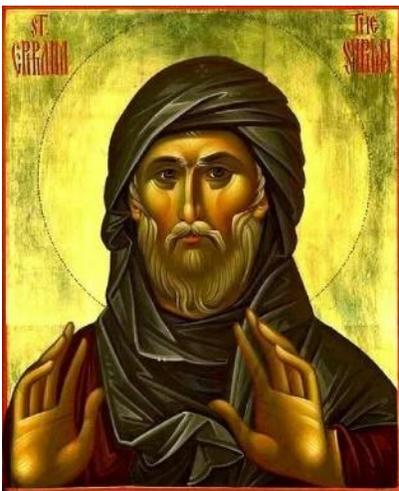
- The raising of Lazarus is considered a 'resuscitation' and not a 'resurrection' because Lazarus would eventually die again. Resurrection refers to a changing into a new and everlasting state (this is a very quick definition, more about it another time).
- Jesus raised three people as listed in the gospels:



- The young man (Luke 7)
 - The little girl (Luke 8)
 - Lazarus (John 11)
- In the Old Testament, there are accounts of other people being raised (resuscitated) from the dead:
 - Elijah prays for a sick boy and he is resuscitated (1 King 17)
 - Elisha prays for a sick boy and he is resuscitated (2 Kings 4)
 - Elisha's touch resuscitates the Israelite man (2 Kings 13)
 - In the New Testament
 - Peter prays for Tabitha and she is resuscitated (Acts 9)
 - Paul examines Eutychus and he is resuscitated (Acts 20)

Prayer of St. Ephrem

Since Lent is coming to an end very soon, here is the prayer of St. Ephrem that you may wish to say a few more times as a way to focus your thoughts as we quickly approach Easter.



O Lord and Master of my life, keep from me the spirit of indifference and discouragement, lust of power and idle chatter (prostration)

Instead grant to me, Your servant, the spirit of wholeness of being, humble-mindedness, patience and love. (prostration)
O Lord and King, grant me the grace to be aware of my sins and not to judge my brother and sisters; for You are blessed, now and for ever and ever. Amen (prostration)

(Image accessed from: <https://catholicism.org/saint-ephrem-373.html>)

Then we can sing:

You have suffered your passion for us, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us (3x).

Palm Sunday

- On Willow or Palm Sunday we remember the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- It is one of the twelve Major Feasts of the liturgical year in the Byzantine Rite.
- It is an old tradition to see Ukrainians striking one another with blessed pussy willows and saying “It is not I but the willow branch which strikes you to remind you that in seven days in the Great Day!”
- Ukrainians use pussy willows for a practical reason (there were no palms that naturally grew locally) and spiritually (during the winter the willow tree seems to be dead. Yet, with the coming of spring, it sprouts and gives a sign of life which reminds us of the resurrection).



(Image accessed from <http://stmichaelukrainian.org/2019/04/14/pussy-willow-sunday/>)

What about blessed pussy willows...who can bless items?

(Written by Fr. Vasyl Tymishak, priest at St. Basil Ukr Catholic Church in Regina)

As St. Thomas Aquinas reminds that everyone can bless. He specifies that to bless [bene-dicere] is to say something good. This can happen in three ways:

- First, by asserting a good, as when one person praises another’s good points: “The lips of many shall bless him that is liberal of his bread; and the testimony of his truth is faithful” (Sir 31:28).
- Secondly, by commanding: to bless in this way belongs to God by Whose command something good comes to creatures, or it belongs to His ministers who invoke the Lord’s name upon the people: “Thus shall you bless the sons of Israel and say to them: The Lord bless you and guard you. The Lord show His face to you and have mercy on you. The Lord turn His countenance toward you and give you peace” (Num 6:22-26); “They shall invoke my name upon the people of Israel and I will bless them” (Num 6:27).
- Thirdly, one blesses by desiring: “Nor did they who passed by say: “The blessing of the Lord be upon you.”” (Os 129:8). To bless in this way is to will someone’s good and, as it were, to pray for his good. [Cfr. St. Thomas Aquinas on Romans, Chapter 12, n.997].

Saying this, Blessing in the first and the third ways belongs to everyone. Blessing in the second way, by commanding, belongs only to God and His ministers .

Therefore, in this time everyone can invoke God’s blessing on water, food, willow, that means that every parishioner is united with the ordained minister’s intention of that blessing.

Blessings of pussy willows

Fr. Janko has submitted the following prayers that could be said over some pussy willows. Many homes have holy water and that can be used with the following prayers:

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

O Lord our God, who sits upon the Cherubim, and who restored the might of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, that through his cross and burial and resurrection He might save the world. Who also, when today HE entered Jerusalem, to embark upon his voluntary passion was met by the people who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death bearing the symbols of victory, boughs of trees and branches of palms emblematic of the resurrection. Keep and preserve us also who in this prefestal day in imitation of them bear in our hands palms and boughs.

Lord Jesus Christ our God, You blessed the crowd that greeted you with branches. Sanctify these branches that all who take them may be protected in soul and body, that they may help save us and become a sacramental sign of Your grace, that those who live where they are placed may obtain Your blessing, as we cry out with one voice: "Hosanna!" Blessed is he who comes to judge in justice with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever.

Amen.

Services

Please remember there are a number of websites you can go to watch the Divine Liturgy.

St. Peter and Paul is now streaming the Divine Liturgy via their YouTube channel.

[Ss. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church – YouTube Channel»»](#)

The link for St. George's in Saskatoon

<https://www.skeparchy.org/wordpress/livestream-ukrainian-catholic-cathedral-of-st-george/>

The link for Dormition Church (Saskatoon)

<https://dormitionsaskatoon.ca/liturgy-live-2/>

In addition, here is a link to other Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgies:

<https://www.royaldoors.net/2020/03/2020-streaming-liturgical-services/>

Reflections on Palm Sunday:

Epistle Reading: Philippians 4: 4-9

This epistle reading speaks for itself (and is very timely in our times of uncertainty).

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

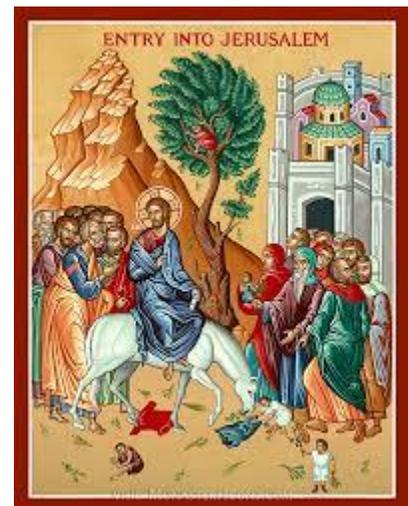


The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

(image accessed from <https://thewordfortheday.tumblr.com/post/172928703727/rejoice-in-the-lord-always-philippians-44-you>)

Gospel Reading: John 12: 1-18

- This reading is about the raising of Lazarus and the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- Here are a few verses to focus on:
 - The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!”
- Context: Although scholars disagree about exact numbers, it is suggested that about 100,000 people lived in and around Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. During a festival, perhaps between 200,000 and 250,000 people were present in Jerusalem.



- So when we read that a great crowd was present, it was probably a great number of people. (Keep in mind the population of Saskatoon is 270,000 so almost everyone in Saskatoon would have attended this festival.)
- The people were finding palm leaves from trees that were along the road and putting their cloaks down on the road. This is very much the 'red carpet' treatment, reserved for only a king.
- The people were singing 'Hosanna', which translates to 'Save us'.
- This would have been a tense environment. The Jewish people were tired of the Roman occupation and they wanted a military messiah to get rid of the Romans. By treating Jesus as a king and chanting, 'Save us', the huge crowd would have got a lot of attention from the Romans. In addition, the Jewish leaders, who did not like Jesus, would have been very upset.
- I want to reflect on the crowd today, that was probably the same crowd who just days later calls for Jesus to be crucified. The crowds seemed to be easily lead, first cheering for Jesus then asking for his death.
- There is a spiritual message in thinking about how quickly the crowd changed from cheering Jesus to asking for his death. Why did the crowd change – because of the voices they listened to.
- This is a good spiritual message for us...who do we listen to when we have to make a moral decision? Do we stand up for our values or just do like the crowd?
- *As Christians, we are asked to stand up and do what is right, even if it is opposite of what a crowd might think.*

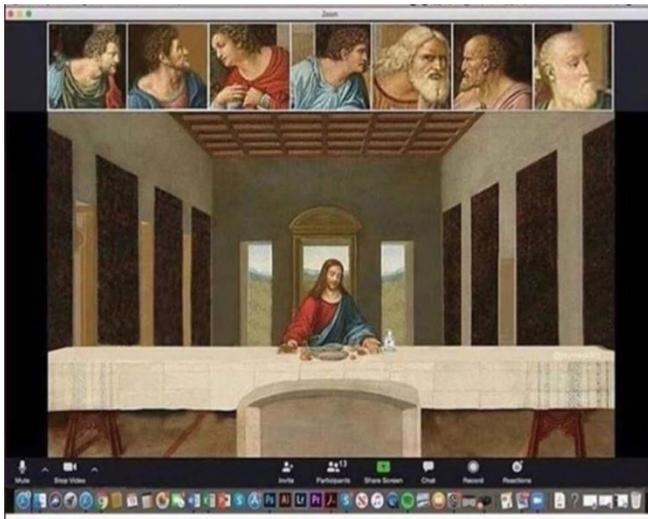


(Image accessed from: <https://cliquotes.com/motivational-quotes/do-what-is-right-not-what-is-easy/>)

Suggestions for ways to support others during social distancing

1. Take care of yourself so you can be supportive for others.
2. Check on your neighbors by calling or texting to see if they are okay.
3. Explore ways to connect with others using your computer.
4. Waste not, want not (by being good stewards of the food and items we have, we can avoid going out to crowded stores)
5. Pray for those who are working in health-care or other services (grocery store clerks, nurses and doctors, police officers, fire fighters, delivery people, etc.)

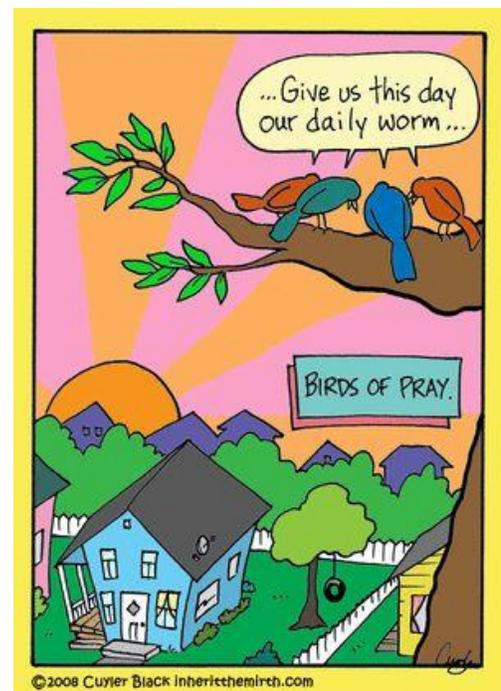
Humour for the week



If the last supper was held during the COVID 19 pandemic, would Jesus have eaten alone and his disciples use their computer screens to join the meal?



Prayer in the animal kingdom..



Have a safe and spiritual week!!!!