



The Byzantine Catholic
Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

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Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

2020 Paschal Message

This Easter Sunday hopefully will be the only time in our lifetime that we will celebrate Holy and Great Week from home watching live stream or listening to the radio. We never realize how blessed we have been, free and able to gather to prayerfully celebrate our traditional services remembering the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ each year. We can also appreciate the years that the people of Eastern Europe and other countries, because of oppressive governments, were not able to celebrate and which they faithfully waited to celebrate again.

As I am writing today, the Corona virus is spreading through the United States. The pattern throughout the world is that it starts with a few cases, it spreads through the community, the hospitals fill, and then most people recover. We pray for those who will be called back to the Lord. We pray for our families, our churches, and that our world will return to normal soon.

The celebration of Great and Holy Week helps us to overcome our fears. Without faith in the Resurrection, people can be overwhelmed with fear. You can become obsessed with what could happen because of that which the media broadcasts twenty four hours a day. There is justifiable fear of illness and death. Also, the fear of financial difficulties or even collapse can be more frightening than death. Without faith, fear and hopelessness can take over.

With the support of our families, church, and community, we can overcome the medical problems and restore the financial system. As the crisis continues, please help and support those in need in whatever way that you can. Also, continue to support your priests, religious, and your church during the crisis. If we work together, we will rise up again.

With the eyes of faith, we can even overcome the fear of death. The icon of the Resurrection shows us the path. In the icon, Jesus is encircled by the light of the Resurrection which enlightens the living. The apostles hold up quotes from the Easter Matins service. And, Jesus also reaches into the darkness of the tombs and lifts the fallen into the light of the Resurrection and into eternal life. The evil one, his virus minions, and death itself is overcome.

It is sad that we are not able to gather to celebrate together this year for Easter, but we will appreciate it more next year. Please pray each day that our leaders be guided to act wisely to end the epidemic and restore the health of their people. I pray the light of our Lord's Resurrect enlightens your mind and protects you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh