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Indications of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches for the Paschal Celebrations in the Eastern Catholic Churches

INDICATIONS FOR THE PASCHAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Considering the rapid evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in many countries where faithful of the Eastern Catholic Churches live, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches invites the Heads of all the Churches *sui iuris* to issue norms in accordance with the measures established by the civil authorities for the containment of the contagion and to encourage such conduct with the other Christian Churches, Catholic and non-Catholic, present on the same territory.

Considering the different ritual traditions and the Easter celebrations according to their respective calendars, it is not possible to issue a unitary provision that would cover all the uses present in each Church *sui iuris*.

Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to share the following recommendations:

- The feasts are strictly to be kept on the days foreseen by the liturgical calendar, broadcasting or streaming those celebrations that are possible, so that they can be followed by the faithful in their homes.
- Consideration should be given to the adaptations that will be made necessary by limited presence at the liturgical service. The participation of the choir and ministers expected by some ritual traditions is not possible at the present time when prudence advises avoiding gathering in significant numbers.
- Those parts of the celebrations connected to some rite outside the church are omitted.
- Remind the faithful of the value of personal and family prayer, which is authentic ecclesial prayer and an important means of transmitting the content of the faith between generations. Also arrange, and distribute through the means of social communication, aids that allow an adult of the family to explain to the little ones the mystagogy of the rites that under normal conditions would be celebrated in the church with the assembly present.

- The riches of the Paschal celebrations, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, can also be valorised by suggesting that part of them be prayed at home and in families, with the aids to participation that are usually made available in each community every year.
- Priests who cannot celebrate the liturgy on their own pray the hours of the office, especially the psalms and those prayers that do not require a response from the choir and the faithful.
- On Holy Thursday, in the liturgical celebration of the morning, some Churches sui iuris celebrate the consecration of the Holy Myron. This celebration, not being linked in the East to this day, can be moved to another date.
- On Good Friday, encourage use – alone or with the family – of the precious texts that the oriental traditions present on this day for prayer around the Cross and the tomb of Christ.
- On the night of Pascha, families may be invited, where possible through the festive sound of the bells, to gather to read the Gospel of the Resurrection, lighting a lamp and singing some troparion or songs typical of their tradition that the faithful often know by memory.
- Any baptisms scheduled for Easter are postponed to another date.
- The provisions issued by the March 19 decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary remain valid. Since many faithful are accustomed to confessing in the period before Easter, where it is not possible to do so, let pastors indicate to the faithful the recitation of some of the rich penitential prayers from the oriental tradition, to be recited with a spirit of contrition.

Sincerely yours,

✠ Leonardo Cardinal Sandri

Prefect

Don Flavio Pace

Under Secretary
