

April 2, 2020

ENTERING HOLY WEEK UNITED IN SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Before writing this message today, we posted on our YouTube channel a 10-minute chat between "Fr. Alain and A Surprise Guest." If you have not done so yet, we invite you to watch it, [click here](#). We hope that you will enjoy it and your feedback is most welcome.

With unprecedented challenges facing all of us, created by the Coronavirus crisis, we pray that our entire parish at OLHOC can enter this Holy Week UNITED IN SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Never before have we experienced a physical separation from our churches for such a long period of time. Since mid-March, the Coronavirus Pandemic has affected all of the 140 parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington. Over the last three weeks, Fr. Ben and I have celebrated the Sunday Masses at OLHOC in front of empty pews. However, thanks to technology, close to 500 of our households were able to participate by watching us on our OLHOC YouTube channel.

As we are now entering the Summit of our entire Annual Liturgy, most of us have mixed emotions. This coming Sunday will be our first Palm Sunday without holding palms in the entrance procession. Can you imagine a Palm Sunday without palms and with only clergy attending our main Mass in English at 11 am?

The full name of Palm Sunday is "Palm Sunday of the Lord's PASSION." Sometimes, we shorten it to "PASSION SUNDAY." While we will not be able to have a procession with palms this year, the Gospel will be "The PASSION of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew." (Matthew 26:14 - 27:66) It is my hope that before Sunday, you can open your Bible and meditate on this passage. You have heard the Passion narrative every Palm Sunday, and also every Good Friday (The Passion from John's Gospel). This year, as we all face a totally new and challenging situation in our lives, may we be inspired by Jesus' INFINITE LOVE for each one of us as He accepts His Father's will to die for all our sins on the Cross. May we join Jesus in His Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane: "My Father, if it is not possible that this CUP pass without my drinking it, YOUR WILL BE DONE." May we accept our sufferings today as we accompany Jesus on His Way to the Cross.

Let us pray with confidence to the Almighty Father who loves us so much that He sent His Only Son to die for our sins and give us LIFE, SPIRITUAL LIFE:

"Heavenly Father, we know that with you everything is possible. Despite our physical separation, help all the members of our parish community to remain UNITED IN SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as we enter Palm Sunday and Holy Week. HELP US TO REMAIN ONE IN YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST. HE IS OUR ROCK, OUR LIGHT, OUR HOPE AND OUR SALVATION. HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Help us not be afraid. Help us increase our FAITH and TRUST in JESUS!"

One in Christ,
Fr. Alain