

**Operations, Standardization and
Quality of Tourism Services Administration**

מרץ 2015 8
Ref. No.:2015-0014-38

**HOLY WEEK and EASTER
of the Catholic and Orthodox Communities
in Jerusalem**

1. Catholic Holy Week and Easter in Jerusalem

The period of Lent is drawing to a close, and both the local Christians and thousands of pilgrims who have come to the Holy City will celebrate during the Holy Week and Easter the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important time of the Christian liturgical year.

There is nothing like experiencing Holy Week in Jerusalem. Celebrating the greatest events of salvation history and of Jesus' life at the very sites where they occurred is a moving and unforgettable experience of faith for all believers.

Holy Week officially begins with the celebration of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, 29th of March. The highlights of the day will be the solemn mass at 8 a.m. at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre with the Blessing of the Palms and the traditional palm procession in the afternoon. The procession will start at 2:30 p.m. from the church of Bethphage down the western slope of the Mount of Olives across the Kidron valley and into the Old City of Jerusalem. Thousands of Christians from around the world will joyfully march, praying and singing in many languages.

On Holy Thursday, April 2nd, the Mass of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre at 8 a.m. by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. In the afternoon (3:30 p.m.), will take place the traditional pilgrimage of the Franciscans to the Cenacle (the Upper Room) on Mount Zion. In the evening, beginning at 9 p.m., pilgrims and local Christians alike will watch with Christ during a meditative Holy Hour in the Basilica of Gethsemane, followed by a candlelight procession to the church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, traditionally known as the place where Jesus spent the night after his arrest.

On Good Friday April 3rd, in the early morning at 7.15 a.m., the Lord's Passion and Crucifixion will be remembered on Calvary. The Way of the Cross will be prayed by the Franciscan fathers with the presence of the Custos of the Holy Land on the Via Dolorosa at 11:30 a.m. Later, at 8:10 p.m., Christ's funeral will be celebrated at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. It is an event unique to the Church of Jerusalem, reenacting the deposition of Christ's body into the tomb.

The much anticipated great Easter Vigil, the climax of the week, will be held on Saturday morning, April 4th at 7:30 a.m. in the Basilica of the Resurrection. In the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. the Latin Patriarch will enter solemnly into the Basilica for the recitation of vespers at 6 p.m.

On Easter Sunday, Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m. with a procession around Jesus' tomb, and the daily procession will take place at 5 p.m.

Finally, on Easter Monday, the encounter between Jesus and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus will be commemorated with the celebration of Mass at the Holy Sepulchre at 8 a.m., and by the Custos in Emmaus Qubeibeh at 10 a.m.

2. **Orthodox Holy Week and Easter in Jerusalem**

According to the Orthodox calendar, the Fast of Lent this year began on 18/2/15 and continues until Easter – 12/04/15. In the area surrounding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during this period we witness many prayers, processions and religious ceremonies by all Christian denominations – especially on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The Holy Fire (Greek Ἅγιον Φῶς, "Holy Light") is described by Orthodox Christians as a miracle that occurs every year at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on Great Saturday, or Holy Saturday, the day preceding Orthodox Easter. This year it will be on 11th of April 2015.

The detailed schedule of the celebration of the churches is available on the website of the Christian Information Center www.cicts.org

Respectfully yours,
Nancy Shedlaz
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