

## From Fr. Yake's Desk –

Changes to our mandated response to the coronavirus themselves change almost by the hour. In this environment of uncertainty we may search for stability, something to trust in that is unchangeable, meaningful, and certain and that is Jesus Christ. Maintaining our connection with the Lord can go a long way to having us deal with what has been called an unprecedented crisis that turns normalcy into an out-of-control experience. The Chinese character for 'crisis,' (pronounced, way-chi) means both danger and opportunity. While not ignoring the obvious dangers presented by covid-19 our faith exercised by a spirituality emboldened by prayerful devotions can bring us peace of mind and an opportunity to be with the Lord in ways that we have never experienced before. I suggest reading the psalms because they address the whole kaleidoscope of human experiences, including times like our present when more and more persons needed to rely on God for reassurance.

I ask those who utilize this and other religious websites to inform those who do not use the Internet of their contents. This is a way for all of us to evangelize, to practice the law of love of neighbour, and to transform this unprecedented moment into an unprecedented opportunity.

1. Note that Holy Mass can be viewed at [www.archtoronto.org](http://www.archtoronto.org) because Cardinal Collins, or a substitute will say Mass each day at 7:30am, Toronto time, with the rosary and Angeles, a prayer to honour the Mystery of the Incarnation.

2. The Catholic Register can be received free at [www.catholicregister.org](http://www.catholicregister.org) or [www.newsletter@catholicregister.org](mailto:www.newsletter@catholicregister.org). Below are two recent excerpts and information from this publication that Catholics should know. Because of copyright laws I have taken only samples rather than the whole article, and much are quotations from others and not the author's words. This information may also be available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

### **a. Vatican says general absolution may be permissible during pandemic**

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

- March 20, 2020

VATICAN CITY -- In places particularly hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic and with severe limits on people leaving their homes, conditions may exist to grant general absolution without people personally confessing their sins first, the Vatican said.

That came after Pope Francis said people who cannot get to confession because of the COVID-19 lockdown or another serious reason can go to God directly, be specific about their sins, request pardon and experience God's loving forgiveness, Pope Francis said.

"This is the right time, the opportune moment," he said March 20 during his live-streamed morning Mass. "An act of contrition done well, and our souls will become white like the snow."

"This Apostolic Penitentiary holds that, especially in places most impacted by the pandemic contagion and until the phenomenon subsides, there are cases of grave necessity" meeting the criteria for general absolution, the notice said.....

The first reading at Mass March 20 was from Hosea, and it encourages people to return to the Lord with all their hearts, recognizing their sins and letting God forgive them, the pope said in his homily.

"Return to your father who is waiting for you," the pope said. "The God of tenderness will heal us; he will heal us of the many, many wounds of life and the many ugly things we have done. Each of us has our own!"

God welcomes every repentant sinner with open arms, he said. "It's like going home."

Lent is a special time "to let God wash us, purify us, to let God embrace us," the Pope said, and the best place for that is the confessional.

"But many people today would tell me, 'Father, where can I find a priest, a confessor, because I can't leave the house? And I want to make peace with the Lord, I want him to embrace me, I want the Father's embrace.'"

The Pope said his response would be, "Do what the Catechism (of the Catholic Church) says. It is very clear: If you cannot find a priest to confess to, speak directly with God, your father, and tell him the truth. Say, 'Lord, I did this, this, this. Forgive me,' and ask for pardon with all your heart."

Make an act of contrition, the pope said, and promise God, "'I will go to confession afterward, but forgive me now.' And immediately you will return to a state of grace with God."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, N. 1452, says: "When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect' -- contrition of charity. Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible."

"As the catechism teaches," Pope Francis said, "you can draw near to God's forgiveness without having a priest at hand. Think about it. This is the moment."

## **b. Vatican says Holy Week liturgies must proceed even if pews are empty**

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

- March 20, 2020

VATICAN CITY -- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that is causing public Mass cancellations worldwide, the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter can not be postponed or suspended, said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

They must proceed even if a bishop or priest celebrates them in a church of empty pews.

"By the mandate of the supreme pontiff for the year 2020 only," the congregation issued guidelines March 20 for celebrating the Triduum and Easter liturgies without the presence of the faithful.

"Easter is at the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast among others. The Easter triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days, which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time," said the "Decree in the Time of COVID-19."

A sole exception is being made for the chrism Mass because the chrism Mass is not formally part of the Triduum. Therefore a bishop can decide to postpone its celebration.

On Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper should be celebrated in the cathedral and in parish churches even if the faithful can't be present, it said.

"The faculty to celebrate this Mass in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests" this year.

"The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted" when there are no faithful present, it said. The traditional procession with the Blessed Sacrament at the end of the Mass also is omitted, and the Eucharist is placed directly in the tabernacle.

For the celebration of the Easter Vigil without the faithful present, it said, the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, but the Easter candle is still lit and the "Exsultet" Easter proclamation is sung or recited.

3. MyParish App is offering a webinar for our parishes on ways to connect with parishioners during this time of isolation.

**The webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 10 am Atlantic Time**

To recap, our diocese signed on to MyParish App in 2018.

The MyParish App itself is free to download and use for anyone with an Apple or Android phone or tablet:

<https://myparishapp.com/>

The app connects with subscribing parishes across North America, and also includes the daily Mass readings and other useful links.

4. With the increase in concern over the spread of COVID-19 and with added precautions for everyone in Nova Scotia, The Diocese of Antigonish, with Debbie Aker, Jennifer Hatt and Art Riley's help, has added a **DONATE** button to the Website. Please let parishioners know that they still can donate to their parish and to Mass for Shut Ins. They or anyone can click on the tree or the word **\*Donate\*** to the left top of the home page. I believe Jennifer will also add this link to the Facebook page as well.

<http://www.antigonishdiocese.com/>

On the issue of donations please consider giving your regular offering to the lay persons in your parish who normally receive, count, and deposit the weekly collections. Like any agency the Church has bills to pay. Note the saying at the emergence of capitalism of economic philosophe John-Baptiste Say that is known as Say's Law, "Whatever is, costs to be."