

The Forgiveness of Sins during this Pandemic

Given public restrictions, the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is not possible at this time, except in the case of life-threatening emergencies.

To help in this, the Holy See, has offered two recourses for the faithful:

1. “Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved of all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confessions, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).”

2. “The gift of special Indulgences is granted to the faithful suffering from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as Coronavirus, as well as to health care workers, family members and all those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them.”

-- this is a time of suffering, especially for those who have contracted COVID-19. As such, it may be a time for us to “rediscover ‘the same redemptive suffering of Christ’ (Salvifici doloris, 30).” Trusting in Christ,

-- a *Plenary Indulgence* is” granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authorities in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Fathers’ intentions), as soon as possible.”

-- “Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: ‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (John 15:13), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.”

“An Indulgence is ‘the expression of the Church’s full confidence of being heard by the Father when- in view of Christ’s merits and, by his gift, those of Our Lady and the Saints – she asks him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace’ (John Paul II, September 29, 1999).”

“A plenary indulgence removes all temporal punishment due to sin (CCC, 1471).”

CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, 1997.

Salvifici doloris, John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, February 1984.