

# Love in the time of corona

 [bulldogcatholic.org/2020/04/03/love-in-the-time-of-corona](https://bulldogcatholic.org/2020/04/03/love-in-the-time-of-corona)

April 3, 2020



**Q: Masses have been canceled. How are we supposed to survive as Catholics, much less continue to grow and raise our families in the faith?**

A: This is a great question. And it is one that many people are asking in the midst of what seems to me to be an unprecedented moment in our history. I don't know if there is anyone currently alive who has experienced what we are going through right now.

Before we look at how you can survive, let's look at why officials in the church might have made the determination to restrict public participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. On the surface, this is quite unreasonable. It even seems like an obvious overreaction. As others have noted, if the coronavirus were merely a virus like any other, it would be an overreaction. If this were just about individual behavior, this kind of quarantining would be unreasonable. But when we consider that we are not merely individuals who only have to think of our

individual welfare, we realize that dramatic self-quarantines are not necessarily for the individual but for the common good. In other words, what would be an overreaction for an individual is not an overreaction for the community.

I've heard people say, "I don't care if I get sick — I need to go to Mass." I am in that same boat. That is my perspective as well. And yet, this virus is reminding us that we are not called to live for ourselves. The quarantine might not be so that you don't get sick, but so that others don't get sick because of you. Quarantine, then, becomes an act of love, not merely an act of wisdom.

Others have said, "The bishops just don't have supernatural faith in the midst of a crisis. They should know that we need prayer now more than ever." While I understand the sentiment (and agree that we need prayer now more than ever), I am glad that those who make these claims have the luxury of being able to criticize. The leaders of our church have the challenge of making decisions that will have a life or death consequence. We need to pray not only for ourselves and our loved ones, but for them.

Now, how do we survive in the midst of a world where the Mass is not being offered? The first thing to realize is that no priest is going to stop offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for even one day. The proscription against the public offering of Holy Mass comes with the call for each priest to continue offering Mass regularly. St. Padre Pio once noted, "The earth could exist more easily without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." The Mass will continue to be offered. The grace of the Mass will continue to be available to everyone in the world and in purgatory.

How can you pray, though? How can you continue to grow?

I would like to suggest three ways.

First, the Liturgy of the Hours. Each day, every priest and religious sister and brother (and many laypeople) pray what is called the Liturgy of the Hours. This is known as the official prayer of the church. In fact, while every priest is encouraged to offer the Mass every day, they are required to pray the Liturgy of the Hours every day. This consists of setting time aside for prayer five times a day: Morning Prayer, Daytime Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer, and what is called the Office of Readings.

I would love to invite every Catholic to make the Liturgy of the Hours a regular part of their prayer life. They don't have to pray all five times, but even simply starting with Morning Prayer could bear much fruit. Remember, when you pray this universal prayer of the church, you are united with the entire church throughout the world. Powerful.

Second, in our diocese, parishes have been told to keep the church doors open so that the faithful can visit their Lord in the Eucharist. Please visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! If your entire family is in quarantine, this could be a phenomenal way to get out of the house,

as well as stoke your love for the Eucharist. Jesus is Emmanuel (God with us) and he truly tabernacles among us. The doors remain unlocked. Go to him. Stay with him.

In a great season of crisis, St. John Bosco had a vision: the church was a massive ship in the midst of a terrible storm. The only thing that preserved the ship from total destruction were two pillars rising from the sea; one massive and the other smaller. The massive pillar was the Eucharist and the smaller pillar was Our Lady. How do we weather this storm? By visiting Jesus in the tabernacle and by staying close to Mary. (Praying the rosary has changed the course of history in the past, and it continues to do so.)

Lastly, you may know what the Mass “is” and what the Mass “does.” The Mass is the offering of the great once-for-all sacrifice of the Son to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit for the Father’s glory and the salvation of the world. The Mass is nothing less than that. Now, your priest is going to be offering that great sacrifice up for you every time he prays the Mass. But you can be a part of this through one incredible prayer.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a way that Catholics can participate in and “extend” the sacrifice of the Mass into the world. Remember, the Mass is the sacrifice of the Son to the Father. That what is happening at every Mass. One of the prayers in the chaplet is, “Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.” This prayer sums up briefly the action of the Mass and allows the Christian to exercise their priestly character by uniting themselves to the sacrifice of Jesus offered through the ministerial priest.

The worst is not being unable to go to Mass. The worst would be to fail to pray as we can during this time when we can’t go to Mass.