

Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary during the coronavirus pandemic

O Mary,
you always shine on our path
as a sign of salvation and of hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith
firm.
You, Salvation of the Roman People,
know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross,
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

We fly to thy protection,
O holy Mother of God.
Despise not our petitions
in our necessities,
but deliver us always
from all dangers
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

This is a simple and loving act of Spiritual Communion we are called to make in these times, while we are unable to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, please come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you now as if you were already there and I unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

"I wish, my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility, and devotion with which your most holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervour of the saints."

A Prayer for our Priests as they exercise their ministry during this time of the Coronavirus COVID-19

Eternal God,
Be with our priests this day as they seek
to minister to your people.
May you be a guiding and protective presence with them
as they bring the consolation and hope of Your word
and the grace and nourishment of Eucharist
to those entrusted into their care.

Grant them the strength of mind and body,
keep them safe to do your will,
And give them the courage and peace
to face each day with trust and confidence in You.
Into your hands O God, we commend them;
fill them with your grace and healing.

Amen.

For those social distancing

A list of quality films that will inspire you as well as entertain you.

With movie theatres shutting down across the country to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, people are turning to streaming platforms to occupy their time during social distancing. Make the most of your time by watching something that will not only entertain but lift your mind and heart to something higher. Here's a [list](#) of quality films that are perfect to engage Catholics in thoughtful reflection.

1. A Man for All Seasons

St. Thomas More was awesome, in the truest sense of the word. He held to his faith and conscience and refused to declare Henry VIII as head of the Church of England, even though he knew he would be executed for it. This film won several Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor. Plus, it has an all-star cast with Orson Welles, Robert Shaw (or Quint from Jaws) and John Hurt (who holds the record for most on-screen deaths).

2. Judgment at Nuremberg

This Best Picture-nominated film centers on a fictional military tribunal and offers a glimpse at what happened to Nazis after World War II and their role in the Holocaust. Spencer Tracy leads an all-star cast including Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Judy Garland and William Shatner. The movie is also the first time Nazi concentration camp footage was used in a commercial film. Judgment at Nuremberg explores why we must value every single human life.

3. On the Waterfront

If Marlon Brando's stunning performance doesn't sell you, this Best-Picture winner tells the story of an uneducated former boxer who stands up against corrupt union bosses who have unmitigated power. Is it anti-Communist? Yes. Does it include pro-Catholic teachings? Yes.

Plus it features one of the greatest lines in movie history. You'll know it when you get to it.

4. Henry V

This film adaptation of the Shakespeare play deals with themes of war and peace, brotherhood and leadership, manipulation and trust. But it's also an underdog story, as the British troops were outnumbered 5 to 1 against the French at the real, historic battle. And here is a future trivia answer for you: HBO's Band of Brothers gets its name from the Henry V line "We few, we happy few. We band of brothers."

5. The Mission

Robert De Niro stars in this movie about a Jesuit missionary evangelizing the native people of 18th-century South America. It was nominated for seven Oscars and won the Palm d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival.

6. We Were Soldiers

Although violent, the battle scenes are accurate portrayals of the events that changed the course of the Vietnam War. The movie, starring by Mel Gibson, shows the men who dedicated and sacrificed their lives for God, country and their brothers.

7. Liberating a Continent

St. John Paul II's trip to Poland in 1978 brought hope to a continent split by the Soviet Union's "Iron Curtain." It's a story of real people, real lives, real consequences and the real power of prayer.

8. For Greater Glory

In the 1920s, Mexican Catholics were persecuted by their government, forcing them to fight for their lives and the right to practice their faith. Many were martyred during the conflict — including six Knights who were later canonized. The film's theme of religious liberty remains powerful, as Christians are still persecuted throughout the world today.

9. Shane

Dealing with themes of heroism, redemption and justice, the film centers on a former gunslinger who tries to help a family of farmers harassed by cattle ranchers who have hired their own gunfighter. Shane is a classic film, listed number 45 on AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Movies list.

10. Michael Collins

First he played Holocaust hero Oskar Schindler. Then he played Irish hero Michael Collins. Liam Neeson stars in this biopic about the Irish revolutionary, soldier and politician who struggled for Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom in the early 20th century. It was nominated for two Academy Awards (cinematography and score), and Neeson and the film won top prizes at the Venice Film Festival.

11. Katyń

If you're looking for a foreign film, put Katyń at the top of your list. Nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 80th Academy Awards, it tells the story of Soviet atrocities against the Polish during the Second World War — including a mass execution and its cover-up. Although the characters are fictional, the Soviet actions are not.

12. Becket

Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton star in this classic film about the disintegrating relationship between King Henry II and St. Thomas Becket due to the latter's commitment to the Catholic Church. Becket received 11 Oscar nominations, including Best Picture and two Best Actor nominations. (Although O'Toole and Burton didn't win, making it a combined 14 times they were nominated for acting but never won.)

Enjoy!





CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC –
STATEMENT FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, **at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20h March 2020, until further notice.**

Our churches will remain open. They are not closing. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting our churches at this time, we will observe with great care the practices of hygiene and the guidance on social distancing.

However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, will take place without a public congregation.

Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live-streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion: this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days. These are the ways in which we will sanctify Sunday, and indeed every day.

We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed. This is, without doubt, the teaching of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181). This pandemic is the 'serious reason' why this obligation does not apply at this time.

You will find more details about the pathway of prayer and sacramental life we are now to take in the accompanying document and on the Bishops' Conference website (www.cbcew.org.uk). Your own bishop and parish priest will provide further support, encouragement and information about our way of prayer together in the coming weeks.

The second vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us.

During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it. The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too. For your commitment to this, we thank you.

"The Lord is my shepherd,
There is nothing I shall want."

May God bless us all.

Vincent Cardinal Nichols
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP
Vice-President

Love Alone Overcomes Fear - Richard Rohr

It is shocking to think how much the world has changed in such a brief time. Each of us has had our lives and communities disrupted. Of course, I am here in this with you. I feel that I'm in no position to tell you how to feel or how to think, but there are a few things that come to mind I will share.

Right now I'm trying to take in psychologically, spiritually, and personally, what is God trying to say? When I use that phrase, I'm not saying that God causes suffering to teach us good things. But God does use everything, and if God wanted us to experience global solidarity, I can't think of a better way. We all have access to this suffering, and it bypasses race, gender, religion, and nation.

We are in the midst of a highly teachable moment. There's no doubt that this period will be referred to for the rest of our lifetimes. We have a chance to go deep, and to go broad. Globally, we're in this together. Depth is being forced on us by great suffering, which as I like to say, always leads to great love.

But for God to reach us, we have to allow suffering to wound us. Now is no time for an academic solidarity with the world. Real solidarity needs to be felt and suffered. That's the real meaning of the word "suffer" – to allow someone else's pain to influence us in a real way. We need to move beyond our own personal feelings and take in the whole. This, I must say, is one of the gifts of television: we can turn it on and see how people in countries other than our own are hurting. What is going to happen to those living in isolated places or for those who don't have health care? Imagine the fragility of the most marginalized, of people in prisons, the homeless, or even the people performing necessary services, such as ambulance drivers, nurses, and doctors, risking their lives to keep society together? Our feelings of urgency and devastation are not exaggeration: they are responding to the real human situation. We're not pushing the panic button; we are the panic button. And we have to allow these feelings, and invite God's presence to hold and sustain us in a time of collective prayer and lament.

I hope this experience will force our attention outwards to the suffering of the most vulnerable. Love always means going beyond yourself to otherness. It takes two. There has to be the lover and the beloved. We must be stretched to an encounter with otherness, and only then do we know it's love. This is what we call the subject-subject relationship. Love alone overcomes fear and is the true foundation that lasts (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Prayer for Our Community:

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world. [Please add your own intentions.] . . . Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF

Archbishop's House
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ARCHESGOBAETH, CAERDYDD

Ty'r Archesgob
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18 March 2020

Dear Father,

The Bishops of England and Wales have issued the following advice for the Church in the face of the coronavirus pandemic we are currently enduring:

The Public Celebration of Mass should cease from the evening of 20 March 2020. This includes Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as communicated in the letter from Cardinal Vincent Nichols. The obligation for the faithful to attend Mass on these days is removed until further notice owing to the extraordinary circumstances.

Priests may continue to celebrate Mass privately, without a congregation.

A notice should be put on the church door to explain the church is open for private prayer, but there are no public services in accordance with coronavirus guidelines against large groups of people gathering together.

A number of churches are going to 'live stream' the Mass on Sundays. Resources for people to use at home will be available on the Bishops conference website.

Baptisms should be deferred until such time as public health advice that congregations may gather is received.

Individual Confessions may be heard on request as long as the necessary hygiene and distancing requirements are observed.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion celebrations are to be postponed until congregations can gather safely in accordance with coronavirus guidelines.

Confirmation should be postponed until congregations can safely gather for the reasons given above.

Marriages should be deferred if possible. If the most pressing circumstances demand, those present should be the celebrant, bride and groom, immediate family and registrar. No large gathering is permitted.

Care of the Sick. Pastoral visits should not be made to people who are self-isolating until that period is over. Telephone support would be helpful and the prayer of Pope Francis should be shared in these circumstances. Anointing of the sick may be conducted applying the Holy Oil with a cotton bud which should be burned afterwards. The "laying on of hands" should be substituted with "the priest extends his hands".

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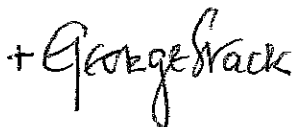
Funerals should be conducted by priests or ministers at the graveside or the crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the authorities. Arrangements may be made for a Mass "In Memoriam" when congregations are allowed to gather.

These guidelines will be further reviewed by the Bishops on 25th March 2020 taking note on what further advice will be given by government and health agencies.

Finally, I realise that we clergy ourselves are vulnerable in these extraordinary times. Many of us are over 70 and so fit into the group that needs to take special care during this pandemic. Many people will look to us for support and encouragement as they worry about their own circumstances. Whilst continuing to be pastoral in our service of our people, we must also be responsible and take precautions in adapting our ministry to the patterns of social distancing which must be observed if this virus is to be contained. Those priests with underlying health issues must follow the protocols which have been set out to maintain their own health.

Needless to say, I am grateful for the care and support you give your people during this and in many other circumstances of your work. Just as our people are being encouraged to care for their neighbour in particular ways at this time, it would be good if we maintained contact with our neighbouring priests and parishes to ensure the well-being of all.

With every blessing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+George Stack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+George Stack

Apostolic Administrator of Menevia