News



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Welcome to NCR's Coronavirus Tracker, where you can find the latest news about the coronavirus pandemic as it relates to the Catholic Church and other institutions. We hope you find it useful in navigating these complex times and welcome your suggestions for how we might improve it. We're currently updating the Tracker twice a day, early in the morning and late in the afternoon. To receive the Coronavirus Tracker by email each weekday afternoon, sign up here. We completed updates to today's tracker at 4:50 pm EDT.

In Italy and beyond, churches grapple with coronavirus

Politico, March 17

Italian priests are discovering social media as 'an instrument of prayer,' but not all countries are following their lead.

Evangelical leader denounces Trump for calling coronavirus the 'Chinese virus'

The Washington Post, March 17

"This is not acceptable. Calling it the 'Chinese virus' only instigates blame, racism, and hatred against Asians - here and abroad," wrote Euguene Cho on Twitter.

Scientists warn we may need to live with social distancing for a year or more

Vox, Mar 17

"I think this idea... that if you close schools and shut restaurants for a couple of weeks, you solve the problem and get back to normal life -- that's not what's going to happen," says Adam Kucharski, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. "The main message that isn't getting across to a lot of people is just how long we might be in this for."

Catholic Archdiocese in Kansas City, Kansas, cancels Masses 'for the time being'

The Kansas City Star, March 17

The archdiocese announced that all Catholic Masses, other than for funerals, would be canceled "for the time being."

Campus chaplains, religious clubs advocate for students in a moment of anxiety

Religion News Service, March 17

As university campuses shut down and move classes online, chaplains and faith-based campus groups are stepping up to ease the transition and advocate for students' needs.

With callous timing, Detroit bishops bar LGBTQ group from Catholic grounds

Jamie Manson (NCR), March 17

Grace on the Margins (column): The Detroit chapter of Dignity has been expelled from its sacred space during a pandemic, a time in which our senses of space, location and home are already in disorienting flux.

CDC head 'not shy about his Catholic faith,' says Baltimore pastor

Catholic News Service, March 17

Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been an active parishioner at Baltimore's Cathedral of Mary Our Queen for years.

In a statement, Redfield said the "compassion, counsel and care" faith communities provide will be "important as we confront this new virus and as many Americans and others around the world experience disruption in their daily lives."



Healthcare professionals exit an ambulance on a central Roman street outside the author's apartment March 17. (NCR photo/ Joshua J. McElwee)

When a priest and housemate falls ill, the practical becomes spiritual

Thomas Reese (RNS), March 17

"The call from a member of my community came at 11:30 March 15 evening. 'The test came back positive. I have the virus.'"

Ambulances, lockdown and new patterns of life in coronavirus Rome

Joshua J. McElwee (NCR), March 17

"It's part of our new pattern of life here in Italy, at the heart of what the World Health Organization calls the European epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak," writes NCR Vatican correspondent Joshua J. McElwee.

"When you're locked up day in and day out, the experience of even seeing someone else at a window is unexpectedly joyous."

As lockdown continues, pope prays for lonely elderly

Catholic News Service, March 17

Pope Francis urged Christians to remember the elderly who are suffering not only loneliness but also fear due to the spread of the coronavirus.

Loyola Chicago climate conference upended by coronavirus precautions

Brian Roewe (NCR), March 17

Inside a seminar room at Loyola University Chicago's Institute of Environmental Sustainability, phones beeped and buzzed Thursday with news of the latest cancellations and postponements as the coronavirus outbreak swept across the country. Ultimately, not even the best hygiene efforts were enough to immunize Loyola Chicago from the crush of cancellations overtaking academics, sports and cultural centers in response to the viral pandemic.

Coronavirus outbreak in southern Italy linked to Neoatechumenate retreat

Crux, March 17

Four small towns in southern Italy have been placed under quarentine due to an outbreak that reportedly originated in a spiritual retreat led by the Neocatechumenal Way, one of the "new movements" in the Catholic Church.

Religious education in a time of coronavirus

Heidi Schlumpf (NCR), March 16

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children" — so says the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Thanks to the coronavirus, that's about to get real.

A DIY edifying film festival for the social distanced and quarantined

Sr. Rose Pacatte (NCR), March 16

There is nothing like being unexpectedly homebound, as the coronavirus has done to us all. As NCR's film critic, I have created a list of edifying films we can watch together as grownups, families with children, or solo. Reluctant homeschoolers may find this helpful as part of their "curriculum."

Italian priests, religious women are among victims of COVID-19

Catholic News Service, March 16

A number of priests and religious women have been among the nearly 2,000 people who have died in Italy because of illness connected with COVID-19.

Trump Urges Limits Amid Pandemic, but Stops Short of National Mandates

The New York Times, March 16

President Trump issued national guidelines that included closing schools and avoiding bars, restaurants and groups of more than 10 as he prepared for months of upheaval.

Macron Declares France ‘at War’ With Virus, as E.U. Proposes 30-Day Travel Ban

The New York Times, March 16

Adopting martial language, President Emmanuel Macron ordered the French to stay at home for at least the next 15 days, as France put in place some of the most severe measures in Europe to try to curb the raging coronavirus.

Archbishops of Canterbury and York: Care for your friends and neighbors

Daily Mail Online, March 16

All of us, now, face a common threat, Covid-19. The question is, how do we find hope in these difficult circumstances? Hope comes both from what we can do and who we are.

Turkey suspends mass prayers in mosques over coronavirus fears: religious authority

Reuters, March 16

Turkey suspended mass prayers in mosques until the risk of coronavirus outbreak passes, the head of Turkey’s religious directorate, Ali Erbas said on Monday.

Advertisement

SF Bay Area orders 'shelter in place,' only essential businesses open in 6 counties

San Francisco Chronicle, March 16

Six Bay Area counties announced “shelter in place” orders for all residents on Monday — the strictest measure of its kind yet in the continental United States — directing everyone to stay inside their homes and away from others as much as possible for the next three weeks in a desperate move to curb the rapid spread of coronavirus across the region.

On eve of primary, Ohio's health director orders polls closed

The Week, March 16

After a judge ruled on Monday evening that Ohio's Tuesday primary could not be postponed until June 2, the state's director of health, Dr. Amy Acton, declared a health emergency in order to keep the polls from opening.

Coronavirus Outbreak Has America’s Homeless at Risk of 'Disaster'

The New York Times, March 16

Doctors say the country’s more than half-million homeless people are at higher risk of catching and dying from the virus.

Priest Offers Drive-Thru Confessions Amid Church Lockdown for Coronavirus

ChurchPop, March 16

Fr. Scott Holmer of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church in Bowie, Md. is offering drive-thru confessions to his parishioners after the Archdiocese of Washington suspended all public Masses, effective Mar. 14.

Trump adviser Paula White pulls out of religious event promising protection from coronavirus

Arizona Republic, March 15

White House adviser Paula White has apparently withdrawn from a religious awakening conference scheduled to be held in Phoenix that promised to offer "supernatural protections" against coronavirus.

The family lockdown guide: how to emotionally prepare for coronavirus quarantine

The Guardian, March 12

As the coronavirus pandemic spreads, self-isolation or quarantine is one of the key strategies in "flattening the curve" of infection rates. These 14-day isolation periods involve individuals or families staying within their homes, and not having physical contact with those outside. What can families expect and how can they survive not only the virus, but each other?

Message from the superior general of the De La Salle Christian Brothers

March 3

The gift of our fraternal life in community is a gift we have to offer the global community. During this crisis may our support for one another and our solidarity with one another be a sign of hope for others.

This story appears in the **Coronavirus Tracker** feature series. View the full series.