News



Joshua J. McElwee

View Author Profile



Jesse Remedios

View Author Profile

jremedios@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @JCRemedios

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March 19, 2020
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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. The Tracker was most recently updated at 4:30 pm EDT.

Eastern Orthodox Church To Halt Services Until End Of March

NPR, March 19

The spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians around the world has ordered churches to halt services and rites until the end of March.

All Roman Catholic dioceses in the U.S. have suspended public celebration of the Mass

Michael Bayer (Twitter), March 19

"As of Thursday, March 19, all 177 Roman Catholic arch/dioceses in the United States have suspended public celebration of the Mass in an effort to contain the spread of the #COVID19 coronavirus"

Sisters strengthen efforts amid coronavirus strain

Global Sisters Report, March 19

"The sudden onslaught of the coronavirus impresses upon us our oneness with the global community. All are affected or infected," said Sr. Joan Mumaw.

Global group of women religious superiors calls for March 22 day of prayer

Global Sisters Report, March 19

The International Union of Superiors General is calling for a global day of prayer and solidarity on Sunday, March 22, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alabama church hosts drive-in coronavirus testing for nearly 1,000 people

The Hill, March 19

977 people have received tests at Church of the Highlands in Jefferson County, the largest church in the state.

Houses of worship pitch in to help those left vulnerable by virus outbreak

Religion News Service, March 19

Across the country, faith organizations are mobilizing to assist vulnerable community members who require assistance with grocery shopping, paying bills, picking up prescriptions and other tasks.

An opportunity for those of you on Facebook:

Sunday Scripture Online

Paulist Center Boston Young Adults

"Join us as we read through the Sunday Mass readings and discuss what they mean to us today. This group will begin meeting on 3/22 and run until Mass at the Paulist Center resumes again."

Hispanic Catholics asked to skip healing sites amid outbreak

The Associated Press, March 19

Due to the pandemic, many historic Hispanic Catholic sites are limiting access to pilgrims seeking a last hope prayer.

White House takes low-key approach to churches that ignore coronavirus advice

Religion News Service, March 19

On March 19, Trump administration officials called out people violating government recommendations to avoid meeting in large groups, but said little about a subset of faith communities that have insisted on gathering despite the threat of the coronavirus.

At Mass, pope prays for prisoners, families

Catholic News Service, March 19

Pope Francis began Mass by praying for prisoners experiencing great uncertainty and worrying about their families who cannot visit them due to coronavirus lockdown measures.

Survival ethos marks New Orleans, now an epicenter of COVID-19

Jason Berry (NCR), March 19

Doused in milky sunlight, the plastic beads tossed by maskers on the decorated floats during Mardi Gras hang in oak limbs that snagged them from waiting hands. And now, the coronavirus pandemic curls its tentacles around a city of festive folkways, squeezing us into an eerie new abnormal.

As I drown in coronavirus information, here's one thing I want to do

Mike Jordan Laskey (NCR), March 19

It's time to make a habit out of scheduling virtual hangouts with people I care about. Our family connects with spread-out relatives like this fairly often already, but we need to step up the intentionality, including setting up conversations with folks who are usually text-only friends.

Communion during the coronavirus pandemic? This Tennessee church offers a drive-thru option

USA TODAY, March 19

At designated times throughout the week, an Anglican priest is setting up in front of his church, distributing wafers that were consecrated during the church's recent Sunday services.

Coronavirus Is Spreading at Religious Gatherings, Ricocheting Across Nations

The Wall Street Journal, March 18

From Malaysia to Iran, faith groups and pilgrims have emerged as risks, transmitting the disease in ways that are proving difficult to trace and contain.

Younger adults are large percentage of coronavirus hospitalizations in United States, according to new CDC data

The Washington Post, March 19

The deadly coronavirus has been met with a bit of a shrug among some in the under-50 set in the United States.

Bishops suspend Mass for all Catholic churches in Alabama

Alabama.com, March 17

Catholic Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi has called a halt to almost all parish and school activities in the Archdiocese of Mobile from Wednesday through April 5, including all worship services.

London tube to close many stations because of coronavirus

The Guardian, March 19

Dozens of London Underground stations are to be closed indefinitely amid a toughening of measures to try to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Transport for London (TfL) announced a series of changes late on Wednesday evening as it urged people in the capital not to travel if at all possible.

Merkel’s Moment Arrives as Virus Tests Leaders’ Grasp of Facts

Bloomberg, March 19

When Angela Merkel says it’s serious, Germans know by now that she means it.

Merkel’s speech on the unparalleled threat posed by the coronavirus was the first crisis address to the nation of her more than 14 years in office. How the German public responds to her plea for solidarity will likely determine history’s view of her chancellorship.

'A generation has died': Italian province struggles to bury its coronavirus dead

The Guardian, March 19

Coffins awaiting burial are lining up in churches and the corpses of those who died at home are being kept in sealed-off rooms for days as funeral services struggle to cope in Bergamo, the Italian province hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Advertisement

Coronavirus Ravages 7 Members of a Single Family, Killing 3

The New York Times, March 18

The matriarch of the large New Jersey family died Wednesday night without ever knowing that her two oldest children had died before her.

Trump Spurns Business Plea to Ease Tariffs Amid Coronavirus

The Wall Street Journal, March 18

The Trump administration is brushing aside calls to put broad import tariffs on hold, despite pleas from the business community that it could stimulate the increasingly rocky U.S. economy.

Trump: It’s the 'Chinese virus,' and he says that's not racist

San Francisco Chronicle, March 18

President Trump intensified his effort Wednesday to brand the coronavirus as the "Chinese virus," a label that public health professionals say is incorrect and many Asian Americans called dangerous to them personally.

China Hits a Coronavirus Milestone: No New Local Infections

The New York Times, March 18

China on Thursday reported no new local infections for the first time since the coronavirus crisis began three months ago, reaching a milestone in its battle with the deadly outbreak that has upended daily life and economic activity around the world.

Trump Invokes A Cold War Relic, The Defense Production Act, For Coronavirus Shortages

NPR, March 18

Bowing to increasing pressure to do so, President Trump announced Wednesday he would use a law dating back to the early years of the Cold War to address serious shortages of supplies needed for responding to the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S.

Italy records its deadliest day of coronavirus outbreak with 475 deaths

The Guardian, March 18

Italy has suffered its deadliest day yet in the coronavirus outbreak and is poised to overtake China as the world’s worst affected country, as Europe tightened a lockdown affecting about 250 million people.

Pastor of St. Anne Catholic Church fills church with faces amid coronavirus

WRBL, March 18

In Georgia, a pastor taped more than 100 photos of students and parishioners to the pews.

Nearly half of U.S. coronavirus patients in intensive care are under 65, CDC reports

The Week, March 18

Older Americans are still at greater risk of death from the new COVID-19 coronavirus, but 38 percent of the U.S. patients known to have been hospitalized for COVID-19 were between age 20 and 54, and nearly half of those admitted to the intensive care unit were adults under 65, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Wednesday.

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