News



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March 24, 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 last updated at 4:40 pm EDT.

The cult of Trump now threatens us all

Jamie Manson (NCR), March 24

What we are seeing play out now is Trump, the charismatic leader, losing his grip on a narrative he has tightly controlled. He is scrambling under a siege of facts: creating distractions, contradicting himself, fabricating a revisionist history about his role in downplaying the crisis. He is recasting himself as a fearless leader in a time of war.

States Differ on Exempting Worship From Coronavirus Closures

The Associated Press/The New York Times, March 24

As multiple governors issue orders to curb large gatherings and implore residents to stay home in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus, at least a half-dozen states have exempted some level of religious activity.

Trump wants 'packed churches' and economy open again on Easter despite the deadly threat of coronavirus

CNBC, March 24

President Trump said on Fox News he wants the U.S. economy to "open" back up by Easter Sunday, even as the number of coronavirus cases in the country accelerates.

A Good Death Is a Rite of Irish Life. Amid Coronavirus, That Looks Different.

The New York Times, March 24

In Ireland, wakes and funerals typically involve entire communities. But social distancing is changing how those rituals play out.

Pope Francis invites Christians to #PrayForTheWorld

Twitter, March 24

"Let us stay united. I invite all Christians to direct their voices together toward Heaven, reciting the Our Father tomorrow, 25 March, at noon. #PrayTogether #PrayForTheWorld"

Liberty University welcomes back students despite coronavirus

The Hill, March 24

Despite the fact that almost all of Liberty's classes have been moved online, staff and faculty are still expected to come to work as usual.

Catholic LGBTQ Ministry Decries Church Leaders for Coronavirus Statements

New Ways Ministry, March 24

"Two high-ranking Catholic leaders have blamed the coronavirus pandemic on LGBTQ people, displaying rash irresponsibility in a time when the world is already suffering from danger, fear, and instability."

Passing the time in lockdown: Sisters sew face masks

Catholic News Service, March 24

While most of the work at a religious order's general headquarters continues in lockdown, a group of Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit found an additional activity where they could use their hands, do something together and be useful.

Vatican employees balk at lack of full shutdown amid virus

The Associated Press, March 24

The Vatican is under pressure to let more employees work from home as its offices remain open two weeks after the Italian government ordered Italians home and shut down all non-essential businesses in an urgent attempt to contain the coronavirus.

Cardinal Burke says faithful should attend Mass despite coronavirus

Religion News Service, March 24

In an online statement, conservative Cardinal Raymond Burke said that access to Mass and the sacraments must not be denied even as the world faces the coronavirus pandemic.

Coronavirus likely to cause first year without papal travel since 1979

Joshua J. McElwee (NCR), March 24

Traveling abroad has become a staple of the modern papacy. In most years, the bishop of Rome takes an average of three or four voyages outside Italy, sometimes visiting a dozen countries in places across the globe.

As with many other things, the coronavirus outbreak has changed all that.

First U.S. clergy fatality from COVID-19 a deacon in Washington

Catholic News Service, March 24

A Franciscan friar who was on his way to join a new religious community in New York became Washington's first COVID-19 fatality March 20 and the first known U.S. Catholic cleric to die after contracting the coronavirus.

Editorial: May the lesson be indelibly inscribed — we need one another

NCR, March 24

We've reached the point in the fight against coronavirus, this awful and unseen enemy, that lays bare the truth that the evangelists of self-sufficiency and libertarian excess bow before a false god. May the lesson be indelibly inscribed on the minds of the generations soon to move into positions of leadership. We need one another.

Two popes and a plague, just like the 14th century

Phyllis Zagano (NCR), March 24

As most of the church sits in isolation, hoping and praying for an "all clear" message and the chance to resume life as it was, new ways of being church arise.

Jesuit superior general offers video message on coronavirus: 'We are all one humanity'

Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar, March 24

Father General in this video shares a message in solidarity with the world following the COVID-19 pandemic that is affecting all across the globe.

Pope Francis' visit to Malta postponed

Vatican News, March 23

Pope Francis’ visit to Malta has been postponed. The Pope’s apostolic journey to the Mediterranean island nation was previously scheduled for 31 May.

U.S.-Mexico border humanitarians scramble to curb coronavirus

America, March 20

Just last month, more than 400 gathered for the blessing of the Kino Border Initiative’s new 18,000-square-foot building in Nogales, in the Mexican state of Sonara, just south of Arizona. Today, with the outbreak of Covid-19, things are much different.

Advertisement

Boris Johnson orders UK lockdown to be enforced by police

The Guardian, March 23

Boris Johnson will order police to enforce a strict coronavirus lockdown, with a ban on gatherings of more than two people and strict limits on exercise, as he told the

British public: “You must stay at home.”

Italy’s coronavirus deaths are staggering. They may be more preview than anomaly.

The Washington Post, March 23

Italy has become the flash point of the coronavirus pandemic, with a death toll at 6,077 and counting — the highest in the world. More than 2,000 Italians have been killed by the virus in the past four days alone.

While some unique aspects have amplified the scale, doctors and health officials say other countries should regard Italy not as an outlier or an example of missteps, but as a harrowing preview of the hardships they might soon have at hand.

Germany's infection curve could be flattening off, public health chief says

Reuters, March 23

There are signs that the exponential upwards curve in new coronavirus infections in Germany is flattening off for the first time thanks to social distancing measures in force, the head of the country’s public health institute said on Monday.

Trump Considers Reopening Economy, Over Health Experts’ Objections

The New York Times, March 23

As the United States entered Week 2 of trying to contain the spread of the coronavirus by shuttering large swaths of the economy, President Trump, Wall Street executives and many conservative economists began questioning whether the government had gone too far and should instead lift restrictions that are already inflicting deep pain on workers and businesses.

Mnuchin, Schumer say coronavirus rescue package deal very close

Politico, March 23

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said that they are "very close" to an agreement on a nearly $2 trillion coronavirus economic rescue package, raising the possibility of a Senate vote on the legislation as early as Tuesday.

Coronavirus ‘Attack Rate’ in N.Y. Concerns White House

The New York Times, March 23

The White House’s coronavirus response coordinator offered a grim assessment of the virus’s assault on the New York metropolitan area Monday evening: She said that nearly 1 in 1,000 people in the region have contracted the virus, an “attack rate” five times that of other areas.

Governor says California needs 30,000 more hospital beds than anticipated for coronavirus patients

Los Angeles Times, March 23

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced new action on Monday to encourage social-distancing measures, including closing parking lots at state parks, and warned that California will need more than twice as many hospital beds for coronavirus patients than previously anticipated.

Elite hackers target WHO as coronavirus cyberattacks spike

Reuters, March 23

Elite hackers tried to break into the World Health Organization earlier this month, sources told Reuters, part of what a senior agency official said was a more than two-fold increase in cyberattacks.

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