News



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March 30, 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 5:10 pm EDT.

Stranded migrants, lack of food: in Indian lockdown, poor suffer

Catholic News Service, March 30

The three-week COVID-19 lockdown of India's 1.37 billion people has stranded millions of domestic migrant workers and left people scrambling for food and other basics amid the ensuing harsh and often violent crackdown by police.

Papal academy says solidarity among ethical responses needed in pandemic

Catholic News Service, March 30

The COVID-19 pandemic has caught entire communities and nations off guard, and the best way to tackle this global crisis is together as a global family, the Pontifical Academy for Life said.

Pastor arrested for violating rules amid virus outbreak

The Associated Press, March 30

Florida officials have arrested the pastor of a megachurch after detectives say he held two Sunday services with hundreds of people and violated a safer-at-home order in place to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

D.C.'s patient zero: A priest's journey from ICU to reuniting with family and flock

The Washington Post, March 30

The first known covid-19 patient in the District of Columbia had been hospitalized for 18 days, hooked up to an oxygen tank at times as he learned his church organist and four parishioners at Christ Church Georgetown had also contracted the novel coronavirus.

Special Report: Five days of worship that set a virus time bomb in France

Reuters, March 30

A prayer meeting at an evangelical church kicked off the biggest cluster of COVID-19 in France -- one of northern Europe's hardest-hit countries.

For Shut-In Pilgrims, the World's Holiest Sites Are a Click Away

The New York Times, March 30

The pandemic has closed holy sites across the globe, but virtual reality is providing worshipers a digital window into ceremonies during touchstone holidays.

Coronavirus worry sparks searches for 'prayer' to skyrocket: 'Religious coping'

Washington Examiner, March 30

A report by an economist at the University of Copenhagen found that internet searches for "prayer" are skyrocketing.

Pope offers Mass for those living in fear of pandemic

Catholic News Service, March 30

Pope Francis offered his daily morning Mass for those who find themselves living in fear of the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the world.

As coronavirus keeps parishioners homebound, Christian clergy debate online Communion

Religion News Service, March 30

As Christian churches cancel in-person services to avoid spreading the novel coronavirus, many have embraced "virtual" Communion: Some celebrate via livestream; others encourage parishioners to bring their own bread to videoconference meetings.

Italian government clarifies lockdown rules for churches

Catholic News Service, March 30

While many churches in Italy remain open, visiting a church to pray is not a valid excuse for leaving one's home during Italy's COVID-19 lockdown, said a note from the Ministry for Internal Affairs.

Pandemic narrows Americans' cultural distance from death and dying

Jesse Remedios (NCR), March 30

Americans don't like talking about death. It makes us uncomfortable. But experts say discussing the end of life is necessary, especially now as the coronavirus pandemic threatens to upend much of our existing dying and grieving processes.

As public fears spiral, living in the day is time-tested wisdom

Ken Briggs (NCR), March 30

As virus warnings have gone viral, public fears have spiraled. We scurry about devising defenses, hunker down against the invisible scourge and suffer from the helplessness of a stubborn unknown. Where will it end and what are we to do?

Florida, Louisiana churches draw hundreds to Sunday services despite coronavirus restrictions

The Hill, March 30

Church services in Florida and Louisiana drew hundreds of worshipers despite bans on public gatherings amid the coronavirus pandemic.

How Arizona religious institutions are responding to coronavirus

azcentral.com, March 29

Photo essay of empty pews and pastors managing live-streams.

Vatican confirms: Member of papal residence positive for coronavirus

Joshua J. McElwee (NCR), March 28

The Vatican confirmed March 28 that a resident of the Domus Santa Marta, where Pope Francis lives, tested positive for the coronavirus and has been recovering at a Rome-area hospital.

Families in Mexico search for silver lining amid COVID-19 pandemic

Carli Pierson (NCR), March 28

Like the rest of the world, those of us in Mexico are trying to look for the silver lining as we face unprecedented restrictions on our freedom of movement. Yesterday, I took a walk in the park with my children, something I rarely do because I am either working or shuttling my kids from activity to activity, dressing or undressing them, feeding them or trying to get things done around the house.

COVID-19 is not God's judgment, but a call to live differently, pope says

Catholic News Service, March 27

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is not God's judgment on humanity, but God's call on people to judge what is most important to them and resolve to act accordingly from now on, Pope Francis said.

Living in Isolation

Timothy Radcliffe (Commonweal), March 27

A few days ago, waiting to go through security in Tel Aviv airport, I watched the maneuverings of the young man before me in the queue. As we shuffled forward, he always had a suitcase five feet in front of him and behind, so that no one could get near him. He may have been wise, but it was a powerful symbol of what the virus means for millions of people: isolation, keeping one’s distance. The very presence of others may be a threat, as one may be for them.

As states crack down on gatherings, some religious exemptions could keep pews full

ABC News, March 29

Despite repeated warnings from health experts about the risk of social interaction amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, governors in at least four states have exempted houses of worship from statewide bans on mass gatherings, and this weekend will offer a first test to see if any congregations forge ahead despite the warnings.

The Religious Right's Hostility to Science Is Crippling Our Coronavirus Response

The New York Times, March 27

Trump's response to the pandemic has been haunted by the science denialism of his ultraconservative religious allies.

Exclusive: Justice Department reviews stock trades by lawmakers after coronavirus briefings

CNN, March 30

The Justice Department has started to probe a series of stock transactions made by lawmakers ahead of the sharp market downturn stemming from the spread of coronavirus, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Trump Extends Social Distancing Guidelines Through End of April

The New York Times, March 29

President Trump retreated Sunday from his desire to relax coronavirus guidelines by Easter, announcing instead that all Americans must continue to avoid nonessential travel, going to work, eating at bars and restaurants, or gathering in groups of more than 10 for at least another month and perhaps until June.

Two new road maps lay out possible paths to end coronavirus lockdowns

Stat, March 29

With Covid-19 racing through the country, the United States is virtually locked down. At the same time, the yearning among Americans to reopen their communities grows, as does their desire to return to some semblance of normality.

In an effort to chart a path toward that goal, public health experts laid out two new roadmaps over the weekend.

Advertisement

Pressure to provide equipment grows after two UK doctors die

The Guardian, March 29

The deaths of the first British doctors from Covid-19 have intensified pressure on ministers to accelerate the supply of protective equipment and address growing fears among frontline staff that they risk catching and spreading coronavirus.

Coronavirus deaths fall again in Italy but lockdown extension looms

Reuters, March 29

The number of deaths from coronavirus in Italy fell for the second consecutive day on Sunday but the country still looked almost certain to see an extension of stringent containment measures.

Spain toughens restrictions as coronavirus death toll surges

Reuters, March 29

Spain prepared to enter its third week under near-total lockdown on Sunday, as the government approved a strengthening of measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus and the death toll rose by 838 cases overnight to 6,528.

Country music's Joe Diffie dies from coronavirus, while fellow singer John Prine hospitalized with symptoms

Washington Examiner, March 29

Country music star Joe Diffie died after developing complications following a positive test for the coronavirus, while fellow singer John Prine is in critical condition with virus symptoms.

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