News



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March 31, 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.

Despite virus concerns, some Philly Catholics still receiving Communion on the tongue

The Philadelphia Inquirer, March 31

While the archdiocese two weeks ago suspended public Masses indefinitely at its more than 250 parishes, and encouraged Catholics to worship online instead, dozens of people lined up to receive Holy Communion in person during Sunday's livestreamed service from the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul. They waited side by side in a tight line for a priest to place the Communion wafer in their hands or directly on their tongue.

Released from quarantine into social distancing

Religion News Service, March 31

If there ever was a time for people of all nations to join forces to work together for the common good, it is now. Until the virus is under control everywhere in the world, no one is safe.

As people are ordered to stay home, pope calls for help for homeless

Catholic News Service, March 31

As national and local governments have been issuing stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders to curb the spread of the coronavirus, Pope Francis asked people to pray for and assist those who are homeless.

Prisoners riot in Iran; Netayahu goes into self-quarantine

The Associated Press, March 31

Prisoners in southern Iran broke cameras and caused other damage during a riot, state media reported March 30, the latest in a series of violent prison disturbances in the country, which is battling the most severe coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East.

'Zoombombing' comes for houses of worship

Religion News Service, March 31

The mass transition of houses of worship to Zoom and other online video conferencing platforms has meant that religious services are more accessible than ever before. Unfortunately for digital congregants, that means they are also more accessible to online trolls who have plenty of free time to disrupt their services with obscene or hateful interruptions.

Pandemic fosters creativity as dioceses move through Lent into Holy Week

Catholic News Service, March 31

Pastors are offering drive-through adoration and confession as well as livestreaming and on-demand liturgies online.

Pandemic economics create widespread upheaval, opportunities for reform

Don Clemmer (NCR), March 31

Riley McCullough was in the middle of uploading online content for the parish north of Pittsburgh where she worked when she got the call from the parish business manager. She was being furloughed — she qualifies for unemployment, though the parish will continue to provide her benefits. McCullough is planning a wedding for this summer; her fiancé works for another parish, one that is also contemplating layoffs.

Helping, not hoarding: After a 'prepper' childhood, I found a better way

David Dault (NCR), March 31

The events of the pandemic have shown us how small the world really is, and how tenuous our safety nets and supply chains actually are. But it has also shown us how interconnected we are.

Italian cardinal who runs Rome diocese tests positive for coronavirus

Joshua J. McElwee (NCR), March 30

The Italian prelate who runs the day-to-day operations of the Diocese of Rome in the name of Pope Francis has tested positive for the coronavirus, his office announced March 30.

How to talk to people who aren’t taking social distancing seriously

America, March 30

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, many of us are increasingly frustrated by divisions over whether or how long to shelter at home, as well as how to see the trade-off between rescuing the economy and saving lives. While most Americans are complying with orders to stay mostly at home, others are attempting to live their lives with minimal disruption.

Florida sheriff charges pastor who kept megachurch open, said closings are for ‘pansies’

The Washington Post, March 30

Tampa-area law enforcement officials issued an arrest warrant Monday and charged a local pastor who has defied coronavirus-related bans on large gatherings, instead encouraging crowds as big as 500 at one service this weekend, a sheriff said.

Behind Trump’s Reversal on Reopening the Country: 2 Sets of Numbers

The New York Times, March 30

An estimate of the number of possible deaths and polling that showed a cautious public changed, for now, the president’s approach to the coronavirus pandemic.

US jails will become death traps in the coronavirus pandemic

The Guardian, March 30

On Wednesday, March 18, while New York emerged as the national center for the coronavirus, a desperate message was dispatched from the city’s notorious Rikers Island. “A storm is coming,” tweeted Dr Ross MacDonald, the chief medical officer for the city’s jails, in a frantic plea for action from local officials. “I know what I’ll be doing when it claims my first patient. What will you be doing? What will you have done?”

Macy’s, Gap, and Kohl’s Furlough Thousands of Workers Without Pay

Barron's, March 30

Macy’s, Gap, and Kohl’s will furlough thousands of workers without pay, as retailers around the world face plummeting apparel sales spurred by Covid-19 social distancing efforts.

Amazon Worker Fired After Staging Walkout Over Company’s Handling Of Coronavirus Risk

HuffPost, March 30

Employees at a Staten Island warehouse called on Amazon to better protect workers amid the coronavirus pandemic. The company says it’s already doing so.

President Trump’s Prime-Time Pandemic

The New York Times, March 30

The coronavirus briefings have given Donald Trump a regularly scheduled reality show again — or, rather, a create-your-own-reality show.

Advertisement

India tracks attendees after Muslim event linked to virus cases

Al Jazeera English, March 31

India has launched a massive search to track down those who attended an event organised by a Muslim missionary movement after dozens of people test positive for coronavirus and at least seven reportedly die.

More than half of Americans have prayed for the end of coronavirus, poll finds

The Washington Post, March 30

A majority of Americans have prayed for the end of the pandemic, according to a poll from the Pew Research Center.

Italy extends lockdown amid hopes of turning corner

BBC, March 30

Italy has extended its lockdown until Easter, but there is some hope as the country reports a declining infection rate.

The number of new coronavirus infections reported on Monday was 1,648, as opposed to 3,815 the previous day.

Pictures of Isolation: Inside Italy's lockdown houses

Politico, March 26

Residents of Italy, home to the first and most severe coronavirus outbreak in Europe, have already undergone weeks of confinement, after the government ordered them to stay at home to slow the rate of infections. Stuck in their apartments, houses and bedrooms, they have had to learn how to live cut off from friends, family and lovers.

With more infections than China, Spain tightens lockdown

Associated Press, March 30

Spain enforced even tighter stay-at-home rules Monday for its 47 million people, as the country overtook China as the nation with the third-highest number of reported infections in the world, after the United States and Italy.

UK police warned against ‘overreach’ in use of virus lockdown powers

The Guardian, March 30

Police chiefs are drawing up new guidance warning forces not to overreach their lockdown enforcement powers after withering criticism of controversial tactics to stop the spread of coronavirus, the Guardian has learned.

Welsh goats run streets, arrested?

Twitter, March 26

After complaints from residents, police chase out a group of goats in Llandudno, Wales.

Yes, we are serious.

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