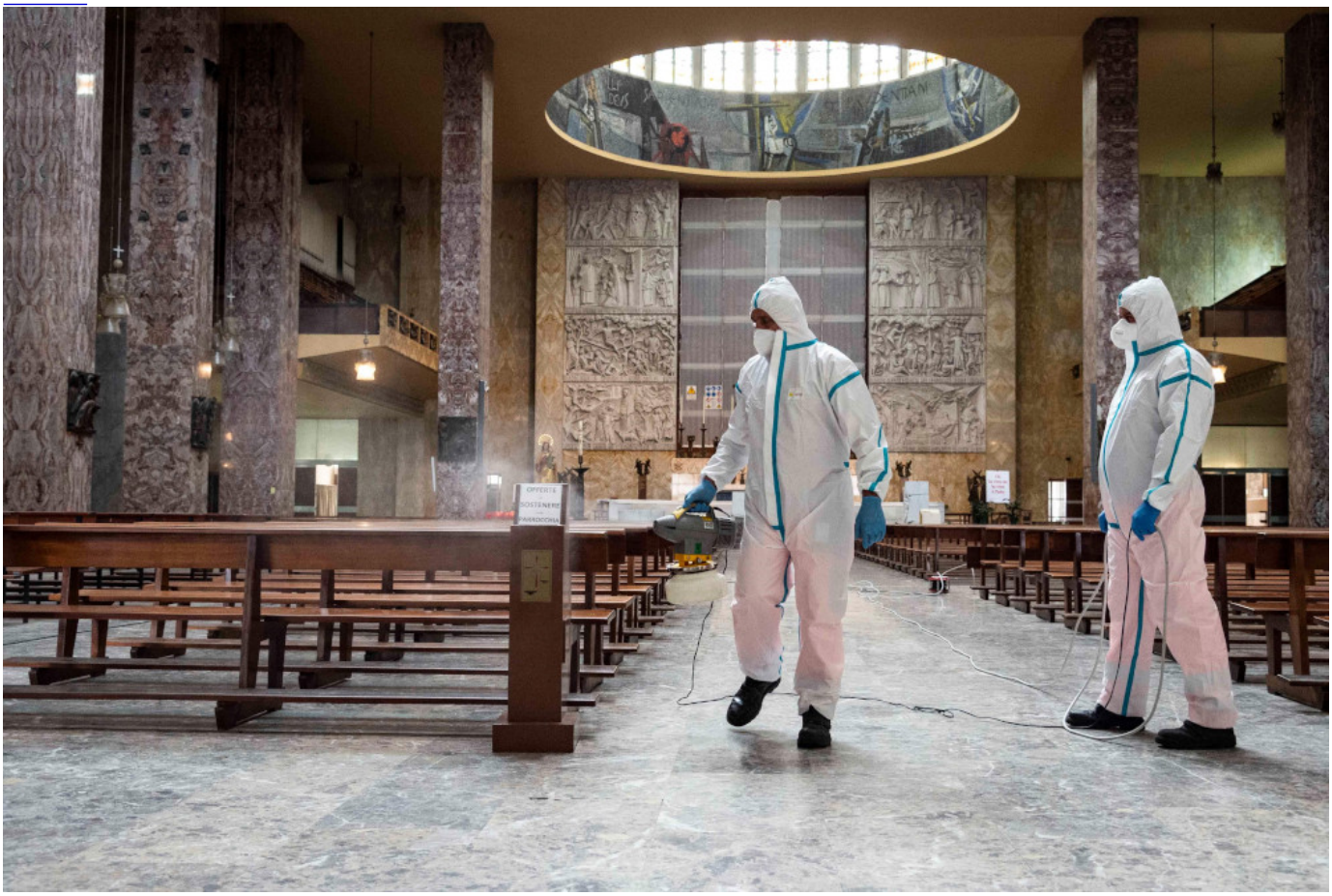
News



Workers disinfect the Church of San Giovanni Bosco in Rome May 14, 2020, in preparation for the resumption of public liturgies in Rome on May 18. The sanitation was carried out by the Italian army and the city sanitation department. (CNS/Christian Gennari, courtesy Diocese of Rome)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Rome — May 14, 2020

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Following a request from the Vicariate of Rome, the city of Rome has called on the Italian army and the city sanitation department to sanitize all of Rome's parish churches in preparation for the resumption of public liturgies May 18.

The army has 80 teams of hazardous-material specialists active throughout Italy in decontaminating and sanitizing needed areas, reported SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference. Nine of those teams will be dedicated to decontaminating all 337 of Rome's parish churches.

The army is disinfecting the outside area of each church and place of worship, while the parish priest will have to request and indicate which areas inside the church they have permission to decontaminate, Brigadier General Giovanni Di Blasi told La Repubblica May 13.

"It is a wonderful example of institutional cooperation for the sake of getting the city back up and running and for the sake of all citizens," said Rome's mayor, Virginia Raggi, who attended the cleaning of the first church, St. John Bosco, in the southeast of the city.

The citywide cleaning came after the Italian bishops and government agreed May 7 on a protocol to allow the public to be present for liturgical celebrations starting May 18.

The protocol specifies the guidelines each church and the faithful will have to follow to help safeguard public health. The restrictions will include wearing facial masks inside the church, social distancing and asking people to not go to church if they are showing flu-like symptoms or know they have been in contact with someone who has recently tested positive for the coronavirus.

"All of us — priests, especially — will do everything to guarantee respect for the rules, to guarantee social distancing, safety measures, so that when celebrations begin, they can be done in an orderly fashion," Auxiliary Bishop Gianpiero Palmieri of

Rome told La Repubblica.

Advertisement