

Activities to do in the time of COVID-19

By

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When I was writing my doctoral dissertation, I divided my day (when I was awake) into thirds: 1/3 personal activities, 1/3 social activities, 1/3 research and writing. The personal activities included prayer, Mass, laundry, reading, practicing my flute etc. The social activities were meals with others, exercise, visiting museums or attending concerts, and getting out of the house. Every day I set aside a certain amount of time to research and write. You may want to consider a similar pattern: time for self-care and personal activities; time for family and friends; and time for work, school, or chores. While you cannot socialize in person, you may want to consider using the telephone and calling people. The internet and social media is good for keeping in touch, but sometimes a conversation (whether short or extended) can do wonders for the soul. You may even want to video-conference or use a video-chat service.

The key is keeping busy and maintaining some kind of routine as we navigate life during a time of confinement.

Here are some activities, both spiritual and temporal, which you can do while on “lockdown.” There is no rhyme or reason to them, just some random thoughts culled from various sources (and my own imagination).

40 bags in 40 days This has been around for a few years. Each day of Lent fill a bag with items to donate or throw away. At the end of Lent you will have purged your home of unused items. Since we're toward the end of Lent, you might want to do a shorter version: 20 bags in 20 days (from now until Easter Monday) or do 70 bags in 70 days (from now until Pentecost).

Create a calendar Write down some of your projects you'd like to accomplish and then create a calendar writing the project down on a particular day of the week or month. Then do that project on that day.

Organize a room a day It might take a day to organize the pantry, while only 15 minutes to get the powder room in shape. But try to do one room a day.

Pray the rosary or the chaplet of Divine Mercy while exercising You could also use other prayers as well. But it is best to use those which you have memorized because it's kind of difficult to read while biking or on the treadmill.

Compile a stack of books (or list them on your digital reader) that you've always wanted to read, then read them. Maybe these are classics or perhaps you've heard about them from someone, but get reading.

Learn a new skill It could be a musical instrument, knitting, whittling wood, collage, stamp collecting, and the list is infinite. If something interests you, start doing it.

Write letters to loved ones or to members of the military Everyone likes to receive mail, except for bills. Write to old classmates, to family and friends, members of the military stationed overseas would enjoy getting a letter or card. Send cards to people who reside in nursing care facilities or senior centers. You may even want to send a bunch of cards to the activities director so he/she could deliver them to the residents.

Go thru any collections you have and get rid of those things that are no longer meaningful For example, if you have a record or CD collection, cull the albums you no longer listen to, upload them to digital media and then donate or sell the albums.

Give your estate away now Don't wait to give your treasured coin collection or Hummel figurines away as part of your legacy, if you know someone likes them (or you were planning on gifting them with it after your death), give it to them now, while they can thank you personally.

Find uplifting memes and stories on social media and share those Too often we share things that are controversial or derogatory to someone. Share positive, uplifting, and inspirational stories and topics.

Tackle those household projects and chores as a family Involve your kids in cleaning up the backyard or the basement. Do this as a family and for a limited time: "We're going to take 2 hours and get the backyard ready for spring planting." Set a limit of time. Don't say, "We're here until this gets done." Two hours per day is sufficient. That way it's not too taxing. Also, have fun doing it. It doesn't need to be perfect. As Brother Randal used to tell us, "My boys, a good dissertation is a done dissertation." Keep on plugging away a little at a

time until it is accomplished. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Pray together as a family Again, set a specific time and limit: Every night from 7 to 7:30 for example. Be specific as to what kind of prayer and how long.

Read Bible stories or prayers or books to one another This is especially good if you have younger children. Or have them read the book to you. It helps them to learn and speak publicly. If you don't have children, read to your pets. You could also do this with your prayers. Pray them outloud.

Do some meditative reading of scripture or spiritual authors

Always wanted to read Revelation? Read a chapter a night. Curious about Julian of Norwich or Therese of Lisieux? Get a book and read a few pages or a section each day. Or download some of their writings from the internet. Ask God to open your heart and mind so that what you're reading will be of benefit for your own growth and development as a Christian.

These are some of my thoughts. If you have others, please share them with me at FrJohn@StThereseParish.ws and I will add them so others may benefit.