



## Still Unable to Go to Confession? Pope Francis Says: Talk to God Your Father & Ask Forgiveness

(The Full Text of the Pope's Morning Homily follows this helpful [Zenit article](#).)

Given the current pandemic concerns, the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation may still not be a wise choice for anyone who is considered “High-Risk,” or who may be currently experiencing viral symptoms. This can make many of us feel anxious, but *please know* that God is prepared to shower us with Mercy, even when we can't receive His forgiveness in the usual way!

To help us with this difficulty, the Church has offered us two remedies:

1) First, it is always helpful to consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), for dependable and faithful guidance. In times like these, the following is taught by the Church:

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that **perfect contrition**, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by “*votum confessionis*,” that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to Sacramental Confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).”

• **Perfect Contrition** requires:

- the love of God
- the sincere desire for forgiveness
- the ardent commitment to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as soon as possible, once it is available

2) Second, with a heart that loves her children, the Church turns to the Lord and implores His grace, in a special way:

“The gift of special indulgences is granted to the faithful who are suffering from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as Coronavirus, as well as to the health care workers, family members, and all those who in any capacity, including

through prayer, care for them,” (see this [Vatican website link](#) for more information).

- This *is* a time of suffering, especially for those who have contracted COVID-19. As such, it may be a time for us to “rediscover ‘the same redemptive suffering of Christ’ (from an encyclical of St. John Paul II about suffering: [Salvifici Doloris](#), 30).”
- Trusting in Christ, a *plenary indulgence* is “granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority, in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross (or other forms of devotion), or if *at least* they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the intention to fulfil the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, reception of the Holy Eucharist and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.”
- “Health care workers, family members and all those, following the example of the Good Samaritan, who expose themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the Divine Redeemer: ‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (Jn 15:13), will obtain the same gift of the *plenary indulgence* under the same conditions (the intention to fulfill the usual conditions: Sacramental Confession, reception of the Holy Eucharist and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions).”

⊙ An indulgence is “the expression of the Church's full confidence of being heard by the Father when - *in view of Christ's merits* and, by His gift, those of Our Lady and the saints - she (the Church) asks Him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment, by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace.” (- [St. John Paul II, General Audience, September 29, 1999](#), 4).

⊙ A plenary indulgence removes all the temporal punishment due to sin. (CCC, 1471).

⊙ A quick overview of indulgences can be found at [this link on Catholic Answers](#).