

# WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I CAN'T GO TO MASS?

## Coronavirus Dispensation and Prayers



Archdiocese of Washington



### Catholics are encouraged to make a 'spiritual communion'.

St. John Paul II writes that "it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of 'spiritual communion', which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. Saint Teresa of Jesus wrote: 'When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.'" (*Ecclesia Eucharistia*, no. 34)

Catholics in the archdiocese are also encouraged to watch our local TV Sunday Mass. The Mass airs every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. on WDCW-50 and through free online streaming at [adw.org/tvmass](http://adw.org/tvmass).

### What is a Dispensation from Mass?

A dispensation from the diocesan Bishop releases Catholics from fulfilling their Sunday obligation (Mass). Since public Masses are cancelled in the Archdiocese of Washington until further notice, this means that if you live in the Archdiocese of Washington, the right thing to do is to stay home for your safety and the safety of others.

Though there is a sadness for not being able to participate at Mass, one should not feel guilty for not going to Mass. You have a free conscience to stay home. Catholics are encouraged to offer up their sickness or pastoral care for the sake of those who are seriously ill and for those who have died.

### How Do I Make a Spiritual Communion?

*Below are recommendations for how to make a 'spiritual communion' when unable to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The recommendations can be adapted based upon personal and family needs.*

- Gather with others in your household and begin a time of prayer with the sign of the cross.
- Take time to read and reflect upon the readings from Sunday Mass. The readings are available at [usccb.org/bible/readings](http://usccb.org/bible/readings) and a Sunday Gospel reflection on [youtube.com/washarchdiocese](http://youtube.com/washarchdiocese).
- Share prayer intentions quietly or aloud.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer.
- Pray one of the following prayers of spiritual communion (see below).
- Close with the sign of the cross.

#### Prayer to the Most Holy Redeemer (Anima Christi)

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, embolden me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within thy wounds hide me.  
Never permit me to be parted from you.  
From the evil Enemy defend me.  
In the hour of my death call me.  
and bid me come to thee,  
that with your saints I may praise thee  
for age upon age.

Amen.

#### Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified

Behold, O good and loving Jesus, that I cast myself on my knees before you and, with the greatest fervor of spirit, I pray and beseech you to instill into my heart ardent sentiments of faith, hope and charity, with true repentance for my sins and a most firm purpose of amendment. With deep affection and sorrow I ponder intimately and contemplate in my mind your five wounds, having before my eyes what the prophet David had already put in your mouth about yourself, O good Jesus: They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones (Ps. 21: 17-18).

#### An Act of Spiritual Communion by St. Alphonsus Liguori

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Please visit [adw.org/coronavirus](http://adw.org/coronavirus) for the latest updates



Archdiocese of Washington