

Common Questions Among Catholics in Response to COVID-19

What should I do if I am hospitalized with COVID-19, and I would like to be Anointed, go to Confession, or receive Last Rites?

On March 20, 2020, Pope Francis declared that a plenary indulgence, which is a full pardon of sins, be granted to any patient with COVID-19, who cannot access the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, or Anointing of the Sick. To receive this indulgence, the patient should offer a spiritual prayer, which can include any of the following:

- Watching Mass through electronic media
- Reciting the Rosary
- Praying the Stations of the Cross
- Reciting the Nicene Creed, Our Father, and Hail Mary

If the patient recovers from their illness, they should seek to go to Confession and receive Holy Communion as soon as possible.



What do I do if I want to receive Holy Communion?



In the reception of Holy Communion, we desire to unite ourselves to Jesus. We do that in a special way as we receive Jesus' Body and Blood in the Eucharist. There are other ways that we can unite ourselves to Jesus, including prayer. One suggested prayer is a Prayer of Spiritual Communion. Although this prayer can be said at any time, it has a special meaning when it is prayed as a person watches Mass through electronic media, at the moment when the priest receives Holy Communion. Here is one Prayer of Spiritual Communion:

"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."

If I am in danger of death because of the COVID-19 illness, can somebody pray with me?

Jesus says, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Ask your family, friends, and hospital staff to pray for you, and Jesus promises that he will be present and hear those prayers.

The hospital staff may be given a copy of the prayers for the Commendation of the Dying. These are prayers approved by the Catholic Church to be used by hospital staff when a patient is nearing death.

