

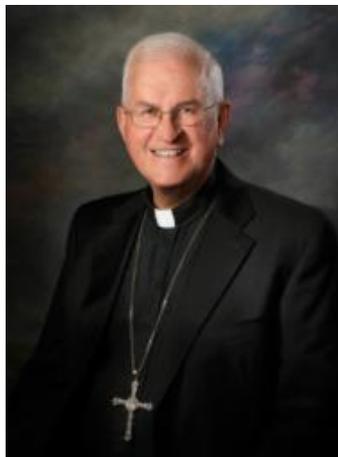


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Update: Archbishop advises prayer routine, Scripture reading if confined at home

By Marnie McAllister [Catholic News Service](#)

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CNS photo/Archdiocese of Louisville

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., is pictured in an Aug. 8, 2018, photo. Archbishop Kurtz says he is praying with the faithful amid the coronavirus pandemic and offers suggestions to those confined to their homes. (CNS photo/Archdiocese of Louisville) See KURTZ-PRAYERS-SUPPORT-PANDEMIC March 17, 2020.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (CNS) -- Times of uncertainty are times to stay especially close to Christ and one another -- though not necessarily in close physical proximity -- said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville.

The archbishop has suspended all public Masses in the Archdiocese of Louisville to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and urged Catholics to find other ways to be in communion with Christ.

"I'd like to thank those who wisely have confined themselves to home," he said during an interview March 13 with The Record, the archdiocesan newspaper. "I join my prayer to yours in solidarity and in support."

He also offered some suggestions for those confined to their homes -- and who may be tempted to binge-watch the news.

First, he said, set aside time for prayer.

"We are at our best when we pray for one another. Include in your prayer -- by specific name -- others you know who may be in greater difficulty," he suggested.

"When we have a lot of time on our hands, it's easy not to know what to do with it. I urge people to take time each day to pray a devotion."

Secondly, the archbishop recommended people establish a balanced routine.

"I think we need to have just the right amount of contact with news media. Just enough to know what's happening and what needs to be done, but not so much that all 24 hours are consumed with reports," he said.

"This is a very important part of establishing some routine."

He suggested deciding on a particular time of day for certain prayers and reading sacred Scripture, as well as setting aside time for household chores, reading a book and doing creative activities.

"Often on retreat, I have the opportunity to do what I call journaling," he said, noting he puts pen to paper and "speaks from my heart."

These writings can be sparked by a Scripture reading, a visit he's had or even something he saw on television, he said.

"It allows the creative aspect of our spiritual life to have room and take root," he said.

A similar schedule of activities, he added, is important for children, too, while school is suspended for the next few weeks.

Since "we don't have the structure of schools, we have to be creative to come up with some life-giving routines that include reading and proper prayer."

Archbishop Kurtz and church workers helped compile a list of a variety of ways adults, children and families can use the next few weeks to grow spiritually and keep a healthy routine.

The list includes watching a local broadcast of the Mass and praying the rosary with Archbishop Kurtz, whose prayer is aired on WLCR 1040 AM Holy Family Radio at 8 a.m. weekdays and 5 p.m. on weekends.

Also, the archdiocesan Office of Multicultural Ministry has suggested Catholics pray the rosary as a family each day at 7 p.m. or 9 p.m. -- a sort of prayer network for protection against the coronavirus.

Other suggestions range from traditional devotions to setting aside time for a conversation with God to using technology, such as a smartphone app, that helps you pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

Here's a list of are other suggestions:

-- Organize via phone a novena to St. Bernardine of Siena, patron saint of those with respiratory illnesses.

-- Set aside simple quiet time for conversation with God, offering intentions and thanksgiving.

-- Pray the "Memorare" for Mary's intercession.

-- Listen to or sing your favorite worship songs from Mass.

-- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet and other devotions.

-- Pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

-- Read "The Little Black Book" of reflections for Lent.

-- Pray the Stations of the Cross (at home with a crucifix).

-- Read "The Lives of the Saints" or other spiritual literature.

-- Pray the Angelus at 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m.

-- Read Scripture for difficult times, such as Sirach 2:1-18.

-- Find daily prayer and readings from giveusthisday.org.

-- Join a prayer network.

-- For children: "Teaching Catholic Kids" from Our Sunday Visitor, teachingcatholickids.com; arts, crafts and activities for home & school inspired by our faith -- www.catholicinspired.com.

McAllister is editor of The Record, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Louisville.