

Thoughts in the Time of COVID-19—#8, April 2, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments reported that it had received many requests from around the world for prayers to address the spiritual needs of Catholics affected or troubled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, a special new Votive Mass has been prepared to address this need "In Time of Pandemic."

A votive Mass is a Mass that differs from the one prescribed for the day and is celebrated for a special intention. The liturgy congregation proposes that priests celebrate this Votive Mass "specifically to implore God to end this pandemic."

With the local bishop's permission—which I grant to the priests in the Archdiocese of Ottawa and the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall—we may celebrate this new Votive Mass for good reason on any day except in Holy Week, Easter Week, the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter and on Solemnities, Ash Wednesday and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.

The Opening Prayer (Collect) of the new Votive Mass reads beautifully for our present circumstances:

*Almighty and eternal God, our refuge in every danger,
to whom we turn in our distress;
in faith we pray:
look with compassion on the afflicted,
grant eternal rest to the dead,
comfort to mourners,
healing to the sick,
peace to the dying,
strength to healthcare workers,
wisdom to our leaders
and the courage to reach out to all in love,
so that together we may give glory to your holy name.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.*

The Congregation has been busy in recent weeks, making recommendations for how we may celebrate the Sacred Triduum in light of the Corona Virus situation where almost all churches around the world will be closed and the faithful will participate spiritually by social media of various kinds and without the possibility of receiving Holy Communion.

At the request of Pope Francis, a special intention has also been added to the extended Good Friday universal prayers “for the afflicted in this time of pandemic.” I will speak of this in one of my reflections next week.

God bless you.

✠Terrence