

Emergency Norms for “Last Rites” - Anointing of the Sick & Confession during the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

Anointing of the Sick, Extreme Unction, “The Last Rites”, Viaticum

Key message: Where physical anointing or the presence of a Priest is not possible, all the faithful are granted forgiveness of their sins upon death provided they wish it and have recited at least a few prayers in their lifetime.

Full text: “The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the Viaticum, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a Plenary Indulgence on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended”.

Confession/the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance

Key message: When forgiveness can not be granted directly in the usual way, being truly sorry and desiring God’s forgiveness (with a desire to get to confession if this later becomes possible) is sufficient for God’s forgiveness of sins, even mortal sins.

Full text: “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)”.

Please familiarise yourself with these norms, to put your own minds at ease, and also explain them to any loved ones, especially those who may be in vulnerable groups. These discussions are never easy, but doing so now can mean a great deal of peace of mind should the worst happen, and at that time such discussions may not be possible.

These norms have been authorised by Pope Francis himself, the full text is available at (simply click/tap on the address below):

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/index.htm

On the 2nd page of this document are the norms for all of us, and those who do not fall critically ill at this time, but upon whom the Church wishes to confer God’s loving mercy, cleansing of conscience and healing at this time.

New Indulgences for us all (for the forgiveness of Sins)

“The 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 will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.

Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing 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.

This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.”