

Clergymen recommend perfect contrition and spiritual communion in times of coronavirus

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Thu Mar 19, 2020 - 3:23 pm EST

March 19, 2020 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) – Two clergymen – a priest and a deacon – both tell LifeSiteNews how important it is now for Catholics who cannot easily receive the Sacraments from their priests to practice perfect contrition and spiritual communion as a means to stay in the state of grace and to receive special sacramental graces. Father Paolo D'Angona of Diocese of Roermond (Netherlands) wrote a spiritual guide which he gave to LifeSite for publication. Deacon Nick Donnelly (Great Britain) has already [published articles](#) on this matter and explains his thoughts to us, as well.

Both clergymen stress that it is important to stay in the state of grace and that there are means to do so in cases of lack of access to the Sacraments. Herewith, we present both of their statements.

Father Paolo D'Angona:

Coronavirus: A spiritual guide for patients in hospitals and quarantine

The critical situation that has arisen because of the coronavirus is becoming increasingly acute. In some places people are under quarantine or similar restrictions. In Austria, for example, there is already a general, very extensive ban on leaving the country. However, according to experts, all this is only the initial stage of a general development which will have extremely serious consequences – also for the possibility of receiving the Holy Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance, Holy Confession.

In this situation it is more than useful to point to [perfect] contrition, also called fidelity of love. Through perfect contrition out of love for God, man can at any time reach the state of sanctifying grace. Since a person who does not die in the state of grace cannot go to heaven, perfect contrition is of the utmost importance. For all those who are not in the state of grace and do not have the possibility of acquiring the state of grace sacramentally, namely, according to the Church's teaching, perfect contrition is the only means of salvation. God alone knows how many people could be saved and have been saved only through perfect contrition.

The following text by Fr. Alfons Maria Weigl gives a brief and concise explanation of perfect contrition:

If you fall into sin – then perfect contrition

What should I do if I have sinned badly, if I even have to die and can no longer confess?

Above all, do not despair, but trust and repent! No one has sunk so low that he could not be saved by the Grace of God and the Blood of Jesus. Trust in the infinite Divine Mercy that bled for you on the Cross. Remember that the wounds of the Crucified Savior are the most poignant expression of an infinite love and goodness, and then repent of all your sins out of love for God by praying with holy earnestness:

“My Lord and my God! I repent of all my sins because I have offended You, the Eternal, Infinite Love and Goodness. I am determined to live and die according to Your Holy Will. I love You, O God, with my whole heart, and this is my greatest pain, that I grieve You, Who are all good; O wash me clean in Your blood.” Or in short: My Jesus, mercy.

At the moment of greatest danger, the thought “Jesus” may suffice.

Penetrated by this attitude, you can be reconciled with God at any moment and become a child of God again. For love destroys sin and brings back grace. This loyalty of love includes the decision to confess at least the grave sins at the next confession. But if one could no longer confess, one would still be saved.

From: Most Rev. Fr. Alfons Maria Weigl, *Gebetschatz* (published with permission from the Church)

Deacon Nick Donnelly:

The reason why I take the COVID-19 coronavirus so seriously is because it is highly infectious and we have no immunity to it, meaning our immune systems do not recognize it as a threat and therefore don't protect our bodies from being hijacked by the virus. There is no comparison between COVID-19 and seasonal flu because we all have some immunity to the flu virus which is why most of us don't get sick every year from flu. The last time a highly infectious, new virus emerged was between 1918 and 1919, and in just two years Spanish Flu killed 50 million people worldwide.

The rigorous enforcement of social isolation, quarantine in hospital and closure of churches in countries overwhelmed by COVID-19 means that Catholics are being denied access to the sacraments and the pastoral care of priests. As a deacon I'm very aware that in these circumstance the faithful will be understandably anxious about not being able to go to confession, receive Holy Communion or receive the Last Rites if they become critically ill. This is why I've been promoting two traditional devotions — the act of perfect contrition and spiritual communion through which we can receive absolution for our sins (under certain conditions), and the consolation of Eucharistic grace. In the absence of priests, God in his providence has given us these devotions as a means to receive his saving grace. Both devotions are officially encouraged by the Church and have been practiced by saints.

In the act of perfect contrition, which is intrinsically related to the sacrament of Confession and in spiritual communion, which is ardently focused on the sacrament of

the Eucharist we receive his saving grace. It is important that you develop now the habit of making acts of perfect contrition, throughout the day, and especially after an examination of conscience last thing at night. Then if you become critically ill or in danger of death without the assistance of a priest, you can readily make an act of perfect contrition sure in the knowledge that you have been forgiven your sins and that if you die you will do so in a state of grace. If you don't die then you can make a sacramental confession as soon as circumstances allow.

Finally, follow the examples of St. Maximilian Kolbe O.F.M., and St Pio of Pietrelcina — Padre Pio — who both made ardent acts of spiritual communion throughout the occupations of the day and in the words of Padre Pio, “Fly with your spirit before the tabernacle, when you can't stand before it bodily, and there pour out the ardent longings of your soul and embrace the Beloved of souls, even more than if you had been permitted to receive Him sacramentally.”

As a final note by LifeSite: as Deacon Donnelly has written at [Church Militant](#), this is how one best practices an act of spiritual communion:

The key to spiritual Communion is to grow in your heart a constant desire for the Blessed Sacrament.

1. If you are aware of serious or mortal sin, make an act of perfect contrition.
2. Imagine the sacred words and actions of the Mass or watch online or on TV.
3. Make all those acts of faith, humility, sorrow, adoration, love and desire that you usually express before Holy Communion.
4. Desire, with earnest longing, to receive Our Lord present — Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity — in the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Say this prayer of St. Alphonsus Ligouri: “My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You are already there, I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You; do not let me ever be separated from You. Amen.”
6. After moments of silent adoration make all those acts of faith, humility, love, thanksgiving and offering that you usually express through prayers after Holy Communion.