



DIOCESE OF
BIRMINGHAM
IN ALABAMA

Seeking the Lord at Home

A Resource Guide for keeping engaged in the Catholic Faith while in Quarantine

The last few weeks have been like few living souls on Earth have ever witnessed, and it doesn't seem like the next few will be normal, either. Not since the influenza of 1918, have we seen forced quarantines to this extent. It is a time of unrest, concern, worry, and strife. Since Bishop Baker's Statement regarding suspension of public Masses was issued, in keeping with the increasing requests of public authorities and health officials regarding the size of gatherings, most of our parish functions are being postponed or cancelled. For Catholics, this puts us in a situation we do not find comfortable. We have been drilled since childhood on the importance of actually going to the Church building to fulfill our duty, something which makes us unique among our separated Christian brothers and sisters. So, what are we to do when we aren't allowed to go?

The first thing to realize is that the Church has wisdom for this, going back centuries. During the days of the Iron Curtain, the Sisters of St Basil managed to amass hundreds of religious vocations without a single gathering of more than two or three at a time. When the Jesuits returned to Japan after 250 years of Imperial persecution, they found Catholic communities which had survived all that time without getting to Church buildings. In 16th century Milan, St Charles Borromeo instructed the faithful to stay home during an outbreak of the plague, and had the Holy Mass offered in the streets, within earshot of their windows. In other words, our ancestors in faith knew how to survive a lockdown or quarantine; and we can, too. Taking the sainted Archbishop's cue, the marvels of modern technology give us the ability to "hear the Mass" as they used to say, to pray, to study, and even to gather together digitally. Following are a number of suggestions on ways to not only survive quarantine, but perhaps even use this time of Lent to enter the desert with Jesus and come out stronger!

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

- CatholicTV.com
- [Word on Fire](#) (Bishop Barron), and
- EWTN.com

All stream daily and Sunday liturgies. They all work on computers, cell phones, tablets and iPad's, and even "smart" TV devices such as ROKU. During the time of reception of the Eucharist, these networks display a prayer for spiritual communion. Many parishes have also begun the practice of live-streaming Mass via sites like Facebook.

Prayers

The [Act of Spiritual Communion](#) prayer is widely available, as are many other helpful and useful prayers. A couple of great resources for these are:

- [Pray More Novena's](#) has a Novena going with excellent prayer resources.
- USCCB.org [Prayers and Devotions](#)
- Ourcatholicprayers.com and
- Catholic.org/prayers

BHMDiocese.org links to daily Lenten Reflections from Bishop Barron.



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Stations of the Cross:

As we are in Lent when praying the Stations of the Cross is customary, praying those at home is also an excellent idea. The text can be found in many prayer books, as well as online:

- [St Francis Version](#)
- [St Alphonsus Liguori Version](#)

There are several good video versions with images and sound to follow along, too.

- Bishop Robert Barron has a wonderful [version on his YouTube channel](#),
- As does [Bishop Robert Reed on CatholicTV](#).
- [Catholic Online has one](#) that includes footage from the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.
- [BustedHalo.com has an online version](#) which is a little less traditional and will likely appeal to teens and young adults.

Lectio Divina

Another practice the Church asks us to do when we are unable to attend Mass is Lectio Divina, the prayerful meditative reading of the Holy Scriptures.

- [BHMDiocese.org](#) has the daily readings
- [USCCB.ORG/bible](#) provide easy access to the daily readings. The USCCB site has a handy calendar on the front page where you can click on each day.
- “[Hallow](#)” is an app which includes instructions and recordings of the readings for guided Lectio Divina.
- [Formed.org](#) subscriptions include “Opening the Word” which is a study of the Sunday Gospel, and a dedicated series called “Lectio.”

If you would like instruction on how to pray Lectio Divina, Ascension Press has an excellent four part series by Fr Mark Toups on their “Ascension Presents” YouTube channel.

- [Part 1](#)
- [Part 2](#)
- [Part 3](#)
- [Part 4](#)

This is an excellent practice in or out of quarantine, and can be done alone, as a family, or in small groups.

Intercession and Staying Connected in Prayer

Speaking of small groups, and prayer, there are a couple of parishioners of Our Lady of Sorrows who have created a free smartphone app called Catholicify.

[The Catholicify app](#) provides a social prayer network. Including a “digital” guided rosary, links to readings and scripture, a host of Catholic material and prayers, as well as a feature that allows you to create a small prayer group connecting other users you invite. Within this group you can pray for one another, as well as have a text discussion. We have already been using this among many of our parish Catechetical leaders. There is a current Novena available for the COVID19 victims and safety which you can join.



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This time provides us an excellent opportunity to strengthen personal bonds of relationship in our parishes. Supporting one another, checking in on one another, and praying for and with one another, will help us sustain our community life.

Liturgy of the Hours

Another ancient practice of the Church for both public and private prayer is the Liturgy of the Hours, also called the Divine Office. Priests and religious pray this throughout the day, every day, but laity are also encouraged to do so. This collection of prayers includes praying the psalms many times through the day. And there are perhaps no better prayers to pray in times of trouble or worry than the Psalms!

- [Explanation of the Liturgy of the Hours](#)
- [How-to Video for Lay people](#)
- “[iBreviary](#)” which is easy to follow and can be used on a computer or installed as an app on your phone or tablet.
- [Magnificat is offering complimentary access to their online version during this time](#). The Magnificat contains a modified version of the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as many other useful prayers and readings, in the [Magnificat magazine](#) or the phone/tablet app by the same publisher.

Sunday School at Home, Family Catechesis

[Formed.org](#): Augustine Institute will be sending info for parish leaders on ways you can use your Formed.org account for family catechesis and study of the faith at home. It is also a good idea to check out the myriad of movies available on Formed.org. Many of us will be watching movies while the kids and grandkids are off from school, so why not make them spiritually edifying?

If you need help signing up for your parish’s formed.org account, please contact the Office of Discipleship and Mission at akubik@bhmdiocese.org.

Sophia Institute Press has some [free materials available](#) for parents to teach religious education to their Children. [Sacred Story](#) is another program for youth and children which will allow parents to continue religious education classes at home, and some of the content is included in Formed.org as well.

For the teens in your life, check out the daily Lenten reflections book by Katie McGrady, [Lent: One Day at a Time for Catholic Teens](#). There is a digital version so you don’t have to wait for the mail!

[ProjectYM](#) will host a weekly live video for Catholic Youth you can share with your teens as well.

Please continue to check the link at the Diocesan website, as this list will continue to grow as more resources become available. We all have heard a lot about keeping physically healthy during this time. But our Spiritual Health is important, too. Check in with your fellow parishioners, and let this be a time of peace, trust in God, and prayer.