

1) Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance:

At this time, Bishop Johnston has directed that **INDIVIDUAL Confessions** heard in **confessional boxes/confined rooms are suspended** effective immediately due to the requirements of combating the coronavirus following the direction of both the Apostolic Penitentiary (See: Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the current pandemic) and USCCB (See: The Care of Souls and the Forgiveness of Sins During This Pandemic). **Individual confessions may be celebrated** in a well-ventilated area which can provide for social distancing and the confidentiality of the confession. The sacrament of Reconciliation is to be celebrated **inside** the church or spaces of church which have been prepared for the worthy celebration of the sacrament.

Also note the USCCB Secretariat of Doctrine and Canonical Affairs in “The Care of Souls and the Forgiveness of Sins During This Pandemic” guidance to the Faithful who are anxious that they do **not have an opportunity for reception of the Sacrament** at this time following:

“However, given public restrictions, the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation with either individual or general absolution may not be possible. To help in this, the Holy See, through the Apostolic Penitentiary, has recourses for the faithful:

- a) “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).”

- **perfect contrition requires**

- the love of God
- the sincere desire for forgiveness
- the ardent commitment to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when available

- b) “The gift of **special Indulgences** is granted to the **faithful suffering** from COVID-19 disease, commonly known as Coronavirus, as well as to health care workers, family members and all **those who in any capacity, including through prayer, care for them.**”

- This is a **time of suffering**, especially for those who have contracted COVID-19. As such, it may be a time for us to “rediscover ‘the same redemptive suffering of Christ’ (*Salvifici doloris*, 30).”

- Trusting in Christ, a *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.”

- o An indulgence is “the expression of the Church's full confidence of being heard by the Father when - in view of Christ's merits and, by his gift, those of Our Lady and the saints - she asks him to mitigate or cancel the painful aspect of punishment by fostering its medicinal aspect through other channels of grace” (John Paul II, General Audience, September 29, 1999).

A plenary indulgence removes all the temporal punishment due to sin (CCC, 1471).