



Be Safe and Get Creative!

In both Italy and Spain people are staying home to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The way their towns are built and the way their societies are structured gives them a means of staying connected even when they must physically be apart, and they are taking advantage of it. People in Italy are visiting and singing together with their neighbors across and down the street from their windows and balconies! In Spain, people can do the same. In one Spanish city they even used social media to arrange a time for everyone to stand at windows and on balconies to show their appreciation for their health workers with applause and cheers. The streets were full of the sound of it! In Japan, some currently closed restaurants have made arrangements with grocery stores. The restaurant workers are now working in the stores helping fill grocery orders and get the food to people who are wisely staying home. It is a win win for everyone. Restaurant workers keep getting paid, stores get desperately needed help, and people get their groceries! Some breweries, where production of spirits has been suspended, are using their ability to produce alcohol to make hand sanitizer instead. One brewery in Pennsylvania is providing its hand sanitizer to hospitals and people in need in their community free of charge. In China, and elsewhere, the need to close factories has also had unintended but welcome consequences. Some Chinese cities have the cleanest air they have had in years! In some places in the world, waterways are markedly cleaner because the sources of pollution are shut down!

This time is a time not for fear and panic, but for prudence and creativity. The experts are now saying COVID-19 is not a 'piece of cake' for anyone. The earlier impression that it is mainly the elderly and those who are already sick who are at risk is proving to be untrue. The realization that more younger people are getting very very sick from COVID-19 than first thought is sinking in. Everyone must take the situation seriously and take care not to put others or themselves at risk. Exposure that does not result in your own illness can still spread the virus to others. Working together is critical! Doing it safely and creatively is just as critical! So is taking the time to stay in touch, if not from balcony to balcony then by phone, or mail, or internet, or. . . *Fine other ways!* Fear and isolation can also be deadly, but we have a treatment for that! God's love shared! Do not forget, the love of God can spread far and wide too, and it is something we want to and are called to share!

This week, in your prayer time remember:

- **Those facing the coronavirus** – That is, all of us. Support those who are sick and those caring for them. Those working to stop the virus, and those responsible for public policy about it. Help all of us do our part to work together for the good of everyone in this time of pandemic.
- **Those dealing with the aftermath of storms & bad weather.**
- **Continue to remember Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, South Sudan, & other places** where people are already living with violence and suffering, who now must face COVID-19 as well.
- **Those for whom having enough to eat and a safe place to live** may be a bigger and more immediate crisis than the pandemic.
- **Those separated from their families** by illness or visitation and travel restrictions.



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