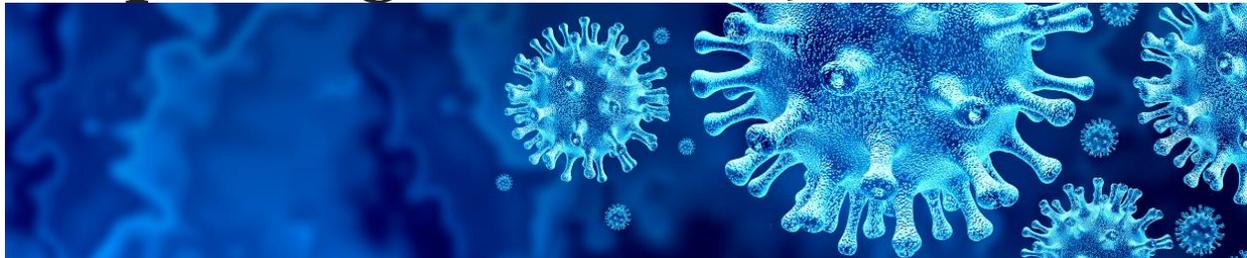


Responding to COVID-19



CMSM has compiled a number of resources that may be helpful as we continue to adapt to the ongoing pandemic. On March 20, 2020, a friar, [Br. John-Sebastian Laird-Hammond, OFM](#), became the first person in Washington, DC, to die from COVID-19. He had underlying health conditions, but this is a sober reminder of the risk we are facing at this time.

***Urbi et Orbi* Blessing and Plenary Indulgence:** Pope Francis will participate in a [prayer service](#) in front of St. Peter's Basilica this Friday, March 27, 6 p.m. Rome time (1 p.m. eastern and 10 a.m. Pacific) before offering a special *Urbi et Orb* blessing, with the possibility of obtaining a plenary indulgence:

- Watch the prayer service: [Vatican YouTube channel](#) (English; other languages are available).
- [Decree for the plenary indulgence](#)
- Text of the [prayer](#) to Our Lady, Health of the Sick

Vatican Decree on Holy Week and Easter: Cardinal Robert Sarah released guidelines for the celebration of liturgy during this week. [See the document text](#) and [Catholic News Service article](#). Of note: "Decisions regarding monasteries, seminaries and religious communities shall be made by the Diocesan Bishop." In addition, the decree indicates there is to be no washing of the feet on Holy Thursday.

As provinces, monasteries, and local houses celebrate Holy Week and Easter, we recommending following the guidance put in place by the local diocesan bishop regarding worship restrictions and the civil authorities regarding public gatherings. Please also keep these in mind:

- Public liturgies generally are not possible, even during Holy Week and Easter. This means outside individuals generally should not attend, even if there is a physical separation between them and your community members.
- In light of the CDC and other guidance to practice "social distancing" and minimize contact that could lead to the spread of COVID-19, and given the number of high risk individuals in many communities (age or health concerns), provincials may wish to

recommend your men observe celebrations within the houses where they live rather than gather from across the province at the provincial house or other location.

- Consider being creative about engaging with your own communities and with the faithful during this time. This may include using Zoom or other software to host a “virtual” gathering with your local communities on Good Friday or Easter; live-streaming Masses, stations of the cross, or other reflections; posting taped reflections online; offering [outdoor “drive-through” confessions](#), as some priests have done or outdoor “drive-in” adoration, where the faithful remain in their automobiles. Also, don’t forget to provide a link for donations on your website and to mention how to give during the appropriate time in a live-streamed Mass.

Chapters and Elections

RCRI has prepared an FAQ regarding [postponing elections and chapters](#) scheduled during this time.

UPDATED March 25: [RCRI](#) reports the Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has provided additional information:

The Institute leadership is to write a letter to the Prefect, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, informing the Dicastery that the General Chapter has been postponed and the terms of office extended. The Institute leadership is also to write a letter to the Prefect informing the Dicastery of the new dates for the General Chapter once they have been established. The Dicastery will send a response to each letter it receives. The letter may be sent through the services of the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington DC, or through the US Postal Service. The addresses are:

His Eminence João Braz Cardinal de Aviz
Prefect
Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
00120 Vatican City

Most Reverend Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States
3339 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Immigration

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) has prepared a [resource page](#) with the latest updates on government agencies during this time.

Livestreaming Masses, Stations of the Cross, etc.

Many parishes and other ministries have jumped into livestreaming and posting reflections for the faithful. The simplest version is a message using your mobile phone – either live or posted online.

These practical resources will walk you step-by-step into online ministry.

The Catholic Apostolate Center has [created a resource page](#), which religious institutes can use as they consider how best to support their ministries. [Fr. Frank Donio, SAC](#), has offered the expertise of their team for members of CMSM who have questions about this.

NEW – an easy [step-by-step guide](#) from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Facebook Live (mobile phone and Facebook account needed): [download this guide](#) from the Diocese of St. Petersburg | [watch this video](#)
- YouTube (note: if you have fewer than 1,000 followers on your channel, you will need to use a webcam for live video): [YouTube instructions](#)
- Suggested equipment and resources from the [Archdiocese of Washington](#)

While shown live, these videos also can be archived so people can watch them afterward, and they can be embedded on your province website.

Just run a test first so you aren't surprised, as occurred here:

Communications Best Practices

Your communications director or coordinator may be interested in a [free 3-session webinar series](#), March 25-27 (then on demand), from the Public Relations Society of America. While geared toward business, presenters will cover communications best practices during COVID-19 (internal, external, and digital).

For virtual conference calls and gatherings, consider Zoom (limited free option available), GoToMeeting, or Skype.

Managing Anxiety

Saint Luke Institute has released a free, [8-minute video on managing anxiety](#) during coronavirus while Southdown has produced a list of [top tips and resources](#).

Ministering with Young People

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry has posted a [full page of resources and ideas](#) for those working with minors during the COVID-19 crisis.

Keeping Healthy

The Centers for Disease Control's [COVID-19 website](#) has the latest information and guidance for the general population, faith communities, retirement centers, etc., in the United States, while the [World Health Organization](#) offers global guidance.

Finally, the Diocese of Dallas is offering a downloadable flyer for [hand-washing "Catholic style"](#) – in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Calendar

www.cmsm.org/events | [Region map and contact list](#)

CMSM

- Region 2 Meeting: March 12, Garrison, NY (Friars of the Atonement)
- **POSTPONED:** National JPIC Gathering, March 16-18, Las Cruces, NM
- Region 1 Meeting: April 20-21, Hingham, MA (Glastonbury Abbey)
- Region 6 Meeting: April 23, Sierra Madre, CA (Mater Dolorosa)
- CMSM National Assembly, Aug. 4-6, 2020, Buffalo, NY
- CMSM Safeguarding Workshop, Oct. 26-28, Lutz, FL

Partners

- **POSTPONED:** Religious Brothers Symposium, April 4, 2020, Boston, MA
- [Human Formation Conference: Mental Health](#), April 20-23, St. Meinrad, IN
- [National Religious Vocation Conference](#), Oct. 30-Nov. 2, Spokane, WA

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The JPIC and Religious Brothers Symposium have been postponed due to the coronavirus.

Please check with your region director to see if your region meeting has been postponed or will be held via video conference in light of the current health crisis.

Thank you for your understanding and let's keep each other in prayer.

[Click here for a region map and contact information](#)