Spiritual Communion

There are times when people are unable to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, through illness or due to their personal disposition. Even though some may not receive 'sacramental' Communion, all are united in some way by the Holy Spirit. The traditional idea of 'spiritual' Communion is an important one to remember and reaffirm. A deep spiritual communion is possible even when we do not share together the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. (cf. Celebrating the Mass 212)

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.
Amen. *based on a prayer of St Alphonsus Liguori*

Prayer for Health Staff

Wondrous God, author of life,
you fashioned us in your likeness
and breathed into us the life which is your own.
Be with those whose special care is the health of mind and body.
Fill their hearts with awe for the life which is your gift
and sustain them daily in your service,
that their hands may bring to others
the comfort of your healing touch.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those affected by the current situation

Merciful God,
come to the help of your people.
Be our shelter in this time of peril
and strengthen the bonds of our community.
Bring healing to all who suffer the ravages of disease
and assist those whose skill and art can put an end to this affliction.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Household

Hear us, Lord, and send your angel from heaven
to visit and protect, to comfort and defend
all who live in this house. Amen.

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No one is alone!

Prayer when confined to your home

This time of the covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity for all of us - especially in families and as Church - to pray more intensely for each other and especially for those who have succumbed to the illness.

It is also a time when those of us who are sick, or whose lives are turned upside down because of being self-isolated[1], may find it difficult to pray in their new circumstances.

The experience of isolation, to some, may seem to offer the unexpected opportunity of a retreat at home, undistracted by other responsibilities. However, distractions are rarely so compliant! And the circumstances that have led to this time apart can turn out to be profoundly unsettling.

It can be easy to feel discouraged and to give up on prayer, at the very time when there is deepest need to know and feel the love and mercy of God and to entrust our worries and concerns to him.

Do not be afraid to bring any feelings of weakness and vulnerability to the Lord in prayer. But also do not be surprised if you find it difficult to pray at all.

Be gentle with yourself, and try to do what you can, and see where that might lead you.

1 https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19

A few simple suggestions:

- You might use the following prayer

  General Prayer for Health
  Christ be with me, Christ within me,
  Christ behind me, Christ before me,
  Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
  Christ to comfort and restore me,
  Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
  Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
  Christ in hearts of all that love me,
  Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

- Read and reflect on a passage of scripture, even a single verse...

  Some suggestions

  - O Lord, come to my rescue, *Ps 39:14*
    Lord, come to my aid.
  - Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; *Jer 17:14*
    save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.
  - Lord, save me. *Matt 14: 30*
  - Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. *Rev 22:20*

- Simply hold a cross or crucifix and ask to know the closeness of Jesus to you, to know his sharing in your pain, for love of you. You might use any cross, but especially popular are the olive wood hand crosses made in Palestine. We offer our sickness and suffering in union with others, with Jesus, of course, but with all who suffer.
- Pray a decade of the Rosary - or just hold the beads and remind yourself of God's love and care
- Quietly sing or hum a favourite hymn tune... Can't remember the words? Try 'google'.
- Make use of a picture that speaks to you of God's power, love, and care. You may have guidebooks to favourite shrines which can focus prayer - and again, of course, 'google' offers many images...

Got the desire and energy for something more?

- It has long been the Church's encouragement that those unable to attend Mass on Sundays should, if they can, spend time in prayer reading the readings and prayers of the Day. These texts can be found in a People's Missal, or in the *Universalis* app[2]. You might like to offer your prayer at the same time as Mass is usually offered in your parish.
- The *Universalis* app also makes available the texts of the Church's Divine Office - her daily prayer. You might find Morning, Evening and Night Prayer the most helpful.
- Other forms of spiritual reading can be very supportive during a time of isolation. If you find you have nothing to hand ask friends and neighbours if they can recommend something. (To avoid import the virus it will be safer to avoid library books etc. Often ordering from the likes of *Amazon* will be the most convenient source.)
- You can find broadcasts of Mass - including the Pope's daily Mass - online or on subscription TV.

Feeling on the fringes of things?

In sickness, you have the benefit of knowing that you are being prayed for by the Church. You may also be in a position where you can pray to God for yourself and your needs.

In addition – even in illness – you may find you have the strength and energy, and the desire, to pray for others.

And when you can you are, of course, sharing in the mission of the Church, interceding for those in need, sharing your love, inspired by the Lord's love.

- If you are sick or in isolation you have a particular experience of this to bring to the Lord as you pray on behalf of others. Your prayer may be all the more informed and focussed, in consequence.

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2 http://universalis.com/