



Pope addresses what to do since many can't get to Confession

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Francis cites the Catechism to encourage the faithful to express contrition, and make resolve to return to Sacrament as soon as it becomes possible

Pope Francis took up the question that many of the faithful are wrestling with as they are under lockdown with churches closed: What about confession?

The Holy Father addressed the issue March 20 during his homily at morning Mass.

The Pope introduced his homily saying that the verse from the First Reading from Hosea: "Return to the Lord, your God" always reminds him of a song sung by Carlo Buti some 75 years ago.

The Italian families in Buenos Aires used to listen to it. They liked it a lot. 'Return to your daddy, he will still sing you a lullaby.' Return. But it's your Father who tells you to return. God is your Daddy. He's not a judge. He's your Daddy. Go back home.

The Holy Father compared the message to that of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, saying that the father sees his son from a distance, "because He was waiting for him. How many times He went up the terrace day after day, month after months, perhaps years even. He waited for His son."

Francis said that the Father's tenderness, as seen in this parable, speaks to us especially during Lent.

[Lent] is the time to enter into ourselves and to remember the Father and return to our Daddy. 'But, Father, I'm ashamed to go back because, you know, Father I've ...done so many things wrong.' What will the Lord say? 'Return. I will heal their defection. I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them (Hosea 14:4).' Return to your Father. The God of tenderness will heal us.

This Father will heal us of "so many of life's wounds," the pope affirmed. "Going back to God is going back to an embrace, the Father's embrace, it's not going to God. No, it's going back home."

But in lockdown?

This habit of returning home “takes flesh in the Sacrament of Reconciliation,” the pope explained.

I know that many of you go to confession before Easter... Many will say to me: ‘But Father...I can’t leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord. I want Him to embrace me... How can I do that unless I find a priest?’

Do what the catechism says. It’s very clear. If you don’t find a priest to go to confession, speak to God. He’s your Father. Tell Him the truth: ‘Lord. I did this and this and this. Pardon me.’ Ask His forgiveness with all your heart with an act of contrition, and promise Him, ‘afterward I will go to confession.’

You will return to God’s grace immediately. You yourself can draw near, as the Catechism teaches us, to God’s forgiveness, without having a priest at hand.

At the end of his homily, the Pope expressed the hope that the word “return” might “echo in our ears today”

Return to your Father. He’s waiting for you, and He will throw a feast for you.

For health care workers

The Holy Father was offering the Mass for health care professionals battling COVID-19 and for civil authorities.

Yesterday, I received a message from a priest from the Bergamo region who asked for prayers for the doctors working there.... They are at the end their strength...and are truly giving their lives to help those who are ill, to save others’ lives.