



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

INVITATION TO PRAY

During these Lenten days, and mindful of all who are affected by the COVID-19 Virus, we are called to be more fervent in prayer. Since we are not able to gather publicly for prayer at this time, we are encouraged to pray with our families in our homes, our “domestic” churches, and to draw on the many spiritual resources which are part of our Catholic tradition.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called for all Christians throughout the world to join in praying the Our Father on Wednesday 25 March 2020 at noon: The Solemnity of the Annunciation. It is most fitting that all the faithful in the Diocese of Hamilton respond to this initiative of the Holy Father, since The Solemnity of the Annunciation is the patronal feast of our Diocese. We pray for the health and safety of all in our Diocese, and in particular for the sick and those who care for them, and families facing financial difficulty during the pandemic.

On Friday, March 27, 2020, Pope Francis will preside over a moment of prayer at the entrance of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. He invites everyone to participate in this prayer by means of communication. The celebration will consist of readings from the Scriptures, prayers of supplication, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. At the conclusion of the prayer Pope Francis will give the *Urbi et orbi* Blessing, with the possibility of gaining a plenary indulgence for all those who listen to it live through the various forms of communication. This service of prayer will take place at 6:00 p.m. Rome time (1:00 p.m. Daylight Saving Time in Ontario).

The Plenary Indulgence is granted to all who, with a spirit detached from any sin, unite themselves 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.

The Prayer of the Holy Rosary is especially recommended during this time of crisis. Families and individuals are encouraged to pray the Rosary daily. Pope Francis offers us these encouraging and insightful words:

“The Rosary is the prayer of the humble and of the saints. In its mysteries, they contemplate, along with Mary, the life of Jesus, the merciful face of the Father. O, how much we all need to be truly comforted, to be wrapped in loving presence! We measure the truth of this experience through our relationship with others. At this moment, they are our closest relatives. Let us be close to one another, being the first to be charitable, understanding, patient and forgiving. Though you may be confined to your own homes, allow your hearts to expand so they may be available and welcoming to all.”

May we unite ourselves with all Canadians and Catholics throughout the world in offering this prayer, relying on the powerful intercession of Mary, our Mother, the Mother of Church.