

As more Catholics around the world find themselves unable to receive the Eucharist due to the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis provided an example of a spiritual communion prayer that can be said from home.

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart ... I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You,” Pope Francis prayed March 21 in his televised daily Mass from his residence in Vatican City.

Pope Francis invited those viewing the livestreamed Mass to find the Lord in prayer. He recited the spiritual communion prayer and then exposed the Blessed Sacrament for Eucharistic Adoration at the end of the Mass.

A spiritual communion is a uniting of oneself to the Sacrifice of the Mass through prayer.

“Let us pray to the Lord, let us return to Him,” the pope said in his homily.

He said that the Gospel parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee provides a lesson in how to pray. While the Pharisee was proud, the tax collector said: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

“The Lord teaches us how to pray ... how we must approach the Lord: with humility,” Francis said.

“When we begin praying with our own justifications with our securities, that’s not prayer. That is like speaking to a mirror. Instead when we begin praying with our true reality – I’m a sinner – this is a good step forward in allowing the Lord to look at us. May Jesus teach us this,” he said.

Pope Francis prayed at the beginning of Mass for families who cannot leave their homes due to quarantine.

“Perhaps the farthest they can go is their balcony,” he said. “May they know how to find a way of communicating well, of building loving relationships within the family. And that they might know how to conquer the anguish of this moment together as a family.”

“We pray for peace in families today during this crisis, and for creativity,” Pope Francis said.