

COVID-19, Religion, and Public Life Reflection?

Catholicism Under COVID-19

The old saying “you never know what you have until its gone” has never rung truer than living today in the era of COVID-19. I am a fallen away Catholic that has recently returned to his faith. As such, it is this faith expressed through the age-old traditions of Catholicism that has enabled me to overcome many of the vices of my past life that I had struggled to overcome. It was through God and my faith that I was able to find hope, strength, and redemption in order to live a more positive and joy filled life that has enabled me to become a better husband and Father.

Practicing one’s faith during these trying times will be considered among the most difficult in history. To live a truly Catholic life is not something that can be done through social media or via the internet. At its core Catholicism depends on a sacramental system that requires interaction with the physical and material world to achieve specific spiritual ends. The various sacraments found within Catholicism are necessary for one’s salvation. The sacrament of Baptism requires the pouring of water on the person to be baptized in order to have one’s sins forgiven and obtain the spiritual life necessary to enter into eternal life before the presence of God. This is something that can not simply be done via technological methods. There are other Sacraments that are important as well that require interaction with the physical. The sacraments of confession and holy communion are others. No matter how much some people believe that technology is the answer to everything it is not. There are some things that technology can not do. As a Catholic for a confession to be valid it must be heard in person by a priest. A smart phone app can not provide a legitimate solution to the problem of not being able to interact with a priest.

For many people it is their faith in God and the rituals and methods of expression that form part of one’s everyday life that help them get through the pains and sorrow of this life. I know two very good Catholic friends that lost a baby during the COVID-19 era. I know that if I had to experience the death of my child without being able to have a mass offered for my child along with the consoling words of my priest to obtain some sort of peace and comfort from this loss the pain would feel unbearable to endure. This year I lost a very good friend from my time in the military due to suicide. He was like a brother to me and I had to consider not being able to attend his service due to lack of room brought about from the need of social distancing as well as possibly not being able to travel due to concerns brought about because of COVID-19. Death brings about a great deal of pain and suffering into the life of humans and for many the way they deal with it is through their religious faith and through the interaction of the community of believers that stand together with those that have lost a loved one sharing in their unbearable grief and agony. There is a lot of pain and anger that is brought about these days when one considers how a Costco or a Casino can remain open but a house of worship has to remain closed or operate at minimum capacity. How can one endure these times, these days if the little comfort that we have in this life of sorrows and tears is taken away from us?