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## **United States: today, national day of prayer for an end to the pandemic. Mgr. Gomez, message to Catholics for the Easter Triduum**

(From New York) “These are almost unprecedented times in the long history of the Church. The future generations will look to this time as to the Long Lent of 2020”. It is with these words that the message which the president of the United States Catholic Bishops’ Conference, José Gomez, sent to the all devotees at the start of the Easter Triduum begins, announcing that today, Good Friday, will be a day of national prayer for an end to the pandemic caused by Covid-19. At 12.00 pm New York time, the archbishops will ask Catholics to stop and pray and say the litany of the Sacred Heart, a prayer the prelate has been fond of since he was young: “Sacred Heart of Jesus, I put all my confidence in you”. The prayer will be streamed, and the Pope granted a special plenary indulgence to all those people who will connect and will pray the litany, repenting of their sins and approaching the Sacrament of Confession as soon as it is possible. “Confronted with this infection all over the world – Gomez goes on in his message –, the bishops, here and in nearly all countries across the world, have been forced to temporarily suspend public worship and the celebration of the Sacraments”. The president of the United States Catholic Bishops’ Conference states that he is aware of the distress felt by many Catholics, “hurt by the loss of the Eucharist and of the Sacraments”. Gomez speaks of “bitter affliction”, of pain, of the fervent wish to go back to the celebrations, yet he asks everyone to put up with such a difficult time and to practise patience and compassion, by staying united like “a single family of God, in the universal Church”, staying in peace and facing this challenging time through mutual love. “This Holy Week will be different. Our churches may be closed – Gomez ended – but Christ has not been quarantined and His Gospel has not been chained. Even if we cannot celebrate together, each one of us can look for God in the shrines of our hearts”.

Valentina Bombelli