

Confession during the pandemic

A few months ago my friend Mutheu and I were having a discussion about how much we were missing the good old days when we could go to Mass and confession with ease. With the Covid-19 pandemic, things had changed drastically and neither of us had ever imagined that a time would come when the very places we sought solace and spiritual strength from would now be listed as out of bounds for gatherings until further notice.

11/13/2020

As time went by, the government lifted some of the restrictions and at last churches could be open albeit with caution that certain protocols had to be observed. Many parishes were unable to resume offering confession immediately as they tried to figure out how best to go about it without putting anyone's health at risk. You see, the tricky thing about confession is that it is ordinarily conducted in an enclosed place with some close proximity between the priest and the penitent.

Well, where there is a will there is a way, and, in a short while, confession became available at Strathmore University. The chaplaincy had managed to set up a little tent outside the chapel in a discreet corner with a portable confessional box. At last we

could freely go to confession again. I quickly informed Mutheu and since then, she regularly comes over and sometimes brings her children along.

One day in our conversation, she looked a little pensive as she thought aloud, “For me and my kids, we are lucky we can come here for confession now. But that won’t be possible for the kids when schools re-open and their schedule changes. And what about everyone else who depends on the parish I go to? There must be many who are looking forward to resuming confession. I wish we could do something.” Being a computer engineer, Mutheu is one of those ladies who easily notices things that need a little fixing and so she is not one to sit back where she can offer a suggestion or a solution. Being proactive is part of her nature.

And so, the following week when she went to Mass at her parish, she

shared the idea of a confessional tent with the priest. She had loved it so much that she had even taken photos of the setup which she now showed the parish priest. Perhaps other parishioners had shared similar suggestions. For sure the priest was very grateful for the enthusiasm shown for confession and suggestions offered. Understandably, a lot of caution had to be observed and the parish had still been trying to see how best to offer confession without compromising the protocols to be observed. In a few days' time, Mutheu was delighted to see that the parish had managed to come up with a solution. At the church compound, in strategic places, stood several tents with confession made available. Now many people could comfortably go back to confession. When I next meet her I shall give her a high five for adding her voice to the parish for the benefit of fellow parishioners.

J.M.

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(08/06/2025)