

# How to stay quarantined, stay married, and keep your friends

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By [Perry West](#)

Denver, Colo., Mar 21, 2020 / 04:00 am ([CNA](#)).- The policy of social distancing means that the newly-homebound are seeing less of coworkers than they did just weeks ago. They're seeing fewer friends too. But they might be seeing a lot more of their family, or their roommates. And that isn't easy.

For some, especially those who live alone, social distancing can bring with it a sense of isolation and loneliness. But for those who live with family or roommates, staying home means spending a lot of time together. After a few days of fun, being "alone together," all the time, can become difficult.

Neither living alone nor with other people is easy in a time of great stress, Dr. Christina Lynch told CNA. But there are ways to build and maintain healthy relationships during the coronavirus pandemic.

A supervising psychologist at Denver's St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Lynch offered CNA a few suggestions for maintaining friendships, and family relationships, under quarantine, "shelter in place" orders, or social distancing policies.

Lynch suggests accepting that losing control is a difficult feeling.

"When we can't be in control, we become agitated. This is part of our survival mechanism that God gave us so that we do whatever it takes to survive. Unfortunately, [through] the negative[ty] of social media and the internet, it's

made us so attached to the world and to what others think and to comparing ourselves that we think we have to always be busy," she said.

It is difficult to be restricted to a house, Lynch said. It is difficult not to be busy. To address that, she emphasized the importance of building a routine, especially one that includes prayer, and recreation.

Lynch emphasizes that the "family is the first Church," and suggests households - families or roommates- set daily routines of prayer, which might include Bible studies, morning and night prayers, or daily rosaries. She encouraged Catholics to bless each other with holy water, and to set up a prayer corner with statues and pictures of the saints.

"A prayer sets the tone for the whole day," she said.

Quoting an old adage, Lynch said it's true that "the family that prays together stays together."

"Ask each member each day what they need prayers for, so you can start a tradition of writing down on a piece of paper each family member's prayer intention."

Families and roommates should also be proactive about building an atmosphere of healthy communication, where thoughts and feelings have a safe place to be shared, she said.

People need to be sensitive to one another, especially during this anxious time, and foster a positive environment, Lynch added.

"Reframe thoughts and feelings of anxiety to how you can do good for others," she said.

"Communicate with each other. This is really important when you live together in close quarters, especially when you can't escape from each other. So you need to set up a place and a time to actually share your feelings and thoughts, and process them out loud," she said.

"If there's a dispute, start with something positive about that person or about what they do. Then mention [about] the behavior, how that behavior has affected you or the household or the family. But, don't accuse, don't be accusatory or blaming about anything. It's good to be constructive in that communication."

Lynch added that shared recreational activities can have a positive effect on the mood of everyone during a period that feels like confinement. She suggested board games, making collages, or watching movies together.

“Use board games, cards or even invent a board game,” she further added. “This is a great thing to use our creativity that God intended and to start doing things for good.”

Lynch offered a few suggestions for people living alone during the quarantine. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a schedule that involves exercise, community, and prayer.

She also suggested keeping a journal, and keeping in daily contact with friends or relatives.

“If you live alone, it's very important to make sure you have connections with others if you can't every day. So whether you set up a schedule with a friend or a family member to FaceTime or just talk to them on the phone. Maybe each day pick two people that you'd like to talk to and make a phone call to them, [or] ask your family to check in with you,” she said.

“Why not write some letters to your friends and your family? You could write emails too. Start making the connection with those we've lost connections with, possibly, or with people we still have connections with.”

The global pandemic is difficult, Lynch said. But she said that looking for opportunities to be grateful will help keep relationships stable, and help quell a sense of anxiety.

“Be grateful for your blessings. Have each member of the household write a list of what they're grateful for each day. It can even be the same things as days go on, because it'll start to really connect the positive neurons in your brain where you will begin to start to think positively first before you think negatively,” she said.