

The Pandemic of 2020

Part # 2 – April 9, 2020

COVID-19

An update regarding The Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity

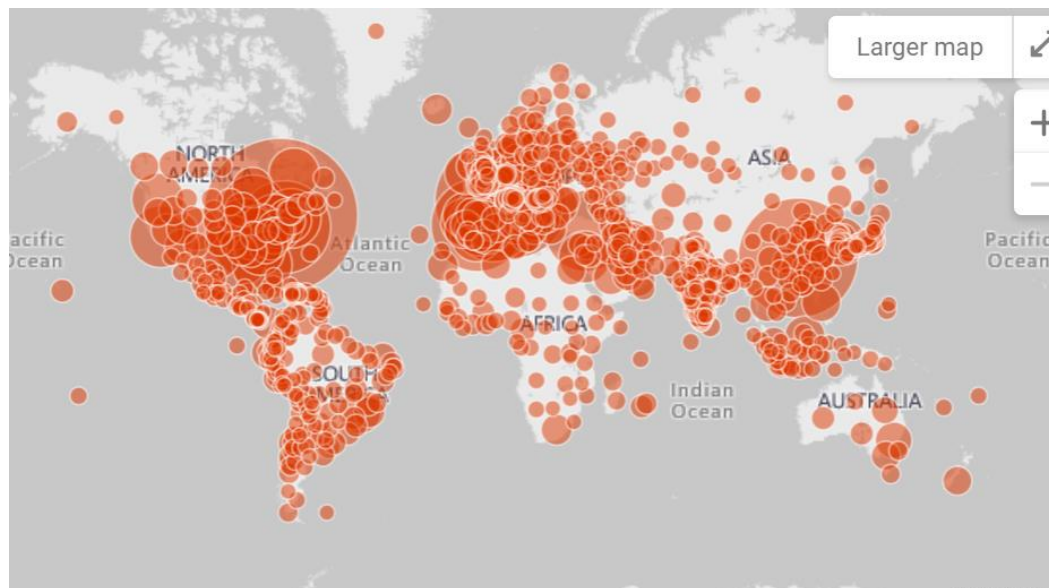
At the writing of this sharing, there have been 1,502,618 persons infected world-wide with the Corona virus with some 89,915 deaths. Every continent has individuals who have been infected...and many countries have taken dramatic measures to combat its spread.

So that we might be able to share in the plight of our sisters (and our world), and join together in this difficult time we asked these questions:

How are you doing?

How are you handling this situation?

Here are the responses of your sisters...



(Here are *some* of the responses...others are coming in and will be sent our later this week.)

Most Holy Trinity Province, Semarang, Indonesia

By Sr. Rosalie Prime Hatmani, Provincial Minister

The following is how Most Holy Trinity Province in Indonesia is responding to the Covid-19 Situation:

1. We are using the Litany Prayer which we received from the Generalate as the daily prayer of the sisters in community.
2. We follow the rules set forth by the local diocese in the communities where our sisters are located.

3. Each community participates in Mass through live streaming and receives Holy Communion.
4. We obey the policies of the Central Government and or the local Government. For example schools are closed: children are learning and even examinations are done online. Burial of the dead is limited to only 20 people and if the person who dies did so because of Covid19 the burial ceremony is attended only by their own family.
5. Communities which have tailors are helping in making masks and clothes worn by medical personal as protectors when treating patients.
6. The Hospital of St. Elisabeth in Semarang accepts all patients who have Covid-19, including those who are still in the early stages or have few symptoms. If they have few symptoms they go to a special area: the Vincentius or Xaverius rooms in the Hospital. St. Elisabeth Semarang is the second hospital in Semarang to accept Covid-19 patients and they are able to do this because it has isolation space.
7. Each of the sister works to maintain immunity.
8. The Province canceled all Jubilee celebrations, especially on Foundation day May 10, 2020, including the International meetings.
9. Communities provide food to employees and surrounding communities in need.
10. Communities continue to make themselves aware of the Covid19 situation and add personal prayers.
11. The impact on the larger community, especially in big cities, is huge: many factories are closed, so there are employees laid off, roads have become quiet and air pollution is reduced, the income of small people, such as taxis and motorcycle taxis, has come to an end.

People have a great desire to receive the communion (Body of Christ) especially during the Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday because they cannot attend these celebration.

We ask for prayers for the situation that is overseen by the government and Church in Indonesia.

These are the activities that we can convey.

Holy Name Province, Stella-Niagara, USA

By Sr. Nancy Zelma, First Provincial Councilor

The Coronavirus pandemic has certainly made life in Holy Name Province take on a new look! Our ways of doing things are different, but we have remained strong in faith! Since Governors in areas of the province have issued a stay at home mandate except to meet essential needs, sisters and associates still stay connected via the telephone, mail, email, facebook and other forms of social media. Our ministries continue, but again they are in different forms. Schools remain closed, but learning continues with the help of Chromebooks and I-pads. Food pantries/soup kitchens now use “take out” rather than having a sit down dining room.

The Sisters at Stella Niagara are staying strong physically, emotionally, and spiritually with the assistance of our dedicated nurses, aides, food service employees, maintenance, housekeeping and heads of departments. Some employees are also “working from home” to keep up with day to day business. We are blessed to have such committed people working with us. The Health Center Sisters continue to pray for all of us and the needs of the world. They are able to attend daily Mass with the help of technology and a television set and/or radio.

Sisters in other areas of the province are also staying at home, attending Mass via TV and radio, no one is going out more than necessary, except for food and medicine! Throughout the province, sisters are walking outdoors, doing yardwork and our houses have never been so clean!!!

Immaculate Heart of Mary Province, Santa Maria, Brazil

By S. Nilvete Soares Gomes, Provincial Minister

Dear Sisters,

Peace and All Good!

Thanks to the General Council for the communication sent in March, encouraging us to be messengers of peace and hope in this time when we are disturbed by the reality of the Coronavirus. I hope that you all continue to be well, with the protection of God, Mary Mother of God, and our Mother Magdalen. The world situation is worrying. With our prayers we are accompanying all of you, the whole world, and especially the people directly affected by COVID19.

Here in Brazil a state of public calamity has already been decreed. We are not yet at a critical moment, but it is already said that we will have, in the coming months, overwhelming times with the spread of the virus. But the effects and results of anticipated social isolation can be seen. The country is seeking to make the population aware of the seriousness of the moment so that the virus does not proliferate. In addition, we are facing difficulties with the National president who is at odds with the WHO and even with the Ministry of Health in Brazil.

In the province, we've had to take a number of measures including the cancellation of activities, especially the Pre-Chapter scheduled for June 2020. Regional preparatory meetings for the chapter are being carried out using technology. The situation of our institutions is worrying: we've suspended school activities not knowing for how long. All the **Schools** and the **University** of the Province, in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, the epidemiological control authorities and the Ministry of Education, immediately provided measures to protect the health of students, staff and teachers. It interrupted the face-to-face classes and started classes through digital technology. We are reinventing ourselves in teaching with the use of digital technologies as we prepare classes, study, teach and learn. We keep the schools running, without opening the buildings. The Franciscan University is part of the Strategic Crisis Council in the municipality of Santa Maria. It also participates in solutions to confront COVID19 in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, with actions that include the following: 1) Teams of teachers, technicians and students do daily work to: (a) produce alcohol in the Pharmaceutical Laboratory and Cosmetics gel to serve hospitals and public health units; (b) produce face shields for health professionals in Engineering Laboratories; (c) perform, at the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory, tests for screening patients with

suspected COVID19. 2) A digital platform was installed at the Franciscan University to answer online video calls. This service is free of charge to the population and is managed by doctors in the medical course with students in their final years of the course as well as volunteer doctors. This service provides a first level of Medical assistance 24 hours a day. This service avoids the need for people to travel and protects everyone from the risk of contagion. In addition to technological support, UFN maintains administrative staff to support professionals in service. 3) A professor of computer science at UFN has produced software to detect, in a rapid test, through X-ray, possible infected patients. This product is already validated and is available for use by doctors in patient care from COVID19. An intense solidarity network has been formed. Many teachers from different educational areas have collaborated intellectually and with financial resources to provide service to people in need.

At the **Convento** São Francisco in Santa Maria, where we have a large number of elderly sisters, we canceled visits by family members and even by other sisters from different communities. We are concerned about the health of the elderly sisters, yet we had to keep employees in different sectors in order to serve them, however, we try to maintain good hygienic practices among both the professionals and the sisters. In addition to intense prayers, the sisters participate in physical exercises and are released for walks in the garden. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with all the sisters of the Convent, spread out in our large chapel, is important since the masses were also canceled. When we do have a mass, it is in a simple way.

Our **hospitals** were already experiencing crises due to the lack of a serious health policy and due to a financial deficit on the part of the government as well as for other reasons. Now, the crisis tends to widen these deficiencies even more due to the urgencies and emergencies of the moment. In March 2020, a Crisis Committee for São Francisco de Assis Hospital (HSFA) was created to better organize the plans and actions to be carried out. The Hospital Casa de Saúde and the Emergency Care Unit - UPA of Santa Maria under the management of the Franciscan Sisters, through the Franciscan Association of Health Care (SEFAS), has prepared and is developing a plan to assist those affected by the Coronavirus, in a joint effort with the public agencies. The population is in solidarity with donations of all kinds, wanting respond to emergency needs as they help to face the epidemic.

In **social works**, all group activities with the elderly were suspended. In partnership with the government, we are able to guarantee the distribution of food: kits of non-perishable food items as well as vegetables and fruits are distributed to the elderly in social isolation. Food delivery is a way of ensuring that they are in guaranteed survival conditions. Employees do internal work.

The dioceses of Brazil closed the churches, and canceled all activities. Parishes hold celebrations without people, using the media to broadcast celebrations and catechesis online. In certain locations, Palm Sunday was celebrated with a motorcade, bicycles and motorbikes on the streets of the cities and by the blessing of the palms that were placed at the gates of the houses. In the parish mission in Guatemala, the sisters follow the same guidelines, canceling appointments at the clinics, and the sisters who are studying receive classes on online. Argentina stands out in Latin America for being the country that took social isolation the most seriously by closing borders.

We are not clear about the purpose of this pandemic, but the moment allows us to be in solitude and put ourselves in prayer with a feeling of solidarity and empathy for the many people who are

experiencing in the body and soul the suffering of this historic moment. May God have mercy on us and the whole world, and destroy the evil that lurks at our door. May you and all the people be protected from this evil.

A big hug to everyone.



Mother Magdalen, Pray for us.

Thank you all for these updates...everyone is so grateful!

Stay tuned for the final part – which may be a few days! Blessings during this Holy time!