

# The Pandemic of 2020

## Part # 3 – April 13, 2020

COVID-19

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

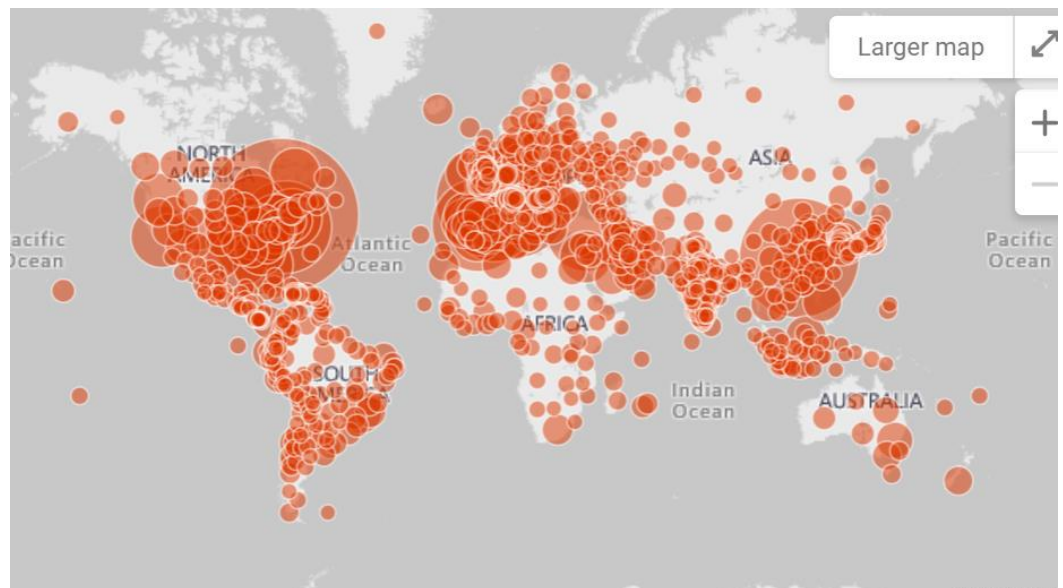
At the writing of this sharing, there have been 1,846,680 persons infected worldwide with the Corona virus with some 114,090 deaths. Every continent has individuals who have been infected...and many countries have taken dramatic measures to combat its spread.

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 out later this week.)

### **St. Francis Province, Redwood City, USA**

By Sr. Mary Litell, Provincial Minister

In this time of social distancing, quarantine and isolation, our Sisters and Associates in St. Francis Province, West Coast of US and also Southern Mexico are still well. It is hard to know who is infected with COVID19 and who is not since testing is not widely available. So the precautions that are in place everywhere are the main way of preventing, or diminishing the spread of the virus.

There is so much to tell about the responses of Sisters and Associates throughout the province. Here are just few highlights. From home, some are making sandwiches or hot meals to be distributed to homeless persons. They are shopping for Sisters and others who cannot be outside because they are vulnerable and at risk of infection. Others are making and distributing masks.

Associates in Los Angeles who are teaching from home, or working in a very large family social service agency are finding creative ways to connect with the people they serve. Parenting classes, counseling, schooling, staff meetings, are all continuing via zoom. Food distribution also is increased with the needs. Our Sisters and Associates who are medical workers — a doctor, a physician assistant, and a few nurses — still see patients and respond to emergencies. While tired, sometimes exhausted, until now they are still healthy. Homeless, poor and homebound people are a priority.

Senior Sisters are living at Marian Convent in Santa Maria and at five different senior residences in other parts of the province. All are well and are following the strict social distancing precautions mandate by the States and local governments. Most have the possibility to participate in the Eucharist through the Internet, connecting to their parishes, or a catholic television channel, or to the Vatican live streaming. Sisters in Santa Maria are supporting the work of our partners in the hospital and clinics. The Home Health staff who share the convent building with the Sisters are finding many of their at home patients who are not able to shop for food, or cannot afford the healthy food they need. The Sisters donated their lenten savings to Home health to help meet this need.

In Chiapas, one of the Sisters, a nurse, is working in a distant village health center, where there is no access to telephone or internet. There is no testing available, still the Doctor and our Sister know that the virus is present in the area. They have asked that only emergencies come to the clinic, and are treating wounds, injuries from car accidents and so on. For other situations they and the Sisters in Palenque are distributing medicine. Our Sister is staying out in this village to avoid spreading the virus among the Sisters and others at home in Palenque. A sign of hope to people is the construction work going on to prepare for installation of units for the St. Claire Family Clinic which will soon be able to offer access to medical care. This has been a dream of the community for years.

More and more of us are noticing that with the stay at home orders, the “social distancing” there is so much connecting growing in society and in our communities was ell. Regional communities are joining together for prayer and community meetings through the internet and phone calls. Associates are doing the same. Our Council meetings are held through Zoom and we find it quite effective.

Many of us are commenting that there is more time for prayer, reading, creating beauty... Like our Sisters and Associate everywhere we are praying in solidarity with those who are suffering the virus, or who have died, for the medical workers, for those who have lost jobs, for people at home alone... This time of immense disruption by COVID19 is also a time of amazing grace and renewal of deeply held values. Perhaps we are experiencing Easter as never before.

## **Maria Immaculata Community, Nonnenwerth, Germany**

By Sr. Maria Lay, Community Minister

When reading the reports of our provinces I can say that we too have similar experiences. Of course, hygiene and distance are of great concern here as well. But we also experience – as today

when we celebrated the Service of the Last Supper with Father Johannes Baptist ofm, that God surmounts all distances and is with us. In and through the restrictions we can have experiences which can and should lead us to what is essential – may this be successful! And besides there are enriching interchanges with co-workers, friends and relatives.

We have also gone through a short time of uneasiness, when a nurse working with our older sisters waited for the result of a Corona test. Thank God it turned out negative. So the stricter isolation was again removed.

In our hospitals there are sufficient intensive and (artificial) respiration resources available. There are still some freedoms so that we are also able to give neighborly help, even across the border.

Prayer for the mitigation of the epidemic and for the fears of many people have a fixed place in our day.

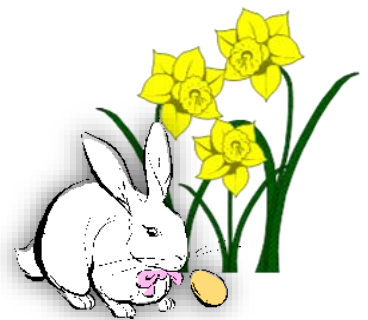
Our most important activity in these days of the pandemic is to pray for everyone who is at the forefront of the virus. Everyone is grateful for this: here is a note from a doctor who works in palliative medicine and respiratory care/pulmonology:

Dear Sister Maria, I found the Sister's prayers for us on our ward and would like to thank you for the support of your entire convent. They are also always in our thoughts and prayers.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL THAT YOU ARE THERE! THANK YOU,  
best regards from the palliative ward, Dr. Aline Sebastian ,,

Sign of life ...

Against this background, we wish you all contemplative days and a happy,  
blessed and confident Easter.  
With all the sisters of the community Nonnenwerth - Sr. Maria Lay



## **Sacred Heart Province, Denver, USA**

By Sr. Sarah Manchester, Vicar

Thank you for your prayer and the news from the Netherlands. Some of the sisters here have begun making masks for health care works, too. The conditions you mentioned in the Netherlands are the ones initiated at our Senior Sisters Home in Nebraska. So far, there has not been any COVID-19 among our sisters or the staff.

We continue to pray for hope, health, and healing for all around the world. It is such a vulnerable time for all. God does provide.



Mother Mary,  
Pray for us.

(Art work: Sr. Sen Nguyen, osf)

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