

**August 2020, Nr.3**Final editing: Karien Janssen-Schwiebbe  
E-mailaddress: [generalate@sistersofcharity.nl](mailto:generalate@sistersofcharity.nl)**Reflection by Sr Hermin Bu'ulölö**

What is really going on in this world? That is a question I think about more often lately than I used to. A few months ago, we were confronted with the corona virus here in Europe. The authorities took strict measures which had a major impact on social life. Fortunately, the severity of the virus has decreased in Europe but we note that the economic impact is increasing. We see a revival of the virus in Indonesia, whilst in Brazil and the USA the virus continues unremittingly. There are major social and economic consequences everywhere. The virus is not influenced by religion. Anyone may be affected, and we are all equal in that respect. However, religion, of whatever kind, is important when it may give people the resilience to continue with social connections and when it Inspires people.

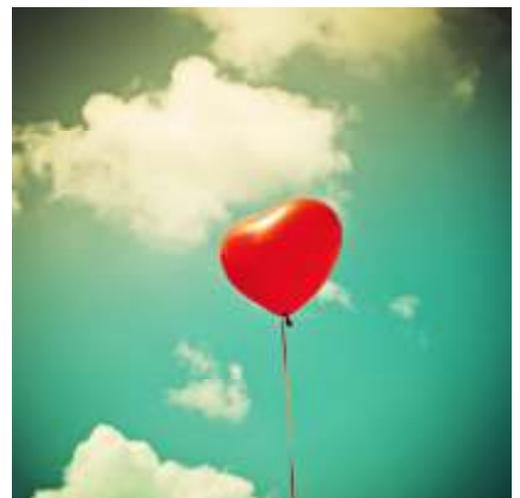
The second topic that holds the world's attention in its grip is racism. Racism is not related to religious belief either. Why would one person be better or worse than another? People with a different faith, ethnic background or sexuality are human beings in the same way as everyone else. They feel regarded and judged on the basis of their external appearance while being a human being relates to the inner being. Oppressed people often find consolation for their situation in their religion and sometimes they also find inspiration there to revolt.

We ought to pay more attention to human dignity and human equality. In both cases it is true that inspiration from your own religion could make a positive contribution to this topic.

You are undoubtedly familiar with the text of the Gospels according to Matthew 22: 37-40:

*Jesus said to them: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second, which is just as important is: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.*

This was the reply of Jesus to the question of a Pharisee who asked him what the most important commandment in the law of Moses was.



Jesus tells us indirectly about the two rules of life, that people have to observe, i.e. that the Lord wants us to love Him with all our heart and soul and that we as people love inspires people.

## **Reports from all parts of the congregation**

### **Twelve new first-year novices in Indonesia**

On 22 July 2020 Sr Blandina Zagötö welcomed twelve postulants who have completed their postulancy. They will now become novices and they will receive their habit during the celebration of the Eucharist in the noviciate's chapel Karang Sari—Pematang Siantar.



The new novices are as follows:

Sr Klaudia Novia Adi Naori, Sr Veronika Sinaga, Sr Evi Simarmata, Sr Moina Manalu, Sr Amelia Sinurat, Sr Flora Indah Nini Kandi, Sr Florentina Anna Marleli Waruwu, Sr Maria Oktaviana Witu Diwa, Sr Anggela Tawa Diwa Sr Defilia Bu'ulolo, Sr Letsia Sebhi and Sr Maria Bernadete Baok.

### **Preparation for the final profession**

Nine Indonesian sisters were to have participated in the Vincentian pilgrimage in preparation for their final vows. Now that this trip cannot go ahead, the provincial council in Medan-Sukadono has developed its own activities led by Sr Florentina Siregar.

Sr Francis Dakhi was responsible for the programme as psychologist.

The second part of the programme took place in Jaranguda – Berastagi. Agustinus Yuw OFM.Cap. mentored the sisters there in the spirituality of religious life, while Sr Angela Siregar accompanied the young sisters. They will take their final vows on 24 September this year.



### Timor Leste postpones the profession

In September of this year two sisters were to take their final profession. However, because of Covid-19, the profession has been postponed by one year until 24 September 2021. Both sisters are living at present in the St Lukas community in Ossu, where they will continue their preparations for the profession.



That means that they will be in the Luca community in Viqueque from 12 June until 12 August. We do not have a community there, but a house has been made available by the local people to house the sisters who will come to help them in the parish.



Each Sunday, our sisters organise a prayer service to prepare for the First Holy Communion; they also take Holy Communion to the sick and visit families. Children are now receiving religious education. In the past this was not possible. The sisters are pleased to have found such an inspiring task here; the priest is happy to get support in his work and the community is joyful about the presence of the sisters. Sr Joanita and Sr Angelita take it in turn to accompany the two young sisters. All sisters in Timor Leste are in good health. Until the present Timor Leste has been a green zone in reference to the corona virus.

### **The sisters in the Philippines are helping families in need**

We experienced a period of uncertainty in this time of the pandemic and we can't predict what our future will hold. Many of us have been affected and we are one of the religious congregations which is not exempt from the pandemic crisis. Despite of these hard times, we hope and will continue the mission entrusted to us as exemplified by our founder Msgr Joannes Zwijsen.



The Livelihood Center and Learning Center have been closed temporarily and will resume operation once the government will allow us to have a face to face learning interaction and a vaccine is available to prevent the spread of the virus. There is a need to respond to the call for help and to assist the poor families and children in our apostolates. We need to look for other means to provide for those who are most in need and those families who were displaced because of job losses, and we responded through food assistance with other congregations and parishes where we are situated.

To sustain our spiritual life, we join the live stream liturgical mass via our FB account or when it is telecast on TV. We say our community prayers as we observe social distancing and wear masks for all our safety. The mission continues despite the crisis.

Sr Cathy started her new task last June 2020 at the “tahanan ng Banal na Awa”, an orphanage managed by the Diocese of San Jose Nueva Ecija. She does research to fulfil the requirements needed to obtain permission from the Department of DSWD and her SEC registration in order to have legal documents. The children are being home schooled



because of the strict quarantine rules of the government. Sr Cathy teaches them how to write, read and do household chores.

### **Brazil is going digital**

At the time of the COVID 19 pandemic, the sisters from the community of Ibimirim, in the interior of Pernambuco, joined the community of Bayeux because it was not possible to carry out their mission there.

In the Bayeux community Sr Dalva not only supports the sisters, but also helps in the work of the school and the Foundation which, although closed to the outside world, continues with the internal work that needs to be done.

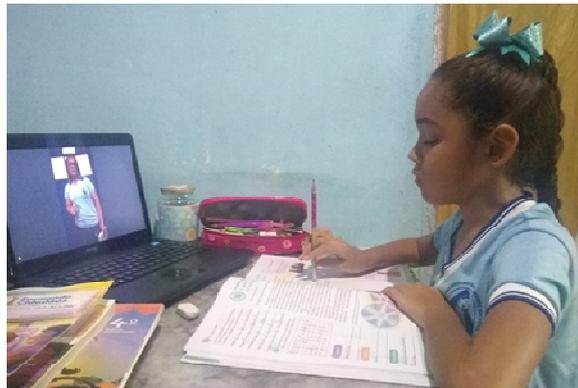


In addition to our daily work (prayer, cleaning, cooking) we read, watch some informative and formative videos and films and we focus on the English language. Once a week we have English lessons with Sr Janice (USA) and Sr Elisângela (GB) via Skype.

We also study during the week; we are involved in activities from our books, YouTube, conversations and music. We use the time we now have to learn English because we cannot do work outside.

We participate in training meetings, exchange of experience, and parish- and school meetings via digital platforms. We also have meetings with young people, our employees, our associate members and we are present through WhatsApp messages and through our daily prayer. Because we cannot go to church on Sunday, we do a Word and Communion service at home.

Twice a week we have a celebration with Communion: on Tuesday in Bible reading and study and on Sunday in the Word and Communion service.



The Brazilian people are experiencing a very difficult time with the pandemic, because in addition to facing a deadly virus which had been totally unknown before, they face the madness of a genocidal government that has no sensitivity or respect for the poor of our country. The reality is that we need to face not only the pandemic, but also the neglect of the insane president that we have. Even so, we remain firm and strong in the defence of life!

### **The Netherlands relaxes the measures**

For a while Sr Marie-Thérèse had to step back because of health reasons. Now she is well again and has resumed her tasks.

Recently the corona measures were relaxed in the Dutch province, which meant that for some time family and friends have been welcome again. That provides a bit more freedom and means that sisters are also going to meet each other. We also have restarted the celebrations in the chapel. The sisters are fine again!

Originally the Dutch province had planned to hold its provincial chapter in November of this year. The preparations were to have started in the middle of the corona period. That was impossible. Therefore, the provincial chapter has been postponed until 1-5 March 2021.

## **Fire in the apartment building where Sr Rosa lives**

In Belgium the government has also imposed strict measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. They are gradually getting control over the virus there. Now that the measures are being relaxed, it is important to remain prudent. The sisters are allowed to have visitors again and meetings may be organised. Let us all hope that an effective vaccine will be found soon, so that this Corona period may become a thing of the past.

On Thursday evening 18 June of this year, Sr Rosa Olaerts was alarmed by a blazing fire in an apartment on the first floor in the apartment block where she lives. The fire in this apartment was caused by the charging of a battery of an electric bike and it was very fierce. As a precaution, Sr Rosa was taken to hospital for a check-up and to deal with mild smoke inhalation. Afterwards she stayed temporarily with the sisters in Maaseik. Meanwhile her apartment has been completely cleaned by a specialised firm. She now lives in Zonhoven again.

On 22 June of this year Sr Louise Bielen celebrated her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. The birthday party will be organised later on during the year.

## **The British-Irish sisters are fine**

The sisters in the UK/Irish part were confronted with the death of Sr Rosaleen Mooney. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic it was difficult to visit Sr Rosaleen during her time in the hospital and later in the hospice. At the funeral, measures such as social distancing also needed to be respected. Fortunately, Sr Nora Hayes and Sr Mary O'Rourke were able to attend the funeral as well as a few family members.

Up until the present, the sisters have been unaffected by the virus, thanks to the efforts of the staff.

Sr Marie Thérèse Croke visits three of the sisters in Bryn Mair in the living room. Two of the sisters are confined to their beds, and because of the need to respect social distancing it is not possible to visit them. The three sisters are pleased that they are still able to use the chapel and that they may go outside to get some fresh air and a bit of exercise. They mind very much that there is no daily celebration of the Eucharist, but fortunately they are given Holy Communion every day. The sisters do miss the daily contact with the parishioners, as well as other social contacts and visits from family and friends.



On 17 July Sr Catherine Shakespeare's birthday was celebrated in a small group and that was a success. Sr Catherine turned 101. Sr Teresa Dougan's 70<sup>th</sup> convent jubilee has been postponed to a later date, as was the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sr Catherine Flynn. They are considering whether the birthday and the jubilee could be celebrated at the same time. We also hope that we shall be able to hold a celebration of the Eucharist in memory of Sr Rosaleen.

*Photo of Sr Catherine on her birthday together with her fellow sisters Sr Teresa Dougan, Sr Theresa Gray and Sr Catherine Flynn.*

### **USA SCMM's and Covid 19**

As we hear the statistics (as of August 5) we know that the USA has a very high percentage of people with this virus.

Where 5 of us live in Connecticut we are fortunate our numbers are holding steady with no significant increases. Our 6th SCMM lives in Chicago, a densely populated city, with once again an increasing number of cases. Yet she remains well and safe. She is able to continue her ministry of Spiritual Direction by various means of technology.

As with everyone this is a strange time for us slowing down abruptly, staying at home alone (Quarantineing), mostly avoiding groups of more than 4 or 5 (social distancing) and wearing masks to protect others and ourselves from the airborne virus. Since we are all in the vulnerable age group of infecting others or being infected, we are being very careful to follow faithfully all the protocols set out by medical and governmental experts.

We are fortunate to have friends and services which take care of us so we have everything we need.



Technology has also enables us - Sisters and 'Friends' - to meet one another on Zoom trough email, phone calls and occasionally, short visits face to face or rather masked face to masked face.

We are very aware of one another and make special efforts to show our concern for one another and to be supportive of how each is managing these stressful times.

Because life has slowed down we have more time for reflection and remembering all who are suffering in prayerful ways.

We are reminded in Psalm 97 that Our God is at the heart of all things.

### **Joys and sorrows**

Sr Lucine Masselink died on 28 June 2020 in Tilburg.

Sr Gerda Kramer died on 24 August 2020 in Tilburg.

On 24 September Sr Maria Pilar Unggay will celebrate her 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee in the Philippines.

On 3 October Sr Alberta Telaumbanua will celebrate her 65<sup>th</sup> jubilee in Indonesia.

We wish you a wonderful summer and hope that it will be possible to control the corona virus in the coming weeks so that we shall be able to meet you again next year face to face.

