



ISSUE 15
ADVENT 2020

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A Message from the CIB Moderator

I have been pondering since early in this time of pandemic what it is that we, especially as monastics, are to learn from this experience of virus, contagion, sickness, fear, isolation, lockdown, etc. And I am still pondering it. In reading the reports of the various CIB regions contained in these pages, I have seen some common issues that seem to bind us together in this. First and foremost, we can see that this time has been both a challenge and a blessing for us. There have been unexpected benefits for our monastic communities even as we have experienced many undesired limitations and some fear, as well as sickness and death (both in our communities and in our families).

The Benedictines have said, because they have had to close the doors of their monasteries due to the coronavirus, that they miss their friends who visit their monasteries, those who come to pray with them and share their lives and support them. Our monasteries have experienced a large financial impact from the pandemic because of loss of income from their guesthouses, their retreat ministries, their gift shops, and other sales of the products usually produced in their monastery workshops. Of course, another large impact has been that many houses have not had access to a priest chaplain during these months and so the loss of celebration of the Eucharist has been an unwelcome experience. Nevertheless, some have found new and creative ways to *be* Eucharist for one another in their communities. Also, through the magic of technology many houses have been broadcasting the praying of the Divine Office from their monastery churches which has allowed more people than ever to share in their prayers by connecting through the internet. Benedictine women have found new ways to connect with people outside their monastery walls, cognizant of the fact that many people for the first time have been restricted to their homes and find themselves lonely and hungry for God in a new way. So, Benedictines have reached out through phone calls and social media, meeting some of those needs in new ways.

Many Benedictines have been making masks by hand and distributing them to those in need. Wearing a mask became a way for people to help stop the spread of the virus through respiratory droplets exhaled into the air. The creativity and generosity of Benedictines has been a Godsend to many in the areas nearby the monasteries.

Some monastics have become the experts of “pandemic living” in quarantine, having been contacted and interviewed by journalists who have been writing about what it is like for people who must stay home during this time. I have been gratified by the responses of the monastics I have seen who have been interviewed for these stories in the media, who have testified about their life in community, their life of prayer celebrated around the clock, praying for the needs of the world.

CIB Moderator Message, cont.

This issue of the newsletter is longer than other editions have been as we wanted to publish the reports we received from the 19 CIB regions of the world. (Some of the reports are included in both the original language in which it was written together with an English translation through the friendly online translator, DeepL.com.) I hope that you will appreciate reading what our sisters from around the world have said about the experiences in each of their regions. As I read them, I became ever more grateful for the communion among us as Benedictines. It is indeed a gift to be a Benedictine and to know so many of you who live your monastic lives faithfully, in stability to the monastery of your profession, seeking God in this monastic way of life, joined together with your sisters in community as well as with all the Benedictines around the world. I believe more than ever in the power of our prayer together. People around the world depend on those prayers, most especially during this time of pandemic, of fear, of uncertainty, of sickness and death. Our world needs healing. Let us always be places of peace and of the healing Word who came into the world to redeem us all.

I am very happy to include information about Sister Benedict Brown of Turvey Abbey in England, our webweaver for the new (and former) CIB website. Please see that information about our new and improved website. We hope you will go online and see the new beauty of the website that Sister Benedict has created for us. <http://www.benedictines-cib.org/>. Please be alert to information provided by Sister Benedict how you can get word out in your regions through the CIB website. Sister Benedict will be happy to include news from your region on the website.

Also, I am pleased to introduce you to Sister Mary Luke Jones of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana, USA, who is our new CIB Executive Secretary. Her email address is: ljonesosb@benedictine.com. Be sure to read her biographical information in this newsletter. We also extend thanks to Sister Mary Jane Vergotz of Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania, USA. We are most grateful for the incomparable service that Sister Mary Jane has given to us all over her 10 years with us as CIB Executive Secretary. And we look forward with gratitude to the role that Sister Mary Luke will have in the CIB.

I am delighted to also include in this newsletter two other unique items: one is an Advent poem written by a talented Spanish speaking Benedictine poet who prefers to remain anonymous. It appears here in both Spanish and English, thanks to the help of an English speaking Benedictine. Perhaps it will inspire you budding poets out there to write your own Advent or Christmas poem! If you do write a poem, we would be happy to place it on the CIB website so that others can appreciate your good work of the heart.

Finally, included here is a link to a wonderfully creative and exquisitely beautiful short CIB pandemic video that I hope you will find inspiring: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/u4w2e5il0wu8qfe/CIB%202020%20%282%29.mp4?dl=0> I cried as I watched it, knowing the suffering that has been endured due to COVID-19 by too many around the globe and also knowing the *communio* we share as Benedictine women. Let us offer our gifts of prayer, community, love, compassion and healing to our hurting and frightened world and remain united in prayer. As always, let us prefer nothing whatever to Christ and may he bring us all together to everlasting life. (RB 72:11-12)

Lynn McKenzie, OSB (Region 9, USA & Canada)
CIB Moderator



ADVIENTO

Para un Dios
que nacerá frágil,
como un Niño,
en medio de
nuestra gran fragilidad,
tenemos mucho
que preparar.
Que se halle cómodo
en nuestras relaciones,
que no le falte
la alegría de
nuestra bondad.

De un Dios
que nacerá frágil,
como un Niño,
en medio de
nuestra gran fragilidad,
tenemos mucho
que esperar:
con él vendrán
los abrazos
que ya podemos desear.
Las canciones
¿de qué nos serviría
ante un Niño sermonear?
Acogerá el cuidado,
y el cuidado nos traerá
paciencia y paz.

Ante un Dios
que nacerá frágil
como un Niño,
se nos regala un tiempo
para entrenarnos,
para ganar agilidad,
poniendo a su disposición
nuestra gran fragilidad.

ADVENT

For a God
who comes
as a fragile Child
in the middle of
our great fragility,
we have much
to make ready,
that he may be welcome
and at ease among us and
not lack
the joy of
our kindness.

From a God
who comes
as a fragile Child
in the middle of
our great fragility,
we have much
to expect:
with him will come
an embrace
that we already anticipate.
And we will have songs.
What good would it be
to preach to a Child?
He will welcome our care,
and his care will bring us
patience and peace.

Before a God
who comes
as a fragile Child
we are given a season
to learn,
to gain agility,
to offer Him
our great fragility.

-written by a nun of Spain
who prefers to remain Anonymous

Pandemic Report of Region 13 - Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan

COVID-19 and our Lives

From January 2020, South Korea was hit by COVID-19, with the second-largest number of infected persons following China. From February, the Korean government did its best to keep the virus from spreading with the strict guidelines from “Korea’s Response to COVID-19”. Except for the hospitals, most of the places where a large crowd gathers, public institutions, schools, factories, and churches were closed. All the religious communities and monasteries restricted members from their ministries, going outside, having visitors, vacation, etc. All active religious congregations in Korea, including Benedictines, suddenly had to become “contemplative orders” cloistered in the monasteries. Annual retreats and education programs, professions and other functions were either reduced in size or canceled, but meeting online using programs such as “Zoom” became more active. Perhaps all the communities around the world are going through similar experiences.

Thanks to thorough guidelines from the government and the incredible cooperation from the citizens, the number of people infected from COVID-19 has decreased relatively quickly, and daily lives have somewhat restored. None of the sisters in Korea caught the virus as of yet. From summer, everyday lives have been back to normal a lot in Korea compared to Europe and North America. Our prayers, love, and consolations are with many of the communities of CIB in Europe and North America who have experienced tremendous hardship and sorrow in their communities due to COVID-19. We all are still standing in front of the enormous challenges of uncertainty that makes it impossible to look ahead to the future. Korean Benedictine sisters consolidated with all women religious in Korea in praying for the end of the pandemic with special prayers, masses, holy hours, and rosaries. The Association of Major Superiors of Women Religious in Korea held a symposium on “The Consecrated Life in Post-Corona Era.” The meeting took place online through “Zoom” with the lectures of an anthropologist, a Benedictine monk, and sisters from an active religious congregation followed by discussion sessions. Reflecting on how the lives of the consecrated in Korea should be, the symposium affirmed that our calling is to live simple and sustainable lives, recover “the genuine community” which has been disappearing even in the religious communities, and to show maternal care for the poor and in need.

All we have to do to fulfill the present urgent calling is to return to the Rule of St. Benedict. We believe that the Rule, written 1500 years ago, holds the wisdom and tools that we need the most in our times of confusion and challenges.

Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing Daegu Priory

The Tutzing Benedictine sisters of Daegu priory went through a difficult time in terms of the spread of COVID-19. At the beginning of the year, the city of Daegu greatly suffered from the virus outbreak from protestant churches. However, the sisters thoroughly followed the guidelines in a state of complete quarantine and thankfully there are no sisters infected with the virus. Daegu priory runs two big general hospitals and many sisters working in those hospitals are at the forefront of the field, taking risks and serving with dedicated care for corona19 patients. The sisters of Daegu priory are very grateful for the prayers and concerns for them from the CIB sisters around the world.

Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing Seoul Priory

Seoul priory had the election for a new prioress on October 15th and Sr. Illumina Lee elected as the new prioress, succeeding Sr. Rosemary Hwang. Seoul priory had to change the election schedule several times to follow the social distancing guidelines. We ask for the prayers for the Seoul priory at this important turning point with the new superior and for Sr. Illumina, who will be responsible for the community in these difficult times. Sr. Illumina will be the new delegate for the CIB Region 13 following Sr. Rosemary Hwang.

Olivetian Benedictine Sisters of Busan

To encourage the medical staff who are fighting with the pandemic in the frontline and to express gratitude and solidarity, the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of Busan visited screening centers and hospitals around the city with snacks that they made. Also, they have been preparing and delivering meals once a week for the elders who live alone without any assistance after the social distancing guidelines went into effect. Our work is limited, and it is tough to help people in need because of the strict quarantine guidelines from the government, but the sisters are doing their best to reach out to the people in need.

Meetings in 2020

The annual meeting of ‘the Benedictine Conference of Korea’ scheduled in May was made simple to a Zoom meeting. The other meetings such as the formation conference and junior’s meeting were canceled. The gathering for the Benedictines of East Asia and Oceania (BEAO) was planned to be held in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam in November was also canceled. Fortunately, “the committee on Inter-religious Dialogue and Ecumenism” belong to ‘the Benedictine Conference of Korea’ was able to continue their meetings this year. The representatives from each monastery working on this committee have met several times a year to have chances of understanding and learning about other religions and to seek solidarity for world peace.

Thanks to the pandemic, we deeply acknowledged that everything is interconnected, and no one can be saved alone. Although the friends of CIB cannot see each other face to face right now, we pray that our Koinonia continues to grow with prayers and solidarity. Just as Noah’s family came out of the Ark after the great flood, let us have faith and courage hoping for the Pascha of humanity, starting anew with sustainable and ecological lives as ‘Sowers of Prophetic Hope’.

M. Enosh Cho (Region 13 Substitute)
Prioress General of Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of Busan, South Korea

NOTE: Region 13 includes not only South Korea but also Vietnam, Japan and Taiwan. However, regrettably, no information was received by the Region 13 delegate from these 3 countries of the region.

Region 16 – East Africa

In our country of Tanzania, the situation was not bad as what happened in other countries. The first patient of corona virus was reported on 7 March 2020 in Arusha region, who came from outside of our country. Later some more patients coming from different countries were found in few regions.

Our President announced nationally to have 3 days of fasting and praying, asking Our Lord to rescue the nation from the disease. He said, “Let us ask Our Lord and He will hear us.” He strongly told the people to depend on our God. All of us did so - everybody according to their beliefs. The government gave us the instructions how to prevent the transmission of the virus: regularly washing hands with soap and running water, wearing masks, close all the schools, avoid the gathering together, sit distantly in churches and mosques during prayer, and taking hot water mixed with lemon juice and ginger. There was also some traditional steaming with some types of leaves which were used in some tribes to treat patients who had high fever.

The president refused to lock down the people. He still always talked to the nation to continue working and not to be afraid. Slowly the situation became better. After 3 months all the schools were opened again and we had again 3 days of fasting and praying nationally to thank our God for the good progress in combating the disease. From that time everything went back to normal. We as sisters were helping to educate the people how to follow up the instructions properly. No deaths have been reported from the congregations as far as I know. In our region (Ruvuma) very few patients were reported in two hospitals. Most of them were cured after treatment. But there were large numbers of deaths in big cities, e.g., Dar es Salaam. We thank our president for the effort he took to allow people to continue to work so that people were able to feed their family from daily work (farm, gardening, etc.)

*Submitted by Sr. Asante Goliama,
Region 16 Substitute, Songea, Tanzania*

2 o 2 o C I B R e g i o n a l R e p o r t s

Compartir Región 2 CIB. Pandemia Covid-19, 2020 España & Portugal

Cuando empezaron las noticias sobre la Covid 19 en China tardamos en hacernos cargo de cómo nos iba a afectar, pero pronto, a medida que nos iban llegando las noticias sobre la expansión de este virus vimos que su transmisión era rápida, seria y letal. Entonces empezamos a tomar conciencia de la seriedad del caso, máxime cuando nuestro país estaba creciendo en contagios y muertes de forma descontrolada. De una cierta indiferencia pasamos a una seria implicación.

En nuestra Región ha tenido especial fuerza. Oficialmente en España han sido 35.000 fallecidos hasta el mes de octubre, de ellos 350 religiosos, 1 de cada 100. En nuestros monasterios ha fallecido también una hermana en **Madrid** donde hubo también otras dos hermanas más infectadas, en Barcelona una hermana pasó por la enfermedad, en **Montserrat** y en **Oviedo** en algún momento también algunas hermanas estuvieron aisladas con síntomas más o menos graves de Covid. En el comienzo de esta segunda ola, que llega con más fuerza, nuestra Comunidad de **Jaca** se ha visto afectada con ocho hermanas infectadas, a las que confiamos a vuestra oración.

También Portugal, donde hubo menos casos en la primera ola, ahora enfrenta un gran número de contagios. En varios de nuestros monasterios ha habido fallecimientos por otras causas, pero las medidas sanitarias no permitían vivir los funerales y entierros como habitualmente. Y lo mismo ocurrió con el fallecimiento de padres, madres, hermanos... de las monjas. No fue posible acompañar, estar cerca, compartir la oración, consolar...

Nuestra vida ha cambiado, todas las claves de nuestra vida se han visto afectadas: Vida de Comunidad, Acogida, Liturgia, Trabajo, ...

En la propia Comunidad: hemos adoptado desde el primer momento del estado de alarma (14 de Marzo) medidas sanitarias antes nunca vistas, pero asumidas con paz y responsabilidad; distancia entre nosotras en el Coro, el refectorio, las salas de encuentro,...; el uso de mascarilla incluso dentro del monasterio, o el Coro, la constancia limpieza de manos, superficies, etc...

Esta distancia nos afecta pero hemos ganado en sentido de pertenencia y vida comunitaria. Compartimos la información, los temores, la incertidumbre y vulnerabilidad que sentimos, por nosotras y por todos.

Pronto tuvimos que **cerrar nuestras iglesias al culto**, y en varios de nuestros monasterios no podíamos celebrar la eucaristía ni compartir con las personas que habitualmente acuden a las celebraciones. Entonces, hemos celebrado Liturgias de la Palabra (con o sin comunión dependiendo de las circunstancias) y también en algunos monasterios la televisión o internet han suplido en parte esta carencia.

Especialmente relevante por el sentido de comunión universal ha sido, en algunas comunidades, el participar de las celebraciones del Triduo Pascual presididas por el Obispo de Roma.

La sobriedad de este despojo litúrgico no ha disminuido, sino que al contrario, ha profundizado, nuestra oración. Hemos redescubierto la Liturgia de las Horas, y la fuerza de los salmos, como oración de Cristo. En algunas comunidades, respondiendo a la petición de distintas personas han transmitido sus celebraciones a través de internet También se han buscado formas de incrementar de alguna manera nuestra súplica según cada comunidad: preces especiales, nombrar a los enfermos en la oración, rosario en comunidad, adoración al Santísimo, red de oración... con un recuerdo especial de las personas mayores, que no han podido ser atendidas, que han fallecido en un gran número, solas... sin consuelo.

Con la **portería y la hospedería cerradas, como en Alba de Tormes, nuestra acogida se ha visto también afectada**. En algún monasterio, como **Palacios de Benaver**, se ha desarrollado actividades de acompañamiento telefónico de personas solas, han sido acogidas en el

seno de la comunidad a personas ancianas próximas a la comunidad como en **Zamora**, y en general se han recibido muchas peticiones de oración y se ha intensificado la plegaria, como en **Trasmañó**. Por otro lado, también hemos recibido muchas muestras de solidaridad, en algún caso también económico o se ha incrementado el intercambio de productos con los vecinos. La oración y la escucha atenta y orante de la gente más afectada está siendo una ayuda para muchas personas.

En **Roriz** (Portugal) compartieron el confinamiento con 4 hermanas congoleñas y 1 hermana angoleña lo que fue un gran enriquecimiento; habían quedado atrapadas, sin poder regresar a sus monasterios, tras la celebración de su Capítulo General, que finalizó antes de lo previsto con la llegada del estado de alarma

En sus aspectos relacionales con el exterior, se han disminuido, casi eliminado, las actividades que el monasterio realiza. Hemos experimentado **paradójicamente una cierta calma**, un silencio envolvente, especialmente en monasterios que están en el centro de ciudades llenas de vida como **Santiago de Compostela** o **León** donde tuvieron que cerrar el Albergue de peregrinos. Algunas comunidades han podido servirse de este tiempo más lento o tranquilo para cuidar la **formación** de la comunidad a través de los cursos *on-line*. O realizar otras tareas pendientes.

Con el confinamiento **en casi todas las comunidades ha cesado el trabajo remunerado** (hospederías, colegios, venta de dulces o de productos artesanales...) pero ha aumentado el trabajo de las monjas que tuvieron que asumir todas las tareas para las que tenemos una ayuda externa y eso sobrecargó a la comunidad. Todo ello ha tenido repercusiones económicas de gran impacto ya que han disminuido muchísimo los ingresos de nuestras actividades económicas, teniendo que seguir abonando en su totalidad o en parte los sueldos de los trabajadores externos.

Junto al impacto de las realidades duras y dolorosas (confinamiento, liturgias en soledad, distancia social, ausencia del abrazo, el beso y la caricia, ocultamiento del rostro tras la mascarilla, preocupación constante por los contagiados, sanitarios, la vivencia casi inhumana del misterio de la muerte..., y la necesidad de hacer duelo por las personas y por las situaciones de pérdida y los proyectos pospuestos, incertidumbre por el futuro a muchos niveles...) **hay también signos de esperanza.**

Hemos sentido el gozo y la grandeza de tantas personas: destacamos y agradecemos la labor extraordinaria de todo el personal sanitario y de servicios, su generosidad, su profesionalidad exponiendo sus vidas constantemente por salvar otras vidas. Y también hemos sido testimonio de personas anónimas ayudando al prójimo más necesitado sin esperar nada a cambio.

Hemos tomado más conciencia de la fragilidad del ser humano. Aquí se ha visto que todos somos igual de vulnerables. Nos ha hecho sentir la posibilidad, como ellos, de entrar en la incertidumbre y la angustia de no saber hasta dónde/cuándo podemos resistir sin ingresos.

Ha sido también otro momento para tomar conciencia de que el planeta, nuestra casa común, está sufriendo y el confinamiento ha podido dar un respiro a la tierra. Hemos visto claro que se puede vivir más sobriamente.

Y hemos ganado en acercarnos más a Dios, en valorar más la oración, en vivir más desde la fe y la esperanza porque esta pandemia nos ha hecho apreciar más lo esencial, lo que permanece para siempre, y que nada ni nadie, ni siquiera el virus puede destruir. Solo el amor permanece.

Con lo que hemos vivido y experimentado, esperamos poder afrontar y atravesar esta segunda ola de la pandemia que está ya en crecimiento, de la mejor manera posible. *Y no desesperar jamás de la misericordia de Dios* RB 4,74

2 Summary Region 2 ClB. Pandemic Covid 19. 2020

o Spain & Portugal

When the news about Covid 19 started in China it took us a while to realise how it was going to affect us, but soon, as news about the spread of this virus reached us we saw that its transmission was rapid, serious and lethal. Then we began to become aware of the seriousness of the case, especially as our country was growing in contagion and death in an uncontrolled way.

In our Region it has been particularly strong. Officially in Spain there have been 35,000 deaths up till October, of which 350 religious, 1 out of every 100. In our monasteries a sister has also died in Madrid where two other sisters were infected, in Barcelona one sister passed through the disease, in Montserrat and in Oviedo at some point some sisters were also isolated with Covid symptoms. At the beginning of this second wave, which is arriving with greater force, our Community of Jaca has been affected with eight infected sisters, to whom we entrust our prayers.

Also Portugal, where there were fewer cases in the first wave, now faces a large number of infections. In several of our monasteries there have been deaths from other causes, but the health measures did not allow funerals and burials to take place as usual. And the same thing happened with the death of parents, siblings... of the nuns. It was not possible to accompany them, to be close to them, to share in prayer, to console them...

Our life has changed, all the keys of our life have been affected:

Community life, Welcome, Liturgy, Work, ...

From the first moment of the state of alarm (14th March), inside the communities, we have adopted sanitary measures never seen before, but assumed with peace and responsibility; distance between us in the Choir, the refectory, the meeting rooms,...; the use of masks even inside the monastery, or the Choir, the constant cleaning of hands, surfaces, etc...

This distance affects us but we have gained a sense of belonging and community life. We share the information, the fears, the uncertainty and vulnerability that we feel, for ourselves and for everyone.

Soon we had to close our churches to worship, and in several of our monasteries we could not celebrate the Eucharist or share with the people who usually come to the celebrations. So we have celebrated Liturgies of the Word (with or without communion depending on the circumstances) and also in some monasteries television or internet have partly made up for this lack. Especially relevant for the sense of universal communion has been, in some communities, the participation in the celebrations of the Easter Triduum presided over by the Bishop of Rome.

The sobriety of this liturgical deprivation has not diminished but, on the contrary, has deepened our prayer. We have rediscovered the Liturgy of the Hours, and the power of the Psalms, as the prayer of Christ. In some communities, responding to the request of various people, they have transmitted their celebrations through the internet

Ways have also been sought to increase in some way our prayer according to each community: special prayers, naming the sick people in prayer, rosary in community, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer network... with a special remembrance of the elderly, who have not been able to be cared for, who have died in great numbers, alone... without consolation.

With the reception and the guesthouse closed, as in Alba de Tormes, our welcome has also been affected. In some monasteries, such as Palacios de Benaver, activities have been developed to accompany

people by telephone, elderly people close to the community have been welcomed into the community, as in Zamora, and in general many prayer requests have been received and prayer has been intensified, as in Trasmañó. On the other hand, we have also received many expressions of solidarity, in some cases also economic, or the exchange of products with the neighbours has increased. The prayer and the attentive and prayerful listening of the people most affected is helping many.

At Roriz (Portugal) they shared the confinement with 4 Congolese and 1 Angolan sisters which was a great enrichment; they had been trapped, unable to return to their monasteries, after the celebration of their General Chapter, which ended earlier than expected with the arrival of the state of alarm

In its relationship with the outside world, the activities carried out by the monastery have been reduced, almost eliminated. Paradoxically, we have experienced a certain calm, an enveloping silence, especially in monasteries that are in the centre of lively cities such as Santiago de Compostela or León where they had to close the Pilgrims' Hostel. Some communities have been able to use this slower or quieter time to take care of community formation through on-line courses. Or to carry out other pending tasks.

With the confinement in almost all the communities, paid work has ceased (guesthouses, schools, sale of cakes or handicraft products...) but the work of the nuns has increased and they have had to take on all the tasks for which we have external help and this has overburdened the community. All of this has had a great economic impact, as the income from our economic activities has diminished greatly, having to continue paying all or part of the salaries of the external workers.

Together with the impact of the hard and painful realities (confinement, liturgies in solitude, social distance, absence of the embrace, the kiss and the caress, the hiding of the face behind the mask, the constant concern for the infected, for the health, the almost inhuman experience of the mystery of death..., and the need to mourn for the people and for the situations of loss and the postponed projects, uncertainty for the future at many levels...) there are also signs of hope.

We have felt the joy and the greatness of so many people: we highlight and thank the extraordinary work of all the health and service personnel, their generosity, their professionalism, constantly exposing their lives to save others. At the same time we have witnessed the anonymous people helping others in need without expecting anything in return.

We have become more aware of the fragility of human beings. Here we have seen that we are all equally vulnerable. It has made us feel the possibility, like everybody, of entering into the uncertainty and anguish of not knowing how long we can resist without income.

The situation has helped us to become aware that the planet, our common home, is suffering and that confinement has been able to give the earth a break. We have seen clearly that it is possible to live more soberly.

And we have gained in coming closer to God, in valuing prayer more, in living more from faith and hope because this pandemic has made us appreciate more what is essential, what remains forever, and what nothing and no one, not even the virus, can destroy. Only love remains. With what we have lived and experienced, we hope to be able to face and cross this second wave of the pandemic that is already growing, in the best possible way. And never despair of God's mercy RB 4,74.

CIB 2020 – Region 9 Report

USA and Canada

Submitted by delegates: Sisters Aileen Bankemper, Tonette Sperando,

Jeanne Weber, First Substitute Clare Carr, Second Substitute

October 24, 2020

- Region 9 is comprised of Benedictine monasteries in the USA and Canada.
- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, life as we have known it has changed drastically since March, 2020:
 - Meetings such as Conference of Benedictine Prioresses (CBP), 55 and Under, Training of New Visitors, Benedictine Spirituality Workshop and Retreat (BSWR), and Inter-Federation Archives Committee were either cancelled, postponed, or held virtually.
 - Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) was held virtually. The two major initiatives for the year are as follows:
 - The initial work of a five-year commitment to undo institutional and systemic racism within the organization as well as within the member congregations and wider society.
 - The ongoing discernment conversation regarding the movement into the future of religious life as a whole and how communities might organize themselves in new ways in order to respond wholeheartedly to the demands of mission today.
 - The bubbling up of America’s hidden social viruses: racism, violence, police brutality and the political polarization of our nation as we head into an historic presidential election is drawing a record number of citizens to vote. Many monasteries are responding by including special intercessions in the Liturgy of the Hours or setting aside additional prayer times for just, compassionate, and peaceful outcomes.
 - Each monastery implemented various safety precautions in response to the pandemic:
 - Varying degrees of quarantine continue to be in place for members, employees, and guests.
 - Eucharistic liturgies were cancelled or limited to Sunday, solemnities and some feast days. Communities with live-in chaplains continue to have Mass daily. Sisters preside at communion services and give reflections.
 - Several discernment and elections of prioresses were postponed.
 - Communities gather for periods of silence and/or participate in intentional prayer opportunities on behalf of our world during this time of pandemic. Prayers for those suffering from the virus, for those who care for them, and for an end to the pandemic are regularly included in the Liturgy of the Hours. Several prayer activities such as Liturgy of the Hours and funerals are live-streamed so that family and guests may participate virtually.
 - Zoom or other forms of video conferencing have become the norm. Communities participated virtually in retreats, meetings, workshops and webinars. This allowed Oblates and other guests to participate when appropriate.
 - Some community sponsored ministries temporarily closed. Others such as schools and retreat centers developed online educational and spiritual programming opportunities, in addition to offering virtual Spiritual Direction.
 - Employees practice social distancing, wear masks, and have temperatures taken regularly. Some employees work remotely from home.
 - Sisters practice social distancing in the Chapel and dining room as best they are able, wear masks when in close contact with each other or employees, and have temperatures taken as determined appropriate.
 - With restricted travel opportunities allowed, specific sisters are delegated as shoppers for the community.
 - With limited staff on site, sisters have taken on more household responsibilities.
 - Outside visiting with guests is allowed on a limited basis with appropriate distancing, masks, and temperature checks required. With winter near, visiting outdoors may not be possible.
 - If sisters must travel staying overnight outside of the monastery, they are required to quarantine upon their return.
 - Sisters who do not live in the monastery have participated in events via Zoom or other virtual formats. Some have been permitted to attend some activities at the monastery but not stay overnight.
 - Some sisters who live at the monastery but work outside of the monastery have been asked to sit apart from the majority of the community in the chapel and dining room so as not to be in “close contact” with others.
 - COVID-19 knows no boundaries. Even with safety precautions in place, sisters in at least five of the monasteries have tested positive for the virus. One community experienced the death of one sister due to complications from the virus with many others in that monastery also testing positive.
 - Although the pandemic has brought great hardship to our monasteries - physically, psychologically, and economically; it has also provided an opportunity for a deeper spiritual life to emerge for individual sisters and the communities, has strengthened bonds, and has called us to a deeper level of trust and faith in our God who knows the plan for us and desires only that which is good. Our hope rests in God alone.

Congregation of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters Our Sisters' Involvement during the time of Pandemic

CASA MODIFIES GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

BY SR. ANTOINETTE ADELMAN, OSB

March 9, schools and universities are directed to close. Soon after, Italy is put into a 'lockdown' mode with people expected to stay at home. Needed permits and fines give support to this government directive. Suddenly the public places and streets of Rome are quiet and empty, as are the churches right up to St. Peter's Basilica and its piazza. Consequent, too, our Mariannahill Fathers no longer can come to the Casa for daily Eucharist.

March 17, the community begins participating in Eucharist by live-streaming with Pope Francis' daily Holy Mass at Santa Marta. In the community, the Sisters practice social distance by using the conference hall for the Liturgy of the Hours and to participate in the daily Eucharist with Pope Francis. Likewise, in the refectory the Sisters move farther apart, and begin using the guesthouse dishes and dishwasher. The International Weeks of Encounter (IWE) needed to be cancelled as announced in the ninth common letter of M. Maoro Sye dated March 3. Our hope was to have the opening of the IWE, coincide with a fitting jubilee liturgy with the Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB presiding at the Eucharist. Needless to say, our jubilee closing was modified. Attentions went to completing a Congregation display. As the weeks progressed, an exhibit under the creative genius of the display committee unfolded. Wednesday, April 22 became the focus day for celebrating the final event of the golden jubilee of Casa Santo Spirito.

April 20 - The table reading on Monday evening, was Sr. Bernita Walter's description of the move from

Grottaferrata to the new house, Casa Santo Spirito.

April 22 - In the Liturgy of the Hours, we highlighted the day with the English office taken from Foundation Day, September 24. When the Sisters heard the 'jubilee bell', brought in late February from Tutzing by Sr. Maria Ignatius Glaser, they quickly assembled at the corridor for the ribbon cutting ceremony. Then followed: a blessing by M. Maoro, an explanation of the exhibit halls, and a especially prepared Midday prayer that expressed our sentiments: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his mercy endures forever". The display committee members, Sr. Monika Groth, Sr. Marie Johann Heo, Sr. Philippa Kwak and their many assistants, worked more than two months to prepare this exhibit of Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing. We thank them for their time, patience, creativity, zeal and perseverance to ready an expansive display in the hall and chapter room. The exhibit includes nine wall panels detailing the image of our Congregation tree from roots to fruits. At the world map are identified our locations with a string linking it to a "face"/photo of the priory/district house. In the nearby showcases are valued archival items, while in the chapter room one can view on ten tables, on the floor before the tables, on the window ledges, and on the walls, a full museum of objects / artifacts / cultural items which are usually in various places in the Casa, besides those kept in storage cabinets. It seems most appropriate that the current members of Casa Santo Spirito view this display after our formal ribbon-cutting ceremony. Hopefully, all could gain new appreciation and gratitude for the treasures hidden in the Casa, as well as appreciation and gratitude for our Missionary Benedictine identity and calling.

A festive *pranzo*, and later a coffee colloquy with freshly baked cream puffs by M. Maoro, and other warm specialties and entertainment continued to fill the jubilee day. In her closing comments during our afternoon colloquy, M. Maoro stated

that, yes, many of our month-by-month activities which we planned for the Casa Santo Spirito jubilee year were accomplished. Then life changed. Yes, the COVID-19 virus did shift our focus.

Our vespers was taken from the September 24, Foundation Day Italian office with Latin antiphons.

After supper was the evening adoration for the victims and circumstances of the COVID19 virus which helped us to reset our awareness of the circumstances of our todays.

To end our special day, the compline prepared our minds and hearts for thankful praise to God for His wondrous ways. It gave us a snapshot review of the past fifty years in the Casa and the eventful activities of April 22, our Jubilee day, that were woven into a tapestry of blessings.

SISTERS MAKE FACE MASKS AND SHIELDS

Sisters from different priories sew face masks for sisters' use and for donating to medical staff in hospitals, health workers and people in need of them. Face shields are also produced by the sisters. One can only admire sisters in their 90s who have been part of the working force. They are Sr. Paula Leick, 95, from Norfolk Priory and Sr. Alesia Beer, 94, from Haus St. Benedikt.

SISTERS REMAIN VIGILANT IN THE HOSPITALS

Sisters from Daegu and Manila priories remain vigilant in the hospitals as they continue to provide treatment to all kinds of patients amid the COVID19 pandemic.

TACLOBAN HOSPITAL OPENS COVID-19 TESTING LABORATORY

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Divine Word Hospital, Tacloban received the license from the Department of Health to operate the Virology COVID-19 laboratory testing on May 13, 2020. Our medical echnologists were sent to Manila for

Missionary Benedictines, cont.

a six day-training at the University of the Philippines National Institute for Health. All of them passed the proficiency test conducted by the RITM – Research Institute of Tropical Medicine with perfect scores. This application went along with a lot of structural and documentary procedures.

The COVID-19 testing laboratory performs the Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction or RTPCR testing of the virus SARS-COV-2 (name of the pandemic virus). The sickness is called COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019). It can detect even if there is only one virus present in the specimen. It is the specific and confirmatory test for the COVID-19.

We opened our COVID testing lab on May 18, 2020. We first tested our front liners. These are our nurses and resident doctors in the emergency room, isolation unit for COVID patients and those in 4 triage areas. Triage areas screen all the people who enter the hospital if they have cough, colds, sore throat and fever and ask their travel history. All in-patients with respiratory symptoms and those who did not have respiratory symptoms but turned reactive to the Rapid Antibody Test were tested with RT PCR. Likewise we also test all major surgical, obstetrics and gynecological, ophthalmology, ENT (ear, nose and throat) and aerosol generating procedures who will undergo general anesthesia and including local anesthesia for ENT procedures.

We serve the whole Region VIII (the Eastern Visayas Region with a population of 4.4M). The Local Government Unit of the province of Leyte, which donated 3 equipments, signed an agreement with us. They also provided the test kits for their patients. They sent 650 nasopharyngeal swabbed specimens from the government employees of Leyte. The Petron and San Miguel Corporation sent about 600 specimens, for the Filipino overseas workers who come home to Leyte, those who come home from Manila and from other provinces. We also serve requests from other hospitals

and walk-in patients. We hope and pray that in our effort and courage to take the risk in building a COVID-19 laboratory, our hospital will play a significant role in the early detection of the virus and so assist the Local Government and all those who made their request to be tested, to contain, quarantine and stop the spread of the COVID-19. In addition, we pray that in so doing, we can save lives.

As of June 5, 2020 our COVID laboratory tested 835 total number of specimens, 829 of these turned negative and 6 were positive.

BY SR. AMADEA DONADILLA, OSB

PANDEMIC RELIEF EFFORTS NORFOLK

By Sr. Rosann Ocken, OSB

Every year the Norfolk community chooses a special project for our annual “bazaar”. This is normally an indoor event with guests filling our cafeteria. Because of Covid-19 we took a much simpler outdoor “Lemonade Stand” approach. Tables flanked our long north drive filled with items for donation to benefit coronavirus relief efforts.

The sisters work all year sewing, crocheting, knitting, weaving, etc. We raffled three beautiful quilts made by the sisters. We also had what we call a “white elephant” section of used books and items, donated from our friends. We were so very grateful for the amount of people who participated and for what was collected. The proceeds have been given to local organizations helping the poor, as well as Catholic Charities and the Francis- Siena House in Omaha who are known for their work with the poor. We are also most grateful for the anonymous benefactor who gave a donation for our international missions to benefit the poor affected by the coronavirus who are served by our sisters.

BREAD (Begetting Relief and Express Assistance for the Deprived)

SR. CONSTANCE TECSON, OSB

MANILA. The BREAD (Begetting Relief and Express Assistance for the Deprived) program of the Manila

Priory is its immediate response to the escalating hunger, poverty, and joblessness of the Filipino people caused by COVID-19. This is spearheaded by the Priory House Community. The daily challenges of living the new normal at this time and the risks of being infected by the virus did not stop the Sisters from working hard to extend their hands to the needy. The Priory House community was divided into three groups to take charge of the feeding program schedules. Each group has to prepare their menu and to do what are needed: the purchasing, cooking, packing, and distributing to the people. Every Wednesday, the Sisters distribute packed meals to the hungry people outside the Chapel. On Saturdays, they do a mobile food distribution and give out some relief packs. They distribute 150 to 200 food packs per feeding or 350 to 400 packs per week. Our thanks go to Sr. Rosann Ocken and the Norfolk Priory who helped us through a donation to sustain this project. We also get donations in cash or in kind from friends and alumnae.

Social Works (Reaching out to the suffering people)

Nairobi is under lockdown from the beginning of the April because of the pandemic, so many poor people who mostly get their daily necessities through daily work were starving because they could not go to work. So our Sister Serva asked her friends in Korea to send some donations to help them and graciously they sent. First group of to be helped was Wasafi, former street boys (introduced previous new letter) and the next group was their poor neighbours in slum. Sr. Serva brought them food and masks. They really appreciated what we have helped and we were also happy to be united with them. May God have mercy on the whole world!

Join the Hope Campaign Relay to Overcome COVID-19

Daegu Fatima Hospital participated in the Hope Campaign Relay to convey a message of thanks and cheer to the medical staff struggling at the forefront to overcome COVID-19. The *Hope Campaign Relay* is going

Missionary Benedictines, cont.

on by posting messages of hope on social media and nominating the next person to post for those struggling with COVID-19. Sr. Anita Park, chief executive officer of Daegu Fatima Hospital, along with the medical staff of the operation room including Medical Director, Hu Dong-myeong, made slogans, such as 'I'm strong because I'm with you', 'We are all true heroes', 'Corona be ended! Daegu Fatima is with you.', and posted them on the hospital's official blog, Facebook and Instagram.

Social project "Looking for peace" – in Sorocaba / Brazil

The project "Looking for peace" attends families in situation of social vulnerability. With the arrival of the pandemic the situation worsened. In face of the actual scene we needed to support the children who could not come to us. At the project, the activities were suspended, the situation of danger became more evident, because the children suffer with the violation of their rights. What would be of our little ones during quarantine? I was worried. Solidarity took us near reality, and our mission continues. Sisters who sew made mascararas to be distributed. During our recreation we joined kits of hygiene to be given to the families.

During two months, from Monday to Friday, we delivered 150 meals, in partnership with an organization of industries. All the days our school made the driver available to help with the distribution. To all our gratitude. Twice a week we assist the families with the delivery of activities for the home work of the children.

The families also get the necessary orientations as to use the mascararas, to care for hygiene and donations. At the end of each month we hand over food stuffs and kits of hygiene, thanks to the Program Table Brazil of industries. Our partnership grew: a Sister from another Congregation in Rio de Janeiro indicated us to get food stuffs and kits of hygiene from a company in São Paulo. Donations from firms continue.

We thank God for so many people ready to help us during these difficult

times. We got blankets, detergent, washing powder, milk, chocolate, aprons, mascararas...

The families are assisted and orientated, but unfortunately the situation of violence and negligence, present in daily family life, became worse. Two families lost the right to care of their children. We also attend families refugees from Haiti.

**Project in Manila
COVID19- BREAD
Programme Missio Project No
329000-0547-2020-C
ACTIVITY REPORT**

(September 2020)

INTRODUCTION

COVID 19 – BREAD Programme, which was dubbed B.R.E.A.D. Amid COVID 19 during its conceptualization and initial implementation, is the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing (MBST) – Manila Priory's express and programmatic response to the worldwide pandemic, the continued transmission of which has recently put the Philippines on the 20th rank of countries with the most number of positive cases. B.R.E.A.D. stands for **B**egetting **R**elief and **E**xpress Assistance for the **D**eprived as the project aspires to meaningfully contribute to efforts geared towards alleviating the escalating hunger of the poor triggered by the pandemic in MBST mission areas in Metro Manila. BREAD has three components: relief assistance, health education and livelihood assistance. Although relief assistance has been undertaken since mid-July 2020, internal resources of the congregation and local contributions have not been ample to cover the entire project and its target sectors, hence, funding assistance



from foreign support groups had to be tapped. The favorable response from **Missio Munchen** has encouraged the BREAD project committee to set off

advanced partial relief assistance to families of dislocated jeepney drivers whose condition has seriously deteriorated.

**PROJECT
IMPLEMENTATION (Initial)
Component: Relief Assistance**

Preparatory Activities

Responding to the worsening situation of the jeepney drivers who have already resorted to begging in the streets, the project committee decided to hold consultations with representatives of the four targeted organizations of jeepney drivers, each group corresponding to a particular route. The meetings aimed at gathering updated information on the status of the target clients, needs validation, criteria for selection of clients and a brief orientation on the BREAD project.

Distribution of Relief Packs

Since available resources could only cater to a partial number of target clients, priority was given to 185 out of the 400 jeepney drivers from the four groups; they are those who were forced into the humiliating experience of begging from previous passengers and strangers out in the streets or from friends and relatives for their families' daily crude subsistence. On September 14, 2020, relief packs containing food and hygiene items were distributed to 102 jeepney drivers of the "Singalong-Zobel-Roxas" route. The second wave of relief distribution was conducted on September 24, 2020 for 30 drivers of the "Caloocan- Baclaran" route, 34 drivers of the "Dominga-Libertad"

Missionary Benedictines, cont.

route, and 19 drivers of the “CCP-Vito Cruz” route. Non-compliance to some protocol/technical requirements resulted in low turnout from the group routes. The food packs included rice, salt, cooking oil, noodles or Bijon, sugar, mongo, salted eggs, dried fish, instant coffee, chocolate drinks, and assorted canned goods while detergent bar, face mask, face shield, 70% isopropyl alcohol and a COVID 19 information poster comprised the hygiene packs. In the latter part of relief distribution, we already included squash or pumpkin donated by an alumna.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Although available but limited resources were able to provide relief assistance only to more or less half of the targeted clients, the project committee’s resolve to implement the project partially with a careful process of selection, was so much appreciated not only by those who were prioritized but also by their respective organizations and fellow jeepney

drivers because without the assistance, the daily subsistence of the families of the 185 drivers is their burden and moral responsibility as well.

The consultations and actual integration of the project committee, staff and volunteers with the clients during distribution of relief assistance were eye openers to the deplorable situation of the poor who are hardest hit in this ongoing COVID 19 pandemic and a validation as well of the relevance of the BREAD program. The overwhelming support of **Missio Munchen, Uli Holdenried Foundation and other supporters** will definitely pave the way for the continued and complete implementation of the relief assistance and the other components of the project. This project will be a learning opportunity and hopefully a stepping stone to a grounded and realistic long term response to the effects of COVID 19 for the MBST apostolates and mission partners.

As of 10.3.20

THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED!



REPORT OF REGION 12 DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC QUARANTINE CONO-SUR

During this time of quarantine, all the Communities of Region 12 have intensified community life, prayer, silence, and tried to find the means to continue with permanent formation.

We all had the joy of celebrating the Easter Triduum. Most of the communities were able to have the celebration of the Eucharist thanks to the generosity of Bishops and Priests -friends of the communities- but without the participation of Oblates or the faithful. Anyway, some communities that are far from the cities have suffered from the absence of a Priest for the celebration of the Eucharist, but in a sporadic way.

All the communities have been able to make their annual retreat through recordings or other electronic means.

One of the communities of our Region 12, the Monastery Madre de la Unidad, in the province of Santiago del Estero, was in quarantine since an elderly Sister was diagnosed with covid-19. Thanks God they were without symptoms and now they are all fine.

All the monasteries have had to close their hospices, but the generosity of the faithful has met our needs.

The Assembly of Abbesses, by means of virtual meetings, has been able to work with great participation of all and in detail the amendment of the Constitutions responding to the directives of Vultum Dei quaerere and Cor orans.

The situation of the pandemic in the Southern Cone is still very compromised, and in Argentina in particular the situation is aggravated by the political-social crisis.

Coping with the pandemic Region 4, UK & Ireland

Lockdown in this region began immediately before the feast of St Benedict in March. For those who had not realized it already, this and the fact that there would no longer be daily Eucharist brought home just how serious the coronavirus was.

Before giving the responses of the communities, I should say that one response was common to all – that we in our monasteries are blessed compared to many. We have space inside the monastery and around; we are not isolated; we have community, support and fellowship; we look after each other and if we need care ourselves, there is always someone there for us; we celebrate the Work of God together. Prior to the pandemic, we perhaps wouldn't have noticed all this, but now we do and realize how much we have to thank God for. There are many for whom Covid and its restrictions bring real suffering.

The communities in the region are mainly contemplative and enclosed, with mission for the Church expressed mainly through the celebration of liturgy, prayer and hospitality. Four Grace and Compassion communities run care homes for the elderly and the infirm.

Liturgy

Most communities suddenly found they could no longer celebrate daily Eucharist, which was a great shock, especially as Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter were approaching. (For one community, however, the virus prevented a visiting monk from returning to his monastery; he was 'stuck', to the great benefit of that community!). Sadly, Eucharistic fasting continues for some communities, especially for those which run care homes, since the need to protect elderly residents is paramount. Enclosed communities are also affected. Live-streamed Masses are a lifeline. In the summer restrictions were eased, so some now have Mass occasionally, to their joy. Others are back to daily Mass, with social distancing measures, thanks to help from monks from a nearby monastery. This might stop if the UK government decrees a major lockdown or if a monk or nun in either community gets the virus. Sadly, some monasteries cannot allow anyone other than the community into church to share in Mass and liturgy, not even neighbours.

During the initial period of lockdown daily Eucharistic services became the norm for most communities. One advantage was that sisters who would not normally speak publicly had the chance, in leading the celebration, to share their reflections on the readings. They were 'given a voice' they had not expected to have.

Some communities live-stream some of their Office. Oblates, among others, appreciate this. Those who participate in live-stream Masses feel solidarity with the wider church, since most of the People of God were not as blessed in this respect as members of religious communities. The sisters appreciate the link with parish life and are moved by the dedication and faithfulness of those who are prepared to celebrate Mass in this way.

One community chose not to have Eucharistic Services, to be in solidarity with those for whom Mass was not possible. The sisters were given the choice of having communion from the tabernacle if they wished, but no one chose to do so. The celebration of the Office was sole liturgy - except for a funeral of an elderly sister.

Our ministries

All the communities had to close their guest houses and hospitality facilities. Apart from the celebration of liturgy, this has been the area of the virus' greatest impact. Inevitably, this was generally seen as a huge loss because sharing what we receive from the Lord is important. I say 'generally' because it was noted that hospitality work can be very demanding, so the (temporary) break came as something of a relief.

With the absence of hospitality work, sisters came to appreciate again how much people and hospitality are part of monastic life, how life-giving it is, how much they receive through it.

Without the usual facilities, new and diverse ways of showing hospitality developed. Contact was maintained through letters, emails, telephone and Zoom calls. Communities made greater use of their websites to post talks and reflections. It is clear from the responses of those who read the talks that this was genuinely appreciated. People who wouldn't normally look at monastic websites write out of the blue in appreciation.

With the gradual easing of restrictions, some hospitality work could resume - but it had to be carefully managed. Even now, some communities do not allow anyone into the monastery. Meeting people - 'having parlours' in monastic-speak - now means sitting outside with the guest whatever the weather or going for a walk. Even here there has to be social distancing (an extraordinary, new, but useful, phrase created to fit the present need). It is strange not to be able to offer guests a cup of tea. If they do want a drink, they are to bring their own cup or use a disposable polystyrene one!

Reg. 4, UK and Ireland, cont.

The communities that run care homes are particularly challenged. Preventing Covid entering the home in the first place remains the priority and then there is the challenge of containing it should it enter. Staff and residents at least (as opposed to many across the country) have regular Covid tests. With minimal visits of families and friends, the sisters and staff are often the only point of contact for the residents. Among the sisters (a number of whom come from abroad), some have lost loved ones to the virus and it has been very difficult for them not to be able to go home and see sick family members or attend a funeral.

There have been some benefits, however. One superior noted how through 'the total embargo on visitors we were drawn into a more radical form of enclosure than we are accustomed to.' 'The positive experience of less busyness, more silence, reading/study, a more prayerful atmosphere did us good.' The return to some sort of normality brought 'a new thoughtfulness about the balance between enclosure and engagement with the world.' Many communities echoed these thoughts, such that when life returns to normal they are thinking of ways of adapting their hospitality so as to keep the atmosphere of peace.

The oblate mistress of one community developed an interesting way of keeping up with oblates. Zoom meetings were not possible (no Zoom account), so the oblates had 'lectio via email'. Strange as it may seem, it worked well.

Income, finance

No longer being able to receive guests meant a significant loss of income for many communities, and this remains a concern. One community has a building programme underway and having to stop its tourist business was a heavy loss. One community observed, however, that running a guest house was not a profit-making enterprise, so when the guest house closed, they saved money. Reduced expenses for the guest house also went some way towards compensating for loss of income from investments.

Travel was, of course, restricted. Reduced travel brought reduced travel expenses, so there were additional savings here!

Technology

This was not a heading for which I asked a response, but clearly there has been a growth in appreciation of new technology. 'Hospitality' is now extended through emails, phone calls, Zoom or Skype. Congregational meetings, council meetings, AGMs, training sessions, conferences and workshops have all been held by Zoom. This development was described as 'a very positive and helpful aspect of the pandemic.' One wonders whether, when life returns to normal, face to face meetings will resume or whether Zoom will take over!

Two sisters were interviewed on BBC Radio 5 Live about living in lockdown conditions. It was thought that nuns were experts in this! The interview generated a good response from the public. Many were surprised that the sisters sounded quite normal!

Any positive experiences? The effect on the spirit of the community generally?

As mentioned, communities have appreciated the greater silence and peace, the reduction in busyness, the additional time for reading, study and prayer. A new spirit of gentleness and tolerance started to form in the community. Some communities took a holiday, where the timetable was relaxed, meals were informal and there was opportunity for long walks. Some mentioned the extraordinary kindness and co-operation they experienced, from strangers as well as friends. Groceries would suddenly appear on the doorstep from people concerned how the sisters were coping. Donations increased.

Some sisters, however, missed the outside contact, not having guests around. But, as another superior said, 'we try to practice hospitality towards each other in community.'

One community, located near major UK airports, appreciated the reduction in flights and in traffic noise, aircraft and cars.

One superior writes (and other communities have been doing something similar):

However, we have also channelled it (the extra time) into

- community conversations on our monastic life with regular meetings to reflect on past and present experience
- regular discussions on the revision of our Customs
- a revision of the books for our Liturgy of the Hours
- vibrant and most enjoyable community celebrations for jubilees etc.
- beginning the re-organisation of the Archives
- Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti have generated a lot of discussion – and the exploration of installing solar panels for most of our electricity

Region 5 Benelux

Dear Sisters from all over the world!

In this time of pandemic, our little region does not have a lot of news! Right now, our countries are facing a new wave of COVID, which means a new lockdown. With all the rules given by the States to go through this pandemic, we have had a very special year. No people were allowed in the celebrations during Easter, for example. For some communities, life continues nearly like ordinary time. Others are really impacted: guesthouses closed, no more monastic shops opened, no more production of altar bread... so they are looking for new sources of income.

Some communities find this lockdown just like a very long retreat time, giving more time for lectio, prayer.

In my community we have taken time to reflect about Eucharist. After readings, sharings, historical searching, we decided to come back to the use of the first Christians: we celebrate Eucharist on Sundays and feast days. And during the weekdays we have a liturgy of the Word. A sister or a lay person is in charge of the reflections during those days. To help people to pray during the lockdown, we also organize a transmission of the liturgy by zoom, so they can join us, and really participate.

That's a little bit how we are living in this time, in Benelux.

We wish you already a very blessed Advent time!

sr Myrèse Dupagne
(in the name of the region 5 Benelux)

Chères sœurs du monde entier!

En cette période de pandémie, notre petite région n'a pas beaucoup de nouvelles! En ce moment, nos pays sont confrontés à une nouvelle vague de COVID, ce qui signifie un nouveau confinement. Avec toutes les règles données par les Etats pour traverser cette pandémie, nous avons vécu une année très spéciale. Les gens n'étaient pas autorisés à participer aux célébrations de Pâques par exemple. Pour certaines communautés, la vie continue presque comme si c'était le temps ordinaire. D'autres sont vraiment touchées: les hôtelleries ont fermé, de même les magasins monastiques, plus de production de pain d'autel.. Elles cherchent donc de nouvelles sources de revenus.

Certaines communautés trouvent ce confinement comme un très long temps de retraite, donnant plus de temps pour la lectio, la prière.

Dans ma communauté, nous avons pris du temps pour réfléchir à l'Eucharistie. Après des lectures, des partages, des recherches historiques, nous avons décidé de revenir à l'usage des premiers chrétiens: nous célébrons l'Eucharistie le dimanche et les jours de fête. Et pendant la semaine, nous avons une liturgie de la Parole. Une sœur ou un laïc est chargé de la prédication pendant ces jours-là. Pour aider les gens à prier pendant le confinement, nous organisons également une transmission de la liturgie par zoom. Ainsi, ils peuvent se joindre à nous et participer réellement.

C'est un peu comme ça que nous vivons en ce moment, au Benelux.

Nous vous souhaitons déjà un temps de l'Avent béni!

sr Myrèse
(au nom de la région 5 Benelux)

CIB - Region 11 (Brazil) REPORT

Thanks be to God who sustains us in all our tribulations.

It is with these words that I wish to begin our report, as it was his powerful hand that sustained us and continues to do so during this time of pandemic.

Our communities were affected mainly with regard to liturgical celebrations and revenues from artisanal work.

For our community of Maria Mãe do Cristo, after the Christmas holidays, the year started with great joy: the abbatial blessing of Mother Anna Maria dos Santos, the newly elected abbess.

Our abbey church is very small and the celebration took place at the parish church, Basilica of the Martyr Saint Lawrence. The Most Reverend Filipe da Silva, Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Benedict of Rio de Janeiro and Abbot President of the Benedictine Congregation, was principal celebrant at the Mass, that was concelebrated by Dom Frei Diamantino Prata de Carvalho, OFM, bishop emeritus of our diocese of Campanha and the Rev. Abbots Dom Emanuel d'Able do Amaral, of Bahia, Dom Matias Tolentino, of São Paulo, Dom Luis Pedro Soares, of Olinda, Dom José Palmeiro Mendes of Rio de Janeiro and many priests. We welcomed with joy the singers of the Schola cantorum of the Monastery of Nossa Senhora da Graças who came to help us with the celebrations and the Abbesses, nuns and monks of the other Monasteries of our Congregation.

In September the joy of an abbatial blessing was renewed in the Monastery of Salvador, with Madre Benita Sodr , elected second abbess of that Monastery. During the liturgy, Archbishop Dom S rgio Cardinal da Rocha bestowed the church's blessing upon her. Abbot Emanuel of the Monastery of Saint Benedict of Bahia was one of the concelebrants. In view of the pandemic, our communities were only able to participate from afar.

March brought us the lockdown with its consequences. The monasteries are observing social isolation, which brought a great problem for the women monasteries for one of the main sources of income is the making of handicrafts, confection of bread, jam, cakes, cookies, cards, invitations etc. In view of our vulnerable elderly sisters, the abbeys' churches, parlours and bookshops remain closed. And this is causing a decrease in the sale of products.

Our Monastery of Maria Mãe do Cristo goes through the crisis with the help of God, without any Sister having suffered from the virus. Since March 19, we have had no daily Mass but could watch it on TV, including Holy Week. On Corpus Christi Day, a friendly priest came to celebrate and since that day, we have a Sunday Mass and since September, 8 a daily Mass, and people have begun to come.

Some nuns of three of our Monasteries got sick with Covid-19, but managed to recover.

We had the joy of celebrating in January, together with the Monastery of Nossa Senhora das Graças, the 100th birthday celebration of Sister Helena Quintino dos Santos.

The Brazilian Benedictine Congregation was also delighted with the celebration of profession and priestly jubilee of monks and nuns.

In relation to the celebration of the Mass, each monastery was affected in a different way during the pandemic.

In addition to the schedules of Catholic networks on TV and YouTube, the parishes made the celebration of the Mass available on Instagram and / or YouTube to the faithful. The monastery of S o Bento de Brasilia was one of the first to put the celebration of Sunday Mass on Instagram. And the Monastery of Rio de Janeiro soon afterwards also placed the daily Mass and Divine Office on Instagram and YouTube.

During this period, we also participated with regret at the funeral of five Sisters from the Monastery of Nossa Senhora das Graças, in Belo Horizonte and one from the Monastery of Nossa Senhora da Paz, in Itapecerica da Serra.

We were able to feel the hand of God protecting us and guiding us, inspiring so many benefactors to seek us out to know that we were in need of and to make generous donations in food and medicine to us.

Region 17 Central & West Africa & Madagascar

IVORY COAST. Bouake

The Pandemic seems to have less impact in the city of Bouake with only a few cases. However, everyone is invited to take habitual precautions such as keeping a social distance, wearing a mask, washing hands very often, taking shower and changing clothing after returning from the city before joining the community. The nuns kindly made masks for their workers which they wear in order for them to keep working as usual and be able to provide for their families. Although the pandemic is not really a concern in Ivory Coast, the nuns remain vigilant and continue to pray for God to keep us all safe.

SENEGAL- Keur Guilaye

The Community of Keur Guilaye feel very vulnerable with this covid-19: They had one hospitalization and two cases of quarantine. All their regular activities (guesthouse, transformation of fruits, fabrication of the holy communion) that help their community to survive are shut down. They are still hanging on God's Providence. Thanks to the generosity and solidarity of the population who assisted them with food donations such as milk, oil, rice, sugar and soaps. In return, they always open their doors to those in need despite the risk of contamination. There is no

celebration of masses there at this point.

BENIN- Péporyakou

The community of Peporyakou observed that with this pandemic, it's still business as usual for the governments of the world. Public buses are still packed and running as usual, tribunals and all other government branches are functioning as if there are no risks of catching covid 19. So they wondered why only the church should be restricted as if our God is contagious. They refused to believe in these big lies going on in the world. As a result, they took action in time to bring in the former Prior Marcellin of the Trappist monastery for help before the movement of the population was restricted. In that way, Masses and necessary sacraments are carried out as usual with everyone wearing masks which curiously people are allowed to remove when it comes the time to eat as if the coronavirus suddenly disappeared....

BURKINA FASO- Koubri

In Burkina, a country already affected by the terrorism, the population has more questions than answers and their own views and doubts about this new covid-19 which divides families and prevents them from sharing moments of prayers with others. Some tend to believe the coronavirus is a

pure creation of the most powerful of this world or the Jihadists who disturb their quiet life and routine. In the community of Koubri, all precautionary measures from the health officials and the diocese are followed to prevent

contamination. The guesthouse has been closed. Even though things are getting slowly back to normal, they still follow all the measures when they go to town or to the market in the village. A true solidarity among neighbors, the local church and themselves - despite the barrier measures - is a great help for everyone. They saw refugees at their door and were solicited to temporarily host people in transition of finding a final refuge despite the pandemic. Living in the countryside, the use of local herbal teas is popular and recommended; everyone is encouraged to share their herbal teas with each other, which their community did as well with friends and families. Its use gives a feeling of protection among the population at this time of the pandemic. They are thankful to God that their Zone has been safe despite being considered at some point as a possible red alert Zone of covid-19. In the neighboring two towns and ten villages, about ten people were contaminated and one passed away. This Pandemic encourages more frequent communications, shared

Reg. 17 Central & West Africa & Madagascar, cont.

information and supports between their community and others in their own country and those in neighbor counties as well. They all pray for everyone.

GUINÉE CONAKRY-Friguiagbe

This might sounds a little surprising but the nuns kept a good memory of their few months of quarantine. Although the congregation strictly followed and keep following all the precautionary measures related to the covid-19 and its restrictions, which, no doubt, have many financial impacts, the nuns saw in the quarantine a unique and positive opportunity to step back , to revisit the history, to strengthen their knowledge

while experiencing together as a community the original life, the values and the realities and of the very first nuns living in monasteries. This necessitated some adjustment. For example, the absence of the hired workers meant all the nuns had to take over. Everyone was helping everyone as a happy team to get things done and to take care of the monastery. New and hidden talents suddenly were coming to light. Everyone was amazed. All the nuns, as

one strong team, are doing their best for their community to try to meet more or less the end despite this pandemic.

The community's prayers are reinforced with this pandemic as we follow the news, think about the realities of each country and the poor health system of others. Prayers, psalmody, are said for the world, especially for all the congregations. Our lectio is revived with more readings of the word of the Lord and meditation. We were so happy and touched to follow the words of Pope Francis during Holy Week via the internet which is a very useful tool for us with this pandemic. This pandemic is an opportunity for each nun to strengthen her faith in God who never abandons those who put their faith in him.

TOGO-SADORI

Following this world pandemic, the community of Sadori sees an urgent call from God to keep praying harder for humanity. As a result, during the first wave or at the peak of this Covid-19, the nuns decided to sacrifice their precious recreational moment for additional prayers. The confinement itself was not much of a problem for the nuns as it's part of the nuns' usual life. Masses were not always said. They are replaced sometimes by

meditations on the word of God followed by the holy communion.

The financial impact was disastrous. The sales dropped 75%. That's a very difficult financial moment and the community is still dragging its feet until now, unable to recover. Despite the heartbreaking financial news, the community decided not to lay off the paid workers as they depend on their salaries to provide the basic financial needs for their families, especially some of them were already struggling and facing all kind of hardships in their life and loss in their families. Therefore, the nuns of Sadori felt the call to stand by them and show solidarity and compassion despite this pandemic and its consequences.

As a preventive measure against the virus itself, the community relied on a daily intake of a local tea made of ginger and honey to stay safe. This has been proven to be a good remedy. In addition to this, all the precautionary measures were followed. This is not only in Togo but also in neighboring countries. No more than fifty deaths were registered at the moment in Togo. The community joins all the communities in the world to continue to pray for this pandemic to end very soon.

Ciudad de México a 31 de octubre de 2020

Muy querida hna.

Lynn Mckenzie Moderado de CIB y Hermanas del Consejo.

ASUNTO: Informe de REGION 10 – ABECCA

Buenos días queridas hermanas, deseo que cada una de ustedes se encuentre bien y fortalecidas por la presencia amorosa de Dios, estamos haciendo llegar a ustedes el Aporte de nuestra Región 10.

Este año ha marcado grandemente cambios en nuestras vidas, monasterios, comunidades y apostolados que nos permiten redescubrir un rostro nuevo de Dios quien ha caminado con nosotras durante estos meses de confinamiento que aún no terminamos de ver llegar a su fin sino todo lo contrario, con la constante zozobra de un posible repunte como nos informan los medios de comunicación en nuestros diferentes países. Hna. Cristina y una servidora hemos tratado de mantenernos al pendiente de nuestra región a través de correos electrónicos, washap, y con posibilidad de continuar con la comunicación por medio de videoconferencias, esto nos anima y alegra porque es otra forma de hacernos sentir cercanas a las comunidades y monasterios de nuestra región y mantenernos en comunión. El proceso en nuestra región sigue lento, pero no sin frutos de un compartir, cercanía y oración como nos lo expresan las hermanas en su compartir.

Ante esta situación de pandemia y confinamiento y con pocas posibilidades de reabrir nuestros monasterios o comunidades con todos los cuidados necesarios, podemos constatar la bondad de Dios que se sigue mostrando en el compartir solidario de algunas personas que nos conocen, quieren y se preocupa por nuestras precariedades económicas. En medio de esta realidad es que hacemos llegar a ustedes el aporte y experiencias de algunas de nuestras comunidades de la región.

Monasterio Santa María de la Paz – Nicaragua

M. Fabiana Barrera nos comparte.

Nuestra comunidad en tiempo el tiempo de pandemia.

En todo este tiempo de crisis mundial, el Señor nos ha guardado en su providencia, damos gracias porque ella se nos ha mostrado en cada paso de la vida de la comunidad.

Este tiempo nos ha permitido estar más unidas en oración y comunión con nuestros hermanos enfermos y ya fallecidos, así también con todos los que están enfrentando esta realidad: médicos enfermeros y voluntarios. Nos hemos reunido en varias oportunidades para orar juntas:

periódicamente todos los días después de Tercia con el salmo 50 y los domingos con la adoración al Santísimo. En comunión con la Iglesia y el Papa hemos tenido días de ayunos. Y, por la Providencia que nos acompaña poder ayudar a nuestros

hermanos más pobres que llegan mensualmente al monasterio.

A pesar de esta situación hemos podido seguir con el proyecto del trabajo en nuestro campo con la implantación del engorde del ganado, siembras en nuestra huerta y el trabajo de forestación y el taller de los rosarios esperando una futura venta.



Mexico City, October 31, 2020

REGION 10 – ABECCA

Greetings, dear sisters, I wish that each one of you is well and strengthened by the loving presence of God, we give you here the contribution of our Region 10.

This year has greatly marked changes in our lives, monasteries, communities, and apostolates that allow us to rediscover a new face of God who has walked with us during these months of confinement that we have not yet seen come to an end but rather the opposite, with the constant anxiety of a possible upturn as the media in our different countries inform us. Sr. Cristina and an assistant have tried to keep up with our region through emails, What's App, and with the possibility of continuing communication through video conferences, this encourages us and makes us happy because it is another way to make us feel close to the communities and monasteries of our region and to keep you in communion. The process in our region continues slowly, but not without the fruits of sharing, closeness and prayer as the sisters express to us in their sharing.

In the face of this situation of pandemic and confinement and with little possibility of reopening our monasteries or communities with all the necessary care, we can see the godness of God that continues to be shown in the sharing in solidarity of some people who know us, love us and are concerned about our economic precariousness.

It is in the midst of this reality that we make available to you the contribution and experiences of some of our communities in the region.

Santa Maria de la Paz Monastery - Nicaragua

M. Fabiana Barrera shares with us:

Our community in time of pandemic.

In all this time of world crisis, the Lord has kept us in his providence, we give thanks because she has shown herself to us in every step of the life of the community. This time has allowed us to be more united in prayer and communion with our sick and deceased brothers and sisters, as well as with all those who are facing this reality: medical nurses and volunteers. We have met on several occasions to pray together: every day after Terce with Psalm 50 and on Sundays with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In communion with the Church and the Pope we have had days of fasting. And, by the Providence that accompanies us, we are able to help our poorer brothers who come to the monastery every month.

In spite of this situation we have been able to continue with the project of working in our field with the implantation of the fattening of the cattle, sowing in our orchard and the work of forestation and the workshop of the rosaries waiting for a future sale.

REGION 10 – ABECCA, cont.

Evidentemente todo esto ha influido en nuestra frágil economía, dado que ya no tenemos ingresos propios y estamos cubriendo nuestros gastos gracias a la generosa ayuda de la Orden, que agradecemos infinitamente. Todo este tiempo ha sido una oportunidad para centrar nuestra vida en lo esencial y ser un testimonio de Esperanza y fidelidad al Amor de Dios ¡Dios bendiga a toda nuestra familia humana!



Monasterio Trapense Santa María de la Esperanza Esmeraldas, Ecuador

M. Celia Quezada Santos nos comparte:

Santa María de la Esperanza está ubicada en el Noroeste de Esmeraldas, una de las ciudades más pobres del país. Aquí, el número de contagios del Covid 19, desde el inicio de la pandemia es desconocido; no hay pruebas suficientes y sin pruebas no aparecen los positivos. Hasta ahora la mayoría de las personas se auto medican y hacen la opción de quedarse en casa para curarse. Actualmente parece que hay una mejor organización en el sector sanitario, y esperamos que también exista más transparencia frente al despliegue de corrupción en nuestros políticos.

En cuanto a la pandemia y todo lo que se ha generado a raíz de la misma hay entre nosotras, una pluralidad de “lecturas” (somos de



7 nacionalidades, 32 hermanas más el capellán). Pero, todas coincidimos en que éste, es un tiempo de GRACIA y que estamos invitadas a vivirlo en una inmensa gratitud. Sentimos un cierto privilegio por el hecho de estar en Comunidad y por formar parte de una Orden.

Nuestra jornada Monástica como tal no ha cambiado; de hecho, vivimos aún más la separación del mundo y la austeridad de vida que se imponen. La oración es incesante, y nos desborda la confianza que las personas depositan en nosotras. Experimentamos con más ímpetu que “servimos a todo el género humano” en una “secreta fecundidad apostólica” como lo expresan nuestras Constituciones.

Hay tiempo y espacio para la Formación y proyectos comunitarios. Recibimos clases semanales de Dom. Bernardo Olivera por medio de zoom. Decidimos potenciar la apicultura y para el próximo año, si Dios quiere y gracias a la Ayuda Trapense se llevará a cabo la reparación de las veredas, columnas y paredes dañadas tras el terremoto del 2016.

Evidently all this has influenced our fragile economy, since we no longer have our own income and we are covering our expenses thanks to the generous help of the Order, which we are infinitely grateful for. All this time has been an opportunity to focus our life on the essential and be a testimony of Hope and fidelity to the Love of God

God bless our entire human family!

Santa María de la Esperanza Esmeraldas Trappist Monastery, Ecuador

M. Celia Quezada Santos shares with us:

Santa María de la Esperanza is located in the Northwest of Esmeraldas, one of the poorest cities in the country. Here, the number of infections of Covid 19, since the beginning of the pandemic is unknown; there is not enough evidence and without testing the positive ones do not appear. So far most people are self-medicating and making the option to stay home to get cured. Currently it seems that there is better organization in the health sector, and we hope that there will also be more transparency in the face of the spread of corruption in our politicians.

As for the pandemic and everything that has been generated by it, there is among us, a plurality of "readings" (we are from 7 nationalities, 32 sisters plus the chaplain). But, we all agree that this is a time of GRACE and that we are invited to live it in immense gratitude. We feel a certain privilege for being in Community and for being part of an Order.

Our Monastic journey as such has not changed; in fact, we live even more the separation from the world and the austerity of life that is imposed. Prayer is incessant, and we are overwhelmed by the trust that people place in us. We experience more strongly that we "serve the whole human race" in a "secret apostolic fruitfulness" as expressed in our Constitutions.

There is time and space for formation and community projects.

We receive weekly classes of Dom. Bernardo Olivera by means of zoom. We decided to promote beekeeping and for next year, God willing and thanks to the Trappist Aid, we will repair the paths, columns and walls damaged after the earthquake of 2016.

REGION 10 – ABECCA, cont.



Desde agosto (después de cinco meses) nuevamente abrimos este sector de acogida, aunque de momento de una forma limitada. Lo mismo hacemos con la Eucaristía de los Domingos a la que asiste un grupo fijo.

Continuamos con pequeños trabajos que los vendemos en nuestra mini tienda: encuadernación, confección de ornamentos litúrgicos, elaboración de hostias, manjar (dulce de leche), “key” (cake), cremas en base a miel y propóleo, varias artesanías y artículos religiosos como rosarios, denarios e íconos.

En este momento crucial de nuestra historia ese apoyo sigue vivo gracias a: AIM-USA, OCSO (Tulebras, Mepkin, Miraflores, Paraíso), amigos, familiares y otros bienhechores que cubren nuestro alimento diario y las necesidades básicas.

GRATITUD es la palabra clave que prevalece en este momento concreto de nuestra historia.

Hnas. Catequistas de María Santísima de Querétaro, México

M. Cristina Galván Valtierra



En este mes de Febrero el Señor me concedió la gracia de visitar las hermanas que se encuentran en la misión en Perú, en Cajamarca, en San Miguel y en Chugur. Nos reunimos las 9 hermanas que se encuentran prestando su servicio pastoral en las distintas parroquias. Realizamos la reunión de tres días para dar a conocer el proyecto comunitario que trabajaremos en

este sexenio 2019 – 2025 fue una experiencia fraternal muy bonita gracia a Dios, pues todavía no teníamos el problema del covid-19 y aprovechamos al máximo este encuentro fraternal.

El día lunes 16 de marzo aquí en la diócesis de Querétaro inicia la contingencia y se restringen eucaristías y salidas de casa y algunos trabajos. Se suspenden escuelas y oficinas, misiones de Semana Santa. Es declarada pandemia mundial el covid – 19.

Esto hizo que viviéramos nuestra vida espiritual con más intensidad se exponía el Santísimo Sacramento de 9:00 a 12:30 todos los días.

En abril del 5 al 11 tuvimos nuestros ejercicios espirituales los dirigió el padre José Ángel Operario Diocesano. Vivimos y experimentamos la gracia muy especial, Celebramos la Semana Santa en comunidad, teníamos muchos años que no la celebrábamos todas juntas siempre estábamos en misión con el pueblo de Dios.



Since August (after five months) we opened this reception sector again, although in a limited way for the time being. We do the same with the Sunday Eucharist which is attended by a fixed group.

We continue with small jobs that we sell in our mini-shop: bookbinding, making liturgical ornaments, making hosts, dulce de leche key (cake), honey and propolis-based creams, various handicrafts and religious items such as rosaries, dinars and icons.

In this crucial moment of our history that support is still alive thanks to: AIM-USA, OCSO (Tulebras, Mepkin, Miraflores, Paraíso), friends, family and other benefactors who cover our daily food and basic needs.

GRATITUDE is the key word that prevails at this particular moment in our history.

Sister Catechists of Mary Most Holy of Queretaro, Mexico

M. Cristina Galvan Valtierra

In this month of February the Lord granted me the grace to visit the sisters who are in the mission in Peru, in Cajamarca, in San Miguel and in Chugur. We met the 9 sisters who are counted as giving their pastoral service in the different parishes. We held the three-day meeting to publicize the community project that we will work in this six-year period 2019 – 2025. It was a very beautiful fraternal experience, because we did not yet have the problem of covid-19 and we took full advantage of this fraternal meeting.

On Monday, March 16, here in the diocese of Querétaro, the contingency began and there are restrictions on the number of Eucharists and on leaving the house, as well as on some work. Schools and offices are suspended, as well as Holy Week missions. Covid-19 was declared a world pandemic.

This made us live our spiritual life with more intensity. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed from 9:00 to 12:30 every day.

In April, from the 5th to the 11th, we had our spiritual exercises directed by Father José Ángel, Diocesan Operator. We lived and experienced a very special grace, we celebrated Holy Week in community, we had many years that we did not celebrate it all together we were always in mission with the people of God.

REGION 10 – ABECCA, cont.

En agosto el lunes 10, fue la Solemne Consagración de nuestra capilla. Día de gozo y alegría, con un número limitado de asistentes por motivo de la pandemia, eso no evito la gran emoción y gratitud hacia Dios por su infinita misericordia hacia nosotros. En septiembre martes 15, tuvimos la Celebración Eucarística en honor a nuestra patrona LA VIRGEN FIEL, la cual fue presidida por Don Mario



Administrador apostólico. Celebraron sus XXV aniversario nuestras hermanas las hnas. Teresita Correa, Lourdes Ayala, Guadalupe García y Bardomiana Muñoz.

El Monasterio de la Abadía Cisterciense Madre De Dios “EL Encuentro”, México

Nos unimos a la comunidad Madre de Dios “El Encuentro”, quienes después de un tiempo de discernimiento han acogido a M. Ma. Esther Mares Silva como nueva Abadesa, damos gracias a Dios por la vida de M. Inés Gravier quien ha dejado su mandato. Dios siga animando y fortaleciendo a la comunidad.

A través de la UBC (Unión Benedictina Cisterciense) en el próximo mes de noviembre tendremos la oportunidad de participar en el Curso que cada año se realiza, ahora gracias al P. Bernardo Olivera O.C.S.O. quien nos ha ofrecido dar el Curso Vía Conferencia dándonos la oportunidad de continuar de manera virtual con el proceso formativo que como UBC se realiza, ahora con el tema Reevangelización de la Vida Fraternal.

Misioneras Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey, OSB, México



En México seguimos en constante movimiento del Semáforo Epidemiológico el cual nos alerta ante la posibilidad un nuevo repunte de covid-19 ahondado el tiempo estacionario por la Influenza que agrava la situación en la mayoría de personas vulnerables.

Ante esta situación de pandemia y los desafíos que nos ha presentado y sigue presentando, como comunidades vamos tratando de hacer relectura de los aprendizajes que unas y otras descubrimos y nos ofrecemos. Si bien el Covid-19 ha limitado nuestras diferentes presencias de apostolados, al interior de cada comunidad nos ha brindado la oportunidad de encontrarnos, acrecentar y fortalecer nuestras relaciones, el diálogo, la creatividad, la confianza mutua va tocando día a día nuestros espacios de vida comunitaria, la recreación, convivencia, reflexiones, asumiendo nuestros duelos por la pérdida de fallecimiento de hermanas, la cercanía a pesar de la sana distancia. Aprender a usar los medios de comunicación (Plataformas) para podernos encontrar a través de reuniones y continuar con nuestra misión ha sido un desafío, necesitamos aprender. Nos mantenemos unidas ayudándonos a mira la vida con realismo, y con mucha esperanza, pero también redescubriendo la importancia de sostenernos unas a otras.

On Monday, August 10, was the Solemn Consecration of our chapel. It was a day of joy and happiness, with a limited number of people attending because of the pandemic. This did not prevent us from being very moved and grateful to God for his infinite mercy towards us. On September 15, we had the Eucharistic Celebration in honor of our patron saint THE FAITHFUL VIRGIN, which was presided over by Don Mario, Apostolic Administrator. Our sisters celebrated their 25th anniversary: Teresita Correa, Lourdes Ayala, Guadalupe García and Bardomiana Muñoz.

The Monastery of the Mother of God Cistercian Abbey "THE ENCOUNTER", Mexico

We join the community Mother of God "El Encuentro", who after a time of discernment have welcomed M. Ma. Esther Mares Silva as the new Abbess, we thank God for the life of M. Ines Gravier who has left her mandate. May God continue to encourage and strengthen the community.

Through the UBC (Cistercian Benedictine Union) in the next month of November we will have the opportunity to participate in the course that every year takes place, now thanks to Fr. Bernardo Olivera O.C.S.O. who has offered us to give the course via video conference giving us the opportunity to continue in a virtual way with the formative process that as UBC takes place, now with the theme Reevangelization of Fraternal Life.

Misioneras Guadalupanas de Cristo Rey, OSB. Mexico

In Mexico, we are in constant movement of the Epidemiological Semaphore which alerts us to the possibility of a new upsurge of covid-19, deepening the stationary time due to the Influenza that aggravates the situation in the majority of vulnerable people.

In view of this pandemic situation and the challenges that it has presented and continues to present, as communities we are trying to re-read the lessons that we have discovered and offered to each other. Although Covid-19 has limited our different apostolate presences, within each community it has given us the opportunity to meet, increase and strengthen our relationships. Dialogue, creativity, mutual trust is touching our community life spaces day by day, recreation, coexistence, reflections, assuming our mourning for the loss of sisters, closeness in spite of the healthy distance. Learning to use the media platforms to be able to meet through video meetings and continue with our mission has been a challenge. We need to learn. We stay together by helping each other look at life realistically, and with a lot of hope, but also by rediscovering the importance of sustaining each other.



REGION 10 – ABECCA, cont.

No fuimos la excepción ante esta realidad de Covid y lo pudimos experimentar al acompañar a algunas de nuestras hermanas quienes sufrieron el contagio, pero que gracias a Dios, a los cuidados necesarios y

atención médica se recuperaron, ahora tenemos otra hna. que ha adquirido el contagio nuevamente pero en USA. Ante las pérdidas de familiares que siguen siendo vario, amigos y personas cercanas a nosotras sentimos la urgencia e invitación de acompañarlos con profunda oración y respeto. Acrecentar la escucha a la que San Benito nos invita ha sido todo un ejercicio que hemos tenido que profundizar para brindar una palabra de consuelo, de esperanza y de paz. En nuestras comunidades nuestra liturgia es más profunda teniendo presente día a día lo que va aconteciendo, (el desempleo, marginación, hambre, violencia, feminicidios...), brindamos un tiempo suficiente a nuestra Lectio y desde ella acoger a las personas que ponen en nosotras su confianza, esto es una bendición.



El poder contar con la celebración de la Eucarística en algunas ocasiones en la comunidad nos alimenta y sostiene y podemos llevar a Dios las necesidades del mundo entero.

Nos hemos enriquecido con las invitaciones que Papa Francisco nos ha hecho durante este tiempo, así también por medio de videoconferencias que la CLAR (Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosas/os y del Caribe) y la CIRM (Conferencia de Superiores/as Mayores de Religiosas/os de México AR) nos comparten para fortalecernos en el caminar.

Seguimos aprendiendo a vivir la vida confiadamente porque Dios camina a nuestro lado y con su pueblo.

Con la confianza en que las experiencias compartidas por las diferentes comunidades puedan ser un aporte para la elaboración de nuestro Boletín de la CIB me despido agradeciendo la bondad y ternura de Dios que derrama en nuestras vida y comunidades.



Con gran afecto y cariño.

En comunión.

Hna. María Teresa Razo Laguna, OSB
Delegada Región 10

We were not the exception to this reality of Covid and we were able to experience it by accompanying some of our sisters who suffered from the contagion, but thanks to God, to the necessary care and medical attention they recovered, now we have another sister who has acquired the contagion again, but in the USA. In the face of the loss of family members who continue to be various, friends and people close to us, we feel the urgency and invitation to accompany them with deep prayer and respect. To increase the listening to which St. Benedict invites us has been a whole exercise that we have had to deepen in order to offer a word of comfort, hope and peace. In our communities our liturgy is more profound, keeping in mind what is happening day by day (unemployment, marginalization, hunger, violence, feminicide...), we offer enough time to our Lectio and from it we welcome the people who put their trust in us. This is a blessing.

Being able to count on the celebration of the Eucharist at times in the community feeds and sustains us and we can bring to God the needs of the whole world.

We have been enriched with the invitations that Pope Francis has given us during this time, also by means of videoconferences that CLAR (Latin American Confederation of Religious and of the Caribbean) and the CIRM (Conference of Major Superiors of Religious of Mexico AR) share with us to strengthen us in the walk.

We continue learning to live the life confidently because God walks beside us and with his people.

With the confidence that the experiences shared by the different communities can be a contribution for the elaboration of our CIB Bulletin I say goodbye, thanking God for the goodness and tenderness that he pours into our lives and communities.

With great affection and love.

In communion.

Sister María Teresa Razo Laguna, OSB
Region 10 Delegate

Region 18 South Africa & Namibia

It is my pleasure to communicate the extent of covid 19 and its implications. Unfortunately I did not receive information from Namibia. This report is therefore for South Africa only, which has 3 Congregations of women Benedictines.

Our Country went into level 5 lockdown, where everything was at stand still. It gradually moved out according to levels, with certain things being opened to certain extent. Now we're at level 1 and most things are allowed.

In August Corona infections attacked us in our convents, the entry being the clinics or persons helping the sick. At Twasana 9 sisters were infected, out of which 3 were in the novitiate. Through God's grace they all survived. At Elukwatini, Benedictine sisters of St Alban one sister became infected, but was healed too. With the Benedictine sisters of Christ the King more elderly sisters were infected by a member working in hospital who mixed with them after being diagnosed with the virus. One of them lost her life. Others were healed after the sisters did their best to provide them with whatever is recommended to help.

As a country we're now in level one, which was proceeded to because of lowering numbers of infections and deaths, but now the opposite is happening. The numbers are increasing daily alarmingly. Today new infections are 1,050, deaths are 164. So far all infections rest at 706,704, while deaths are 18,656.

Nowadays the virus seems to be more virulent. Our President Cyril Ramaphosa is in a dilemma because business owners want him to open the country completely so that they enhance their profits, while the situation of the Corona demands that he reverse lockdown to stricter levels.

In our convent at Twasana we observe social distancing, use facemasks and sanitizer and touching items that might spread infections, like dishing spoons, table items that are shared like salt, pepper etc. At kitchen the food is dished by chefs into our containers. Each sister takes her own and sits down to eat. That's not perfect, but we believe that we have to try our best and leave the rest to God.

Corona pandemic is the globe's serious challenge, but we live in hope that God is still alive and there in all our circumstances.

I shall continue to look for Namibia congregations to find out how they are keeping under covid 19. If I get any feedback I promise to let you know.

For now thank you and God bless you all.

Sr Bonaventure Tshabalala, Twasana, South Africa (22 October 2020)

Region 7: Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine

REPORT 2020

Our region, like the rest of the world, is struggling with the pandemic and its consequences, which affect our communities to varying degrees. Restrictions on movement and restrictions on meetings have prevented us from meeting where we usually exchange messages from our monasteries. The last such meeting took place in September 2019, shortly after the meeting of the CIB conference in Mexico, and it was unusual because it was attended by Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, who then visited many Benedictine communities in Poland and the monastery in Kaunas, Lithuania.



Poland

Since the beginning of March, when the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Poland, the whole society has been struggling with the epidemic and the associated threats and restrictions, depending on the extent of the spread of the virus in a given period. Almost one million cases have been reported so far, including over 17,000 deaths.



This situation has obviously also affected our communities. Sisters working in nursing homes and caring for the sick, disabled and the elderly have been in the most difficult situation. In such environments, the virus spreads rapidly and takes a lethal toll. **The Benedictine Samaritan Sisters of the Cross of Christ, Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict and Benedictine Sisters of the Mother of God of Loretto** have been very dedicated to the care



of the sick. Sometimes the situation becomes dramatic when infected sisters cannot take care of the sick and the continuation of this ministry requires reorganization in the whole congregation and often recourse to volunteers. During the lockdown, when the kindergartens remained closed, the sisters working there reported for help in hospitals.

Sisters also try to help in different ways: by donating blood, shopping for the elderly or those in quarantine, supporting them spiritually through phone calls and praying.



In such unusual circumstances, the **Benedictine Sisters of the Mother of God of Loretto** celebrated the hundredth anniversary of their congregation. They also continue their publishing activities.

The epidemic relatively least changed the life of the nuns (**Benedictine Nuns, Benedictine Nuns of Perpetual Adoration and Camaldolese Nuns**), although of course it was the reason for a special prayerful mobilization. The drastic limitation of the number of participants of the liturgy, the impossibility of organizing meetings, retreats and courses, as well as the restrictions in receiving

guests, due to the sanitary regulations, also had a great impact on the material situation of the monasteries and the difficulties in maintaining them.

The cloistered nuns joke that quarantine is their specialty, but the virus does not respect the cloister regulations and has invaded several communities, including the monastery in Siedlce (Benedictine sacrament), where all the sisters fell ill.

Despite all the adversities, the nuns lead a normal monastic life, trying to support each other and, although in a limited form, continue the cooperation between the monasteries, the formation meetings of the nuns and the oblates' communities.

Lithuania

This is how Sister Paulina Aleksandra Vanagaitė, the Kaunas Prioress, reports on the situation in Lithuania:

The situation in Lithuania was quite calm until October. But the situation of the last month caused us to make some new decisions regarding our activities. As the situation is growing worse in the country we also must take some precautions. The liturgy is not canceled in the churches, so we can celebrate Office and Eucharist. We do not know what limitations and what precautions will be next from the Government but now everyone is using masks, disinfection means, and keeping distance.

The sisters who are teachers at schools and universities now work on-line. Our catechesis activities with children and youth will be also replaced by meetings on-line from next week onward. We also reduced some of our programs. The work on-line takes much time and is very exhausting.

We feel that the virus is quite near. Some of the members of the families who come to pray with us got sick, some of them quite serious. We pray for their recovery.

There is a tension in some way, following the situation and waiting for instructions from Government and Church leaders. We try to do our best to protect ourselves and those whom we meet. And we hope that our Lord will help us to overcome this challenge.

Region 7: Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, cont.**Ukraine**

Ukraine is struggling with similar problems as our whole region. But let's end this short report with a sign of new life sprouting in the middle of the pandemic:

On June 4, the Archbishop of Lviv consecrated the cross, which was then placed on the church tower of the new Benedictine nuns' monastery, whose construction began 4 years earlier. The new foundation will be taken over by the sisters from Zhytomyr.



Despite difficult moments life goes on, difficult situations allow us to discover new deposits of trust in God and draw peace, strength, hope and joy from Him.

Region 19 – India & Sri Lanka

The announcement of the lockdown on 19th March 2020 came as a surprise. There was a great change in the daily life since then. We had no Mass from March 20th onwards. We carried on with our divine office and instead of mass had adoration of the Blessed Sacrament daily. All of us felt upset but got used to the situation. A priest friend of the Monastery came to buy candles in our shop and he accepted to come for mass on Easter Sunday morning. As the first Easter morning Father came early in the morning before the sunrise at 6 a.m. We locked the gates and for fear of police and had Holy Mass. Father lighted the Easter candle and blessed the water and he finished the mass quickly and left because he had to get back before the police are on the road. We closed our shop since people were not allowed to come. Since there are no Masses we stopped baking Altar Bread which is the main source of our income. The excise Officers came and sealed the Winery. So we could not sell Sacramental Wine though few priest wanted wine for the private masses. All our departments Altar Bread and Wine, candle making and receiving guests all stopped and we all started working in the fields. We were lucky to have fruits and vegetables from our garden. Some of our friends and benefactors brought us provisions so we were also able to share rice oil and other food items with our neighbors and workers.

On May 10th our Sr. Mary Xavier aged 74 suddenly left for her heavenly reward. She was suffering due to her bad knees and also diabetic related ailments. She died at 1.30 p.m. and we had to bury her within 5 hours, according to the covid -19 protocol. Though no priests were ready to come for the funeral, Fr. Jerome, Prior of Asirvanam Monastery, came with the permission of the Bishop and the police and said mass and did the last rites. It was a big shock for all of us. Her family also was very sad as they could not come. On Pentecost Sunday we had again the privilege of having Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Sibi, OSB a Sylvestrine monk from Vansharam. After that,

on Sundays, Fr. Sibi and some of our priest friends came on Sundays for mass. The community had retreat online and Fr. Sibi came and stayed with us for his retreat so we could have mass. Many of the sisters were not happy to have retreat without mass. Fr. Sibi said Mass every day and also accepted to hear confessions. On 26th of July we had the first profession of our 3 novices in a simple celebration at which Fr.Sibi OSB officiated. No one was present except the community. On 15th August two sisters made their Perpetual profession The Archbishop's secretary and Fr.Sibi concelebrated. Only the community was present. Our Sr. Amala, superior of the Monastery in Jamshedpur, had to have some treatment and with special permission she came and was in quarantine for 14 days. She stayed in the guest house. On 10th of September we woke in the morning to find ourselves surrounded by flood water. We were like in an Island. The whole night it rained and some municipal drains got blocked and all the water came into our compound. We lost all our vegetables and we had to pump out the water to a lower place. We were all busy all day clearing and cleaning etc. We have started to grow vegetables again. Our Abbey Chapel construction had stopped due to the pandemic and since October they started again. We were to finish it by July as it is the 50th anniversary of the blessing of the Abbey. We did not even have Holy Mass that day. We silently thanked God for all the many blessings showered on us during the last 50 years. Since October we have daily Mass. We are grateful to Our Heavenly Father for keeping us and our daughter houses safe and sound from the Virus. All our families also were safe except Sr. Bridget lost her sister in-law aged 74. She suddenly collapsed and died. After her death the test showed positive. Now life is coming to be normal even though there are many cases of Covid -19 around us. We, like Job, put our trust in the LORD. In spite of all the tragedies he kept faith in the Lord and was blessed doubly. Let us hope we, too, will be doubly blessed and like his daughters we too will become beautiful people.

Received from Sr. Nirmala Mathew 10-30-2020



Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba, Ashirbhavan Priory, Bhopal, India Report of our Monastery and its branch houses

*“Faith is believing the word of God and acting upon it,
no matter how we feel because God promises a good result”*

Covid 19 Relief work

The global pandemic COVID-19 has affected every nook and corners of our country and state and ***Benedictine Sisters of St. Lioba Ashirbhavan Priory, Bhopal***, rooted in God and in solidarity with the poor in the marginalized of the society were urged to respond proactively to the need of the hour of this challenging time. First and foremost all the communities of our Priory is started with the daily **Eucharistic adoration** throughout the day, one or a group of Sisters taking turns to sit at the feet of the Lord to encounter Him and plead His mercy thus constantly interceding for the people who are affected due to *corona virus*.



The Communities felt the need to collaborate, network, join hands with one another to reach out to the poorest of the poor. Within a few days of lock-down most of the communities to take up the relief work to reach out to the people who are affected due to lock-down. The communities responded to it with diligence, courage, creativeness and generosity. Here are the reports of some of the communities and their generous initiative to support this mission.

- ❖ The covid 19 has disorganized our routine life of prayer, worship and pastoral works. We were deprived of Holy mass, confessions and other public worships. All the apostolic activities came to a stagnant point, which resulted in a huge economic loss, and a social and moral responsibility of taking care of our employees and their families, who became jobless after the temporary closure of our institutes.



- ❖ With the help of the Police officers sisters were able to reach out to interior villages to distribute the provision kits.
- ❖ All the workers of our monasteries paid full salary even if they were not able to come for work due to lock-down and were provided with the provisions and necessary things to cook a meal in their family.
- ❖ We distributed grocery to community kitchen and more than 1500 provision kits to daily wagers & slum residents of our area. We have also provided some PPE, masks, gloves and sanitizers to the health workers and police department who are tirelessly working day and night for the protection and good health of common people. Medicines for few diabetic and B.P patients were also distributed.



- ❖ An appreciable amount of work is being done by Prerana Service Society- our social work centre and the stitching sowing a good number of masks (approximately 10, 000) and cloth bags for the distribution of provision kits to around 400 families in 10 villages.
- ❖ The migrant workers moving towards their homeland miles of walking are really create an emotional scene on the road. Sisters took the initiative to give them food packets and some financial help to their families.

- ❖ As per the request of the Additional Collector on behalf of Archdiocese of Bhopal two of our sisters with many other NGOs undertaken by the Health Department of Madhya Pradesh had volunteered for 3 days of survey in which they were sent to the containment areas of Bhopal to identify the symptomatic cases and to report the health department.



Reg. 19, India and Sri Lanka, cont.



❖ When all the other activities were under lockdown situation our sisters at Hospital continued their mission with full vigor & enthusiasm fitting themselves with the protection of PPE and saved many sick and covid people.

❖ Few of our communities actively involved in extending their help to the poor in 9 villages in distributing the provision kits and the government officials accompanied them to reach out to the deprived and needy.

- ❖ Sisters visited the villagers in their locality and took the initiative of providing immediate relief to the slum dwellers and construction workers in front of the road side and provided them kits of grocery, vegetables & stationary items.
- ❖ We assisted few families with financially due to the unavailability of groceries in the shop.



The issue of the poor and migrant workers was one of the most cruel and pathetic condition during this pandemic where thousands were rendered unemployed and stranded without money, food and shelter, crossing the country's highways to return to their villages and several people meeting with accidents and death on their way. Hence the congregation played an important role in extending a helping hand to the migrants by providing food and water on their way back to their home town and villages. Despite of the financial crisis we also supported more than thousands families in different villages, in three districts of Madhya Pradesh as well as different parts of India with distribution of food and sanitary items.

Conclusion

God works in mysterious ways, but always for our good. In the beginning, a kind of uncertainty encircled us, not knowing for how many days this situation will be continued. Gradually we realized that God wants to have a personal relationship with us. It is not a time to be distressed and anxious. We started with prioritizing things in our time table, with prayer, and other spiritual exercises which gave us a sense of discipline and discipleship. As a religious congregation with a motto of never forsake charity, we felt that it is our moral obligation to come forward and joint hand with government and other organizations to fight against this social issue.



From the congregation level with our own little way we have tried our best to reach out to the needy with our good will and generous contribution.

These are the humble attempts of Benedictine sisters of S. Lioba to live the values of the gospel and witnessed the love of Jesus among the humanity. During the covid-19 lock-down days the Sisters are able to experience protection and providence of God, the goodness of people, learn the art of networking with the people of good will. *Together with global world we witness to the need of being united with the whole world through our prayers and acts of solidarity giving light of hope*

and joy to the humanity. Placing our trust in Jesus our Lord and divine healer and master we journey ahead hoping that we will be delivered very soon from this dreaded virus disease and resume our normal life once again. We hope to continue our journey in solidarity with the needy and suffering people.

Sr. Vandana Paliakkara OSB
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2 REGION 14 - Philippines

This report is from the Congregation of the Benedictine Nuns of the Eucharistic King. The report of the Tutzing Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory is contained in the separate international report of the Congregation of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters.

Covid 19 is like waking up to a terribly bad morning, without knowing what is wrong. The fear of confronting an unknown is high but with FAITH, we stand still and the unknown gradually unmasks itself to be a terrifying experience for most, if not for all people.

The community had to gird itself for the difficulties the lockdown imposed. We were basically on our own during the first months. We anticipated something like a food shortage so we seriously embarked on developing vegetable gardens by groups. We were able to produce vegetables for the community and even share them with other people. We also did cooking and kitchen work by groups. This proved to be good for the community as it enhanced camaraderie and solidarity and boosted the health of the nuns.

In one of our community meetings, we agreed to forego certain food to lessen our expenses, like bread and dessert. But lo and behold, bread kept coming weekly and we always had dessert. People came and gave rice. The Lord made sure we did not go hungry. And more than that, He made us instruments to help the needy. Generous benefactors gave funds for basic commodities to be shared with the poor and those who lost their jobs and livelihood. Since we could not give full salary to our workers, our benefactors pitched in by filling in the gap with goods.

Pandemic is a time for us to extend our hands and reach out to others and touch them with God's loving care. During this time of distress God assures us of his presence in many symbolic ways. And this we extend to others in certain ways, like our prayers; daily on the air rosary, oratio imperata and angelus as examples. Like the wisp of a gentle kiss we feel God's loving providence. This gives us an enduring hope for better things to come... the hope that the world needs ...the same hope that we ought to share to others.

- From the Congregation of the Benedictine Nuns of the Eucharistic King, Philippines

REGION 1 REPORT PANDEMIC (*Italy and Malta*)

Italy was the first country hit by the pandemic in Europe. The female Benedictine monasteries have reacted with their millennial wisdom and the ability to protect themselves acquired over centuries - these have allowed us to be ready to face this new challenge in an intelligent and evangelical way. Many monasteries have been affected by Covid-19 and most of the nuns were infected, but they all survived. In the affected monasteries the internal infirmary system worked, where the affected nuns were carefully cared for and healed without having to leave their own monastery. The Italian health system was also able to provide assistance within these infirmaries thus not allowing other infections. The infections mainly occurred during medical examinations in Hospital. The nuns in the various places, in addition to our vocation to universal prayer, support their presence in the Church and in territory giving also an online service of liturgical prayer, like Lectio Divina and eucharistic adoration, using social media like Facebook. This has created a daily appointment in lockdown, in particular for lonely and old people. In addition, telephone listening support was offered to people in quarantine, suffering from loneliness and fear. With their listening and sweetness they have comforted thousands of people. Many monasteries have also offered their work and time by packing thousands of masks that have been distributed for free in their territory, either directly to people or offered to public institutions in charge of protection of people. The monasteries continued to provide hot meals and distribution of food and clothing to the most desperate and severely affected from an economic point of view from the pandemic. The first wave of the pandemic between March and June was very challenging and complex in Italy, and in the world, since there was no knowledge of the virus and no vaccine. In these weeks we have had a return of infections with high numbers in Europe and also in Italy. We are aware of the fact that we must not let our guard down, that we must be prudent and vigilant in relations with the outside world to protect life community.

Région 3

Voici quelques nouvelles de la région 3

France/Israël depuis mars 2020 jusqu'à aujourd'hui où nous commençons un deuxième temps de confinement depuis le 30 octobre.

Les communautés bénédictines féminines ont plutôt mieux résisté au virus que les moines. L'épidémie ne s'est pas répandue dans nos monastères et dans l'ensemble, ce ne sont pas nos communautés qui ont le plus souffert car nous bénéficions souvent d'un terrain assez grand où il est possible de prendre l'air. Les familles habitant en ville ont beaucoup plus souffert du confinement.

D'autre part notre vie est relativement adaptée à une situation de confinement à condition que cela ne dure pas trop longtemps car certaines communautés ont souffert d'un sérieux manque à gagner financier. Leurs activités économiques étaient, en effet, complètement bloquées, en particulier celles qui fabriquent des hosties ou vivent de leur hôtellerie. Tous les magasins des abbayes étaient et sont à nouveau fermés. C'est là aussi une ressource financière en moins.

Le plus difficile était souvent de voir nos églises et nos hôtelleries sans hôte ni fidèle à la messe. La semaine sainte et Pâques sans hôtes: quelle étrangeté! Va-t-on vivre la même chose à Noël? Les évêques se sont engagées dans une procédure judiciaire auprès du Conseil d'Etat pour avoir le droit de célébrer l'eucharistie dans les églises de France. Nous attendons la décision de l'Etat.

En mars et avril, certains monastères ont proposé leurs offices en ligne pour que les amis, oblats et tous ceux qui le désiraient puissent se joindre à la prière de la communauté.

En Israël, vous avez su que Mgr Pizzaballa a été nommé patriarche de Jérusalem par le pape. Il a envoyé à ses fidèles de Terre Sainte une très belle lettre pour les encourager et leur dire son désir de travailler avec eux à la vigne du Seigneur.

Les communautés bénédictines de Terre Sainte semblent aller bien. Contrairement à la France, elles ne sont plus en confinement mais l'absence totale de pèlerins est vraiment déroutante pour ce pays et pour les communautés religieuses en particulier. Pas de pèlerins à Abu-Gosh, au Mont des Oliviers ou à Bethléem depuis 8 mois! C'est assez incroyable et à la longue c'est même assez lourd. Les communautés essaient de se soutenir, par exemple les sœurs d'Abu-Gosh sont venues aider à la récolte des olives au Mont des Oliviers.

Merci de votre prière pour ces communautés bénédictines de Terre Sainte.

Sr Marie-Caroline, déléguée de la région 3.

Region 3

Here are some news from Region 3 **France/Israel** from March 2020 until today where we start a second containment time since October 30th.

The female Benedictine communities have rather better resisted the virus than the monks. The epidemic has not spread to our monasteries and on the whole, it is not our communities that have suffered the most because we often benefit from a fairly large area of land where it is possible to get some fresh air. Families living in the city suffered much more from the confinement.

On the other hand, our life is relatively adapted to a situation of confinement as long as it does not last too long because some communities have suffered a serious financial shortfall. Their economic activities were, in fact, completely blocked, especially those who manufacture hosts or live from their hotel business. All the stores in the abbeys were and are again closed. This is another financial resource that is being lost.

The most difficult thing was often to see our churches and hostels without a guest or a faithful at Mass. Holy Week and Easter without hosts: what a strangeness! Are we going to experience the same thing at Christmas? The bishops have engaged in legal proceedings with the Conseil d'Etat for the right to celebrate the Eucharist in the churches of France. We are waiting for the decision of the State.

In March and April, some monasteries offered their services online so that friends, Oblates, and all those who wished could join in the community's prayer. In Israel, you have heard that Bishop Pizzaballa has been named Patriarch of Jerusalem by the Pope. He sent his faithful in the Holy Land a very beautiful letter to encourage them and tell them of his desire to work with them in the Lord's vineyard.

The Benedictine communities in the Holy Land seem to be doing well. Contrary to France, they are no longer in confinement, but the total absence of pilgrims is really confusing for this country and for the religious communities in particular. No pilgrims to Abu-Gosh, the Mount of Olives or Bethlehem for the past 8 months! It is quite incredible and in the long run it is even quite heavy. The communities are trying to support each other, for example the sisters from Abu-Gosh came to help with the olive harvest on the Mount of Olives.

Thank you for your prayer for these Benedictine communities in the Holy Land.

Sr. Marie-Caroline, delegate for Region 3.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

October 21, 2020

MONTHS OF PANDEMIC IN REGION 8, CROATIA

Our monastic life has not changed much. As much of the world struggles with compulsory isolation to stem the spread of Covid-19, the monasteries were better prepared than most to weather this storm. The world has begun to know about Covid-19 and unfortunately, some countries know it better than others. It is uncertain what will become of the virus in weeks to come. With social distancing and everyone wearing masks, pandemic made monasteries to stay away more from the outside world. Location of all our monasteries are along Adriatic coast. They attract many foreigners due to religious and cultural heritage. The Adriatic coastal region has always been popular with tourist attraction and travelers from all around the world; therefore extra precautions were necessary for us to undertake as we live in a communal coastal environment.

As the infections grew in neighboring countries, we were put on full lock-down on March 19. Most of our monasteries had daily Mass service within the monasteries only for the communities. All the Federation's meetings were suspended, the gatherings cancelled and rescheduled. Lockdowns didn't really change our monastic life that much in our Region. Pandemic consequence created the inability of the faithful to attend public worship which has led to creative use of social media making church services available online.

Generally monasteries had a lot to teach people during the pandemic lockdown. Many people were not spiritually prepared for the situation. Isolation in their homes were for many like a shadow of death with a constant reminder of mortality and fragility making a critical moment of reflection. Enclosure made many aware of how interdependent their lives really are.

The experience of lockdown made many recognise the isolation lesson as to be more responsive to the needs of others by recognising our common fragility as human beings. That's precisely what life has thrown at us since the outbreak of the pandemic. Throughout Croatian history, the Adriatic coastal region was ravaged by numerous diseases, with leprosy and plague posing the largest threats to public health. The rule of isolation and discipline has always been applied. Other than that, not much has changed in the last centuries regarding the protocols of quarantine, which Croatia has implemented many times over the centuries.

The quarantined life made for all of us an opportunity to get a moment of reset awareness of the current situation reflecting on what kind of Church we need during the pandemic and afterwards. Praying for the Lord's merciful love and for that Our Lady may keep us under the mantle of her protection to intercede for us in our time of need for the end of the Coronavirus outbreak.

With prayerful best wishes for you and God's blessings,
M. Benedicta

In addition to this letter above from our federation president, here is a piece of news that is worth mentioning and happened in connection with our monastery of St. Mary in Zadar.

Last year, it was agreed that the 1100th anniversary of the commemoration of our monastery (920-2020) would be solemnly celebrated at the State level. As part of this celebration, which was to take place from 19 to 21 March 2020, it was decided to hold an International scientific conference marking 11 centuries of Benedictine presence St. Marija in Zadar, and everything had to end with the solemn St. Mass on the feast of Transitus St. Father Benedict 21.3. 2020.

Due to the situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, everything was postponed until September 27, 2020. This date is important for our convent because it is the day 50 years ago (1970-2020) when our exiled sisters returned to the restored convent after Second World War. This was to mark another anniversary of our monastery.

In the meantime, the situation with Covid-19 in our country and the world was monitored. It seemed at the beginning of the summer that everything would calm down. There were no sick people in Zadar for 2 months, and then with the arrival of many tourists in July and August, everything started again. At the beginning of September, our Abbess asked the organizing committee if we would postpone everything once again, and a few days later a reply arrived from the archbishop that such a great jubilee should be celebrated.

It was decided that only the International Scientific Conference will be held on September 17, 2020 at the feast day of St. Hildegard in the Ceremonial Hall of the University of Zadar. The lectures were shortened a bit, the lecturers from Italy gave lectures via a Skype.

The celebration of the 50th year of our return to the restored monastery was celebrated only internally in the monastery of St. Mass of Thanksgiving. Our archbishop promised that we will celebrate this jubilee when this pandemic passes.

REGION 8, CROATIA, cont.

As for the lecture, our Abbess and our Sr. Klara gave an introductory lecture on the history of the monastery through the 11th century, and other lecturers covered the history and meaning of our order and our Benedictine spirituality in Europe and the World through various topics. Among the lecturers was our Benedictine sister Sr. Katarina Zrno from the monastery of St. Nicholas in Trogir. This International Scientific Conference resonated very well in our city and our public and State, although the pandemic had to be shortened considerably. (Originally it was going to be three days.) We are thankful to God that all went well, and when we look back at the times that the sisters who lived in this convent went through we can only see God and that his times and centuries and that He is God Almighty who governs and sustain all.

*United with you in prayer that God will stop this disease, I cordially greet you
Sr. Rafaela Dominis, Region 8 (Croatia)*

Report Region 6 GASS

(Germany, Austria; Switzerland, Sweden)

Today, as I write this report, the final counting for the presidential election in the United States is underway. We in GASS are also waiting for the result, as it will affect us all. Thinking about it, it is clear to me that we can and must be grateful for level-headed governments. The restlessness that is spreading through societies around the globe is also making itself felt in the Church. We here in Germany are on the so-called "Synodal Way": a process in the church that is the beginning - so the hope of many - of addressing various issues. It has become clear that although there is a great need for discussion, there is also a need for decisions on questions like "Power and separation of powers in the Church - Joint participation and sharing in the mission", "Priestly existence today", "Living in successful relationships - Living love in sexuality and partnership", "Women in ministries and offices in the church". Especially the last is enormously important for the Church, because we fear that especially young women will leave the Church if there are no clear steps towards equality and equal value. Despite all this, many women are still passionately committed to the Church. For about 1 ½ years many of us have been praying the "Prayer on Thursday". It is a network that prayerfully accompanies the renewal process of the church. This initiative was co-initiated by the Benedictine Monastery, Fahr, in Switzerland and is connected to the prayer that we know from St. Scholastica from the dialogues of Pope Gregory, the Great. The refugee problem has become even more acute in the last year. In politics there is a constantly renewed tendency to reduce the willingness to receive refugees. Some of our monasteries continue to accept people into

church asylum in cases of particular hardship. Here too, the responsible politicians have tightened the regulations. For Abbess Mechthild, Kirschletten, a court case is coming because of her commitment. In this situation, too, we are trying to show solidarity and support each other. All this also happens in the "Corona Year", which unites us worldwide. Up to now, the health situation in the Benedictine communities of Region 6 seems to be relatively stable. However, the virus also affects the economic side of our monastic life. For many monasteries, the pandemic has a distressing effect. On the other hand I have heard that the lockdown has also brought the positive effect with it, that our whole life has been brought down to a peaceful level. It has been a somewhat ambivalent experience in the sense that in our monasteries, for example, the guests have been missing, but on the other hand the silence has also done us good. It also brought the experience that we questioned / had to question the familiar. Many things that seemed self-evident to us could and had to be questioned, e.g., processes in community life, in the liturgy, etc. I believe that this has often allowed us to discover and live a new creativity, which has taken us out of our habitual routine. Especially the celebration of the Triduum without the possibility of celebrating the Eucharist has made some of us think about the correlation between the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. Christmas 2020 also will become a very new experience. God's Spirit works in all the realities of our human existence. To Him be given our trust. In this sense, a warm greeting in solidarity goes out to all regions!

Dinklage, 06.11.2020

Sr. Franziska Lukas, Delegate Region 6

Oceania:

Australia, New Zealand, Kiribati

Double Catastrophe

The situation in Region 15 year has been complicated by two major events. Late in 2019 and then into 2020 Australians, faced the ravages of destructive bush fires. The Benedictine Community at Jamberoo was evacuated three times. The destruction of life, land, flora and fauna has been devastating.

Closed Borders

No sooner were the fires brought under control, than the COVID pandemic struck. International borders were closed in New Zealand, Australia and Kiribati (coral atolls in the Pacific Ocean on the equator) where Good Samaritan Sisters live. In Australia, many State borders are still closed in Australia.

Members of the region have found ways to think “outside the square”, to hold Easter ceremonies without a priest, to approach spiritual guidance, on-line retreats and reflections with the aid of technology.

The Good Samaritan Sisters had about 120 Sisters, Oblates and colleagues gather by Zoom from across Australia and the Philippines for evening prayer on the Feast of St Benedict. It was truly a joy for everyone to connect.

Financial implications

There has been a serious financial consequence as retreat cottages and the gift shop have had to close at Jamberoo. It is unlikely that the monastery can resume full capacity for guests because of the COVID restrictions that remain in place.

Like all monasteries around the world we, in this region, have suffered a negative impact on our investments. Some monasteries have had to make employees redundant, while others continue to do their best to keep employees in paid work.

New Members

Jamberoo was unable to receive five aspirants who were waiting to come and experience life at a Benedictine Monastery because of the State border closures.

At St Scholastica’s Glebe, a COVID-safe First Profession Ceremony was held. Despite the COVID restrictions which meant fewer numbers, the wearing of face masks and no singing, except for a cantor, it was still a most joyous celebration. The liturgy was live streamed for those unable to attend the profession. This was particularly helpful to the families of the newly professed in Kiribati.

Ministries

Many of the Sisters have tried to keep offering ongoing support in their various ministries. A Good Samaritan Community in Bacolod in the Philippines established a feeding program for those that had lost their jobs and had no source of income. The Sisters don their masks and drop food at doors without interaction with the people. They have truly been at the coal face and we pray constantly for their safety.



Reg. 15 – Oceania, cont.

Gifts

Yet, these times have held hidden gifts for us amid the very real uncertainties of these times.

Who would have thought that we would all become so computer proficient with our Zoom technology? Although the mute button remains a challenge! Good Samaritan Sisters are holding Plenary Council and Council meetings via Zoom. The Sisters have established conversation circles where Sisters can gather and reflect together on life and mission.

Good Samaritan Sisters have had wonderful support from their health care team who managed the needs of the Sisters as they faced isolation and the inability to get to essential medical services.

Mother Hilda from Jamberoo wrote: *We feel very privileged and grateful to be on the same page as many others while recognising that the shape of our lockdown has really only mirrored our enclosed life anyway to say nothing of our beautiful surroundings denied to so many.*

The absence of guests has given us space to “get our house in order”, to engage in some much needed communal reflection time together articulating, among other things, some long held yearnings and hearing each other at new and deeper levels.

We have been blessed to share in the EBC ongoing formation zoom talks, while at the same time hearing from one another, “sharing each other’s wisdom” as the sisters have said. We have known total and real dependence on God and one another: our trust in His care has soared, our appreciation of the goodness that lives among us likewise has been reinvigorated. Furthermore we have been able to truly get into touch and deepen our real ministry, namely to bring before God the heartaches and joys of His people: our early morning Vigils and fidelity to our calling has never seemed to us to be more important than in these days.

Conclusion

Creative partnerships and the digital world can create a better world for all. We communities of Region 15 continue to ponder and explore how we as Benedictine women can continue to bring the Good News of God’s love to our wounded world.

Patty Fawcner
Patty Fawcner SGS

Meet the new CIB Executive Secretary

Sr. Mary Luke Jones is a member of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery. She taught grade school for 6 years before being named principal of Christ the King School in Indianapolis; a position she held for 9 years. Through the generosity of Lilly Endowment, she was trained as a director of development and served her community in that role for 15 years before being appointed the administrator of Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center in 2001. In June 2010, Sr. Mary Luke returned to the monastery's development office where she now serves again as the director of development. Sr. Mary Luke has spearheaded two capital campaigns raising over \$10 million for the care of the aged. As the administrator of the retreat center, she received over \$1 million from the Lilly Endowment for a spiritual renewal program for women pastors. The program, entitled Women Touched by Grace, is unique because it couples Protestant clergywomen with Catholic women religious in an effort to deepen the prayer and spirituality of those serving congregations. The program was granted an additional million dollars from the Endowment in 2017. In 2015, through the efforts of the development office, the Benedict Inn received a multi-million dollar gift enabling major renovations and ensuring the future of the ministry. Sr. Mary Luke holds a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from the University of Indianapolis and a master’s degree in administration from the University of Notre Dame. Currently, Sr. Mary Luke serves on the council of the Federation of St. Gertrude, is an active member of the Greater Beech Grove Chamber of Commerce and serves as secretary for the CIB.



“Living each day to the full is what God invites us to do. Devoting our time on earth to the care of others through works of mercy and compassion makes for a rewarding life and an even greater reward for all eternity.”

AIM International Council meeting

November 2020 – held via Zoom



From all over the world, members of the AIM International Council gathered via Zoom on 23-24 November 2020, rather than as planned to have been held in Rome. Despite the disappointment of not being able to gather together at Sant' Anselmo, it was an excellent meeting held on Rome time, as if we were really there together on the Aventine Hill!

As is usual at the beginning of these council meetings, there were reports given by the O. Cist. abbot general, the OCSO abbot general, the abbot primate and the CIB moderator. The report I gave included some highlights from my pilgrimage to 12 monasteries in Spain last fall, which took place just after the last AIM International Council meeting was held in León, Spain. It was a joy for me to recall those happy memories and that strong feeling of *communio* among las benedictinas de España. Also included in the report was a brief account of the meetings of the CIB Administrative Council held via Zoom during these months of pandemic, as have had to shift our plans from in person meetings. The next meeting of the Administrative Council will be held in January 2021 via Zoom (instead of in Belgium as we had previously planned), when we will discuss and plan our next Conference of Delegates meeting to be held in September 2021 in Assisi, just before the Congress of Abbots to be held at Sant' Anselmo in Rome. I also reported on the brand new CIB website ably designed by our faithful CIB webweaver, Sister Benedict Brown of Turvey Abbey in England. I also introduced the AIM Council to Sister Mary Luke Jones of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Indiana, USA, the new CIB Executive Secretary who has already been at work for approximately one year. Finally, I shared some about the experiences of the pandemic in the monasteries of our CIB regions, based on the reports I had already received for this newsletter.

There was also a deep sharing in the Council generally about the impact of the coronavirus among monastic communities all over the world. The highlight of the meeting for me was hearing Sister Patricia Murray, the executive secretary of the Union of International Superiors General (UISG), who spoke very compellingly about the many ways religious around the world have responded to the coronavirus crisis. Her words were inspiring and spurred very good discussion among the members of the Council. Of course, we had excellent reports from Fr Jean-Pierre Longeat and Sr Christine Conrath of the AIM International office located in Vanves, France, and a clear financial report from Fr. Patrice Gautrot. The important work of AIM International of supporting still young monasteries in far reaching parts of the globe is ongoing and strong. Finally, we set the dates for the next meeting of the AIM International Council meeting in November 2021, which we hope will be able to be held in person instead of online. It is a joy and privilege for me to represent the CIB on the Council of AIM International.

Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB, CIB Moderator.



Turvey Abbey’s involvement with the CIB website began in 2007. Sr Monica Lewis from Dinklage, then CIB secretary, was visiting Turvey Abbey, we had an enthusiastic conversation about a new website, and by 2008 a small website was online. In January 2009, I was invited to the Admin Council meeting in Portugal to discuss the website and, as a result, I set about creating a new website using Adobe ‘Dreamweaver’. This website had a separate section for each language, but in practice it turned out to be very difficult to get translations into all the languages, so it was simplified. Back in 2009, almost everyone was looking at websites on computers, but, with the advent of tablets and smartphones, this was beginning to change. The 2009 website was becoming out of date, a new website was needed. This was easier said than done, but in 2019 work finally began on a website created using WordPress, which has now replaced the 2009 website. The new website is what is called ‘responsive’ which means that the layout changes so that the content can be read on smartphones and tablets as well as on computers. A new feature is the use of the WordPress ‘blog’ page for Sr Lynn’s letters—with the ‘comments’ option disabled! Flickr is used to display the pictures, as it was on the previous website. The new website also has a ‘search’ option. At the time of writing, the website isn’t finished, some of the information has yet to be transferred from the old website, and we are looking into ways of making it easier for people to know when new content is available. We are looking into ways of making it easier for people to know when new content is available, and are also planning to create a separate page for each region—and are hoping that each region will contribute information for their page. The new website is now live!—and we pray that the USA is starting on a new ‘life’ as well.

-Sr Benedict Brown, Turvey Abbey

About Sr Benedict Brown

I was born in 1949, in Liverpool, and became a Roman Catholic whilst at University. I taught physics for four and a half years in the north of Ghana with the Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) then became a postulant with the Little Sisters of Jesus. They suggested that I consider the Benedictines—they were right, and in 1979 I entered at the Priory of Our Lady of Peace, then at Cockfosters in North London. My community was in the process of moving to a premises already named ‘Turvey Abbey’ in the village of Turvey, Bedfordshire, and I spent many happy hours driving to Turvey with members of the community to do a bit of ‘building work’—mainly demolition. I learned a lot about the structure of the Abbey, and about builders—and I have been involved with maintenance work and builders ever since. I also enjoyed working in the garden. In 1991 my community purchased a computer and printer to create booklets for the Divine Office, and after a while it became my job to make them, another job which I have had ever since—I did the layout, not the typing. In the course of time I also acquired the jobs of sacristan and MC, and sub-prioress, all of which I still have in my community of eight. My community assumes that if something goes wrong with a computer I will know what to do; well, that’s not quite correct, but sometimes I can help. In 2004 I created a website for Turvey Abbey, and discovered that website design with its mixture of art and code was something which suited me very well. And, quite a few websites later, I am still working on websites and everything else—and still enjoying life with my community at Turvey Abbey.



Click [HERE](#) to view a video interpreting the impact of the global Coronavirus pandemic.



Links

Atlas of Benedictine Houses and Congregations

- www.osbatlas.com

International Benedictine Organisations

- The Order of Saint Benedict: www.osb.org
- Abbot Primate and the Benedictine Confederation: www.osb.org/the-benedictine-order/the-benedictine-confederation
- A.I.M. Alliance InterMonastères: www.aimintl.org

CIB Regional Websites

- Region 1 Italy and Malta: www.benedettineitaliane.org
- Region 3 France and Israel: <https://sites.google.com/site/benedictinefrance>
- Region 5 Benelux: Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg: [site web en français](#) & [website in het Nederlands](#)
- Region 6 GASS: Germany/Austria/Switzerland/Scandinavia: www.benediktinerinnen.de
- Region 7 Poland: www.benedyktynki.net/region7



Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum

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