



Medical Mission News

Summer 2020

Healing Presence in Covid-19 pandemic time

"We are aware that our response in mission to the urgent signs of the times will lead us into a process of mutual transformation of ourselves and all of creation..."
(14th General Chapter)

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic continues affecting our world today. People are suffering and no one is spared. Many have lost lives and families are grieving the loss of loved ones. The pandemic leaves an impact on the way people live and behave – on relationships, health system, work, education, economy, nature and how our global system operates. *"The pandemic is a reminder of the intimate and delicate relationship between people and planet. Any efforts to make our world safer are doomed to fail unless they address the critical interface between people and pathogens, and the existential threat of climate change that is making our earth less habitable."* 73 WHA

The national and international authorities are sometimes at a loss on how to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, but the collaborative efforts and solidarity of support from various charities and NGO's across the globe is having a gradual positive effect in protecting and safeguarding people from COVID-19. Nevertheless, the poor and marginalised people are left behind; they are the most susceptible sector affected in this pandemic. Together with co-workers and other charities, **Medical Mission Sisters** are collaborating and supporting the vulnerable people in our society in different parts of the world.



United Kingdom



Sister Simone Herrmann works as emergency physician in A&E at St Thomas' Hospital in London, the COVID-19 treatment centre for Central and South London. Her emergency department (ED) sees a high number of rough sleepers, while all homeless support services and hostels in the city had to close during lockdown. Homeless patients showing symptoms of COVID-19 are transferred to COVID Care, a care facility in a hotel, run by MSF ("Doctors without Borders") and the UCL Hospital. Others can be provided with mobile phones

when attending ED out of hours and the hospital homeless team can follow them up the next day to help to arrange for temporary housing. And sometimes it is just a cup of tea and a friendly word that is needed most.

Sister Jyoti Kujur works as a complex needs case worker in Hope for Southall Street Homeless" (HSSH), a small charity that runs a night shelter for the mainly Indian homeless in Southall. The night shelter in a parish hall had to close and most of her clients were transferred to hotels in London's East End, in an unfamiliar environment and far from their friends. Having developed symptoms of Covid-19, three of them even needed admission to higher care facilities – and there was little time to prepare hotels and supporting social workers to welcome their quite unusual guests!

Sr Jyoti keeps contact by phone or travels to the hotels once or twice a week supporting her clients in their various needs; this might be the transfer of a Methadone prescription to a nearby pharmacy, mobile top-ups, Indian/Punjabi translation for staff and social workers in the hotels or a delivery of homemade Indian food once a week which is always very welcomed.



While she had to shield herself because of health reasons, **Sister Gill Horsfield** started making face masks for Sr Jyoti's guests in the homeless night shelter. She enjoyed it very much and went on to make them for neighbours and the sisters.

She has invested in 10 metres of gingham, and plain 100% cotton and started making them in larger numbers. She offered them to Ealing Council for its care homes and surgeries in the borough. Recently, she started making face masks for a charity providing PPE to refugees in Calais.

To date, Sr Gill has made over 600 face masks.

North East India



Sister Bimla Toppo, together with other sisters, educates the people in the village of Sundari in Assam on the effects of corona virus. They put up posters to create awareness on social distancing and ways of preventing the infection spreading. In the hospitals and health centres people are taught to use masks, wash hands etc., but many have lost their income and cannot afford basic PPE. In addition, seasonal rains have created massive flooding in some parts of North East India recently. The sisters are distributing masks, food and other necessary items as an emergency response to their local community.

Ghana

There is a general shortage of sanitary items such as hand sanitizers and face masks in Ghana. Many medicines are out of stock and have to be imported from overseas. Therefore, prices have gone up and patients who depend on these medicines have to bear the extra cost! This makes PPE and basic medicine even more unaffordable especially for the poor.

Sister Rita Amponsaa, chief pharmacist at the Holy Family Hospital in Techiman, and her team, have innovated to produce sanitizer in large quantities. As a positive effect, the people's hygiene habits are changing and some are adopting a healthier lifestyle that will keep their immune system strong.



North America



In Kensington, an inner-city section of Philadelphia, **Sister Marisol Martinez** goes twice a week to her local community centre where she distributes food provided by the city of Philadelphia - 420 boxes with dry foods, fresh fruits and vegetables to those without homes and those who have lost their jobs because of the pandemic.

Sister Marisol also helps to cook and distribute meals at Sarnelli House, an organization dedicated to providing for the needs of people made poor. Before the coronavirus outbreak, they were serving meals to approximately 120 people per day; with so many community organizations closed, she now serves 200 people every day, who queue patiently in a line.

Venezuela



Venezuela, which has already been hit very hard by an unstable political system and severe recession, is now suffering even more from the impact of the corona virus pandemic. Many Venezuelans who had left for jobs in neighbouring countries are now forced to return.

Sister Norys Navas, along with other parishioners of San Camilo de Lelis parish in El Nula, a town close to the Colombian border, have welcomed these migrants. They provide them with a place to stay while on quarantine before being allowed to return to their families in other states. Our sisters also address their health needs and provide medicines and food for over 200 families in different areas that belong to the parish.

This work and all the emergency response of Medical Mission Sisters, especially during the time of pandemic, would not have been possible without the generous support of our friends and benefactors. Thank you!

*"Finding common ground in the intention of mission despite all differences
frees the potential of healing and establishes bonds beyond conflicts.
Walking beyond borders and boundaries, our life and mission are happening
in a world community beyond North – South, East - West paradigms."
(Our Evolving Understanding of Spirituality and Mission, society document)*

Your Medical Mission Sisters

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Please pray for Medical Mission Sisters in: Belgium, England, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, The Netherlands, Uganda, USA, Venezuela. Thank you for your support and prayers.

We are grateful for your interest in our work and we hope to keep in touch with you from time to time through this newsletter. If you would prefer not to hear from us, please contact us by phone or email, as above. Visit our website for full privacy policy.