

The lock down from march till the end of April was a very special and in a way blessed time for all of us. We were 24 sisters in the community, with our chaplain (who lives here) and a volunteer who is here for several months to help in the guesthouse. As the guesthouse closed down, she lived with us in the community. We continued to have daily mass. It was a very particular experience to have no contacts with the outside world, but to remain among us. For many it was a time +with many graces. To be in church week after week without guests, gave us a feeling of intimacy, of belonging together. There were hardly cars on the road, which is usually pretty busy and you could almost hear that the world around us calmed down, got quiet, everything reduced to simplicity. It was very special as this coincided with Lent.

From the beginning we decided to lengthen our evening meditation during Vespers to half an hour, to pray for all corona victims and so many who suffered loneliness, medical staff, people cut off from their beloved ones.

The lock down also made it possible to try another schedule, so we changed our Sunday mass from 10 to 11 hr and planned the Easter Vigil at 21 hr instead of 23 hr, which was less tiring for the community. Easter vigil was special as our neighbouring parishes asked us to bless their Easter candles, so ten sisters each walked in the procession with an Easter candle that remained burning during the whole Easter Vigil.

One of our eldest sisters died after the lock down and also this was particular, as not much people were allowed to attend mass and only her nieces and nephews came. In a way we discover a new form of closeness which is much more depending on the quality of the present people than on the big group of neighbours and friends of the abbey who usually come for the burial.



Cowboy : You're wearing your mask the wrong way
Zorro : Mind your own business

We keep looking how to go along with all measures the government imposes on us. The mouth mask is important for the sisters who go out for shopping, to the doctor... In the guesthouse sisters often wear it, not in community. In church guests are obliged to wear their mouth mask and it is forbidden for them to sing. Many complain that there is so little communion in this way, which we understand, but they are happy they can come. Economically this year will be very hard as our shop had to close, the guesthouse had to close and bank investments bring nothing. Luckily we developed a webshop last year and could continue to sell our new soap products.

The guesthouse re opened June 15 on half capacity.



In a sense the big question remains : where is God inviting us to with this pandemic ?

We remain faithful to our monastic life and keep praying for all those who work hard so that this pandemic comes to an end.