

Like everyone else, the corona crisis has affected us, but not in any dramatic way. We did not have any patients, even though two sisters spent a few days in isolation, out of caution. The financial consequences were moderate. The most significant impact was felt at the liturgy, especially the experience of the Eucharist and the accompaniment of our sisters at a nursing home.

The experience of confinement in the Netherlands is based on a certain freedom and individual responsibility. As the at-risk groups in our community is quite large, we decided to follow the standards quite strictly and we closed the Church, the guesthouse, and the store. The Bishops have set fairly strict standards, including the prohibition of the distribution of communion. In addition, our usual celebrants came from a religious retirement home that was completely closed. As a result, we were unable to have the Eucharist for two months. On Sundays we followed it on television. On weekdays, we only celebrated the Divine Office. Since the end of June, we have been celebrating the Eucharist on Sundays and solemnities. This motivated us to take on a reflection on our experience of the Eucharist itself, and the celebration of the daily Eucharist. We will have a training and dialogue program around this theme for the coming months.

In community, we have lived this time as a time of healing. The pace was slower, and the lack of visitors and volunteers had a direct impact on the atmosphere in the community. There was a real realization that all these contacts, however important they are, have had a big impact on our monastic and community life. Here, too, we shared around this theme and adapted our manner of hospitality.

It is certainly our sisters in a nursing home who suffered the most from the situation. Visits were prohibited, and we were only able to maintain contact by telephone. The situation was also difficult to explain. In addition, the religious house near us will eventually close, which means that some sisters had just moved to another place right before the crisis began and one of them was unable to move on the scheduled date. This created even more insecurity in this difficult period. Also, one of the sisters died during this time, but not from corona. All the restrictions made the last stages around her death difficult as well.

Naturally, the closure of the store and the guesthouse had direct financial consequences. However, the ecological cemetery was opened last September and already supports our economy in a positive manner. If at the beginning of the crisis we had very few demands because cremation seemed to respond better to the crisis situation, we later saw the requests increase because, faced with the possibility of illness and death, many wanted to settle in advance their alternative choice for a tomb in a nature reserve.

Throughout this period, which was also agonizing for some of us, we have also experienced closely the difficult situations of families, friends, and religious communities. Our inability to help directly forced us to refocus on the importance of our presence through prayer. For a long time, our Offices have long been webcasted though the internet, but this has intensified during this difficult period for many. This has been our small contribution in this crisis which has caused a lot of suffering and many questions.