



April 23, 2020

COVID-19 Threatens Devastating Impact on World's Most Vulnerable People

~ by Chris Herlinger, *Global Sisters Report*

United Nations leaders, humanitarian experts and sister advocates at the U.N. are alarmed by the COVID-19 pandemic's potential to devastate vulnerable communities, particularly refugees, migrants, and women and girls already challenged by economic hardship and social disparities.

"The impact is going to be devastating," said Jennifer Poidatz, vice president of humanitarian response for Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services.

Poidatz said, "This is not a three-month thing or a six-month thing. This is a new normal."

She noted that what is particularly alarming about the current crisis is its global reach. "We're used to having multiple crises at the same time, but not in every country we're operating in," she said.



Participants in a U.S. Agency for International Development food security program practice social distancing while waiting to receive food rations in Duk, South Sudan. Photo credit: Catholic Relief Services/Gatluak Miak Deng

And what makes the situation especially challenging, Poidatz said, "is that the environments we work in are experiencing protracted humanitarian crises in which 61 million people — migrants, refugees — are on the move. And even in those areas where we are working in 'stable environments,' the health infrastructure is weak."

For example, for 600,000 refugees in a confined area, such as the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, self-quarantine and social distancing are not options.

"When you have a situation where your house is a temporary structure with one room, how do you do [social distancing]?"

Multiply that by the hundreds of thousands, and then in dozens of places throughout the world, and "it's pretty awful stuff," Poidatz said.

The gender imbalance is also deeply worrisome, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in an [April 9 statement](#). While early data show "the mortality rates from COVID-19 may be higher for men," he said, "the pandemic is having devastating social and economic consequences for women and girls."

He noted that nearly 60% of women globally "work in the informal economy, earning less, saving less, and at greater risk of falling into poverty."

Women do as much as 80% of the farming work in the world, and disruption in the food supply chain will have a serious effect on women's income, said Sr. [Celine Paramundayil](#), the representative for the [Medical Mission Sisters'](#) non-governmental organization at the United Nations.

And that is not the only issue of concern. With more men now staying at home, Guterres had earlier sounded an alarm about the increased risk for domestic violence, a worry that is all too real, Paramundayil said.

"There's more pressure on women in so many ways, as women are so often the ones meeting the needs in families and communities," Paramundayil said in an interview with [Global Sisters Report](#).



Participants in an April 8 webinar sponsored by the [Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security](#) expressed similar concerns.

Catholic Relief Services in Ethiopia is moving commodities to rural communities where food can be distributed to extremely vulnerable populations in case COVID-19 causes potential travel restrictions. Photo credit: Catholic Relief Services

Sister of Charity Teresa Kotturan said at the U.N. that global efforts to reverse poverty and other social ills will now be put on hold, with alarming effects. "Hunger is going to increase, poverty is going to increase, it's a vicious cycle."

Another sister frustrated by the current situation is Mercy Sr. Deborah Watson. "Whenever there's a crisis, it's about the most vulnerable, whether it's about age, or health, or economic status or gender," she said. "Those are the most vulnerable." To read the entire article click [here](#).

How Catholic Schools are Serving Immigrant Families during the Pandemic

~ by J.D. Long-Garcia, *America Magazine*

In New York City, often referred to as the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., Catholic schools closed on March 13. Jessica Maldonado, Principal of St. Thomas Aquinas School in the Bronx, started preparing for on-line learning well before the closure. They checked in with families, asking about internet access, technology and work schedules. Initially, teachers prepared packets for two weeks, hoping it would be over by then.



About 85 percent of students at St. Thomas are Latino, and others are African or African American, Ms. Maldonado said. Most of the staff speaks Spanish and the families from Africa speak English, so language has not been an issue.

“Most of the time, it’s the kids helping the parents [with the technology],” Ms. Maldonado said, adding that some of the students who had been less engaged before are now participating more often. “They have been super excited to log on to Zoom every morning.”

Each day at 10 a.m. Ms. Maldonado leads prayer on Zoom for the entire school – including 188 students and 25 staff members. Students, who wear their school polo shirts, take turns doing the readings and responsorial psalm. Teachers take attendance, and if a student is not logged in to the call, parents get a phone call.

“The students have been super excited to log on to Zoom every morning... They’re having fun and loving it because it is new.”

~ Ms. Maldonado,
Principal

“But the children have been amazing. They have a good, positive attitude about all of this. They’re having fun and loving it because it is new,” said Ms. Maldonado.

Many of the parents work in healthcare and some have contracted COVID-19 and have had to send their children to stay with other families while they quarantine themselves. In those cases, teachers work with aunts and uncles or grandparents to explain the online learning process.

Unfortunately, more than half of the school’s parents have been laid off during the pandemic. They have had a hard time keeping up with tuition, but the Archdiocese of New York has come through with funding to help make up the difference so far, Ms. Maldonado said.

Michael J. Deegan, Superintendent of the NY Archdiocesan Schools, said, “We don’t want to lose anyone. No one could have prepared for the coronavirus pandemic, but we have the infrastructure and the support to make it through.”

Cardinal Timothy Dolan has been sending out recorded messages for Catholic school students. For example, the Cardinal told students in a YouTube message that “we miss you in the schools and in church, because the buildings are closed. But Jesus is never closed and he is always with us...especially in tough times.” To read the entire article click [here](#).

Sisters Share the **Light of Christ** in the Easter Season



The celebration of Easter in the age of COVID 19 was unlike all others.

Old and new friends of Cabrini Retreat Center received not only an Easter greeting in the mail but a personal call from Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC or Sr. Grace Waters, MSC during Easter week. The Sisters' personal connection was deeply appreciated and provided light and hope regardless of individual circumstances.

Over the Easter season, Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC (l.) and Sr. Grace Waters, MSC (r.) extended warm greetings to Cabrini friends in Chicago which brightened the lives of so many, especially at this time of COVID-19. People were delighted by their phone call and touched by their kindness.



The Retreat Center Easter cards extended the invitation:



“Lighting a candle symbolizes the light of Christ and can help illuminate our hearts when we feel burdened. If you would like to share a special need or intention with the Missionary Sisters we would be honored to light a candle and unite with you in prayer.”

Cabrini Retreat Center's Easter Outreach was included as an example in the Christian Brothers Services webinar **“Communications in the Age of COVID”**.

<https://vimeo.com/409869357>

The staff members of the Retreat Center are grateful for the willingness of the Sisters to extend the mission in a new direction while we wait for the time when we can welcome guests to the Center once again.

Next week, please look for more information on the Missionary Sisters Prayer Partners ministry at Cabrini Retreat Center.

~ submitted by Nancy Golen, Director, Cabrini Retreat Center



Love and Resilience: Stories from the MSCs

We have been asked by the MSC Generalate in Rome to invite you to submit stories of the Missionary Sisters who have touched your life, particularly, perhaps, in time of difficulty. These stories will be posted on the website of the Generalate: www.cabriniworld.org and we will also feature your stories of the MSCs and of your family experiences during the COVID crisis in The Update and on www.motherscabrini.org

Cabrini U. Donates PPE to Bryn Mawr Hospital

Cabrini University's Science Department contributed unused personal protective equipment (PPE) from its labs to Bryn Mawr Hospital, part of Main Line Health, to aid front-line healthcare workers battling the coronavirus pandemic. Amid intense political discourse around the availability and allocation of PPE, Cabrini donated approximately 2,000 pairs of disposable gloves, 400 lab coats, and 20 safety goggles on April 7.



Brian Eury (standing l.), Cabrini University Chief of Staff, delivered the PPE to grateful staff members at Bryn Mawr Hospital.

PPE supply, which has been in use around-the-clock since the epidemic reached the East Coast.

In March, while watching a news report of PPE shortages in the tri-state area, Cynthia McGauley (MED '11), Cabrini's Laboratory Manager and Chemical Safety Hygiene Officer, realized that PPE stock on shuttered university campuses would soon be needed at hospitals nationwide.

"I knew that there were supplies going unused on campus that would be of great value to the local medical community," McGauley, said. "I felt the higher education community was well-equipped to supply these valiant healthcare workers."

McGauley consulted with Richard J. Thompson, PhD, Dean of Natural Sciences and Allied Health, as well as Brian Eury, Chief of Staff and Vice President of External Relations, who routed the PPE donation to Bryn Mawr Hospital.

At the hospital, the shipment of gloves, lab coats and goggles were a welcome addition to its

“We are incredibly grateful to Cabrini University for their donation of PPE,” said Andrea Gilbert, President, Bryn Mawr Hospital. “The community has come together in so many ways to demonstrate their support of health care workers on the frontline. Cabrini has been a great partner to Bryn Mawr Hospital over the years, and we’re so appreciative of their help during this challenging time.”

For McGauley, proactive safety measures are a regular part of the job at Cabrini. She urges students in the labs to practice extra vigilance with regard to sanitization and contamination at the beginning of each spring semester—the start of the traditional cold and flu season. As it became apparent that this flu season was in fact the beginning of a worldwide pandemic, the scope of these precautions expanded at Cabrini.

“We have started virtual discussions among the school safety committee to address what we can be doing proactively to be safe for the Fall 2020 semester,” she said. “From increased hand sanitization stations and scheduled cleanings to advanced coordination of PPE allotment, we’re working to ensure our students, staff and faculty are comfortable working and learning in our campus labs.”

~ submitted by Matt Nestor and Molly Harty, Cabrini U. Marketing and Communications



At 50 years, Earth Day becomes a Digital Outpouring of Resolve.

~ by Brian Rowe, Jesse Remedios and Bill Mitchell, *Earth Beat*,
National Catholic Reporter

On its 50th birthday, Earth Day went digital. People across the world logged onto their computer to follow along with livestreams and join virtual meetings to take part in the annual day dedicated to protecting, preserving and appreciating our common planetary home.

In his Wednesday general audience at the Vatican, Pope Francis called the 50th Earth Day “an occasion for renewing our commitment to love and care for our common home and for the weaker members of our human family.” Video of the Pope’s address was included as part of the Earth Day Live broadcast from the Earth Day Network. Later in the day, it was announced that the all-virtual format would be used during next month’s Laudato Si’ Week.

In a message on social media, U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa called for governments to use the recovery from coronavirus as an opportunity to share the 21st century economy as “clean, green, healthy, safe and more resilient. It’s the world’s chance to recover better.”

In a statement for Earth Day, the Catholic Climate Covenant stated, “Humanity is at a critical crossroad,” citing agreement among scientists, policymakers and religious leaders “that climate change is an existential threat to God’s creation.” To read the entire article click [here](#).

From the Province Vocation Promotion Team...

Earth Day 2020 – Women Religious Model Ecological Vocation

~ by Franciscan Sr. Dawn Nothwehr, *Earth Beat*, National Catholic Reporter

On the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, Catholic women religious were among the more than 20 million people across the country who demonstrated on behalf of planet Earth and aroused a mainstream America that was largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.

Such issues, though, were not new to those divinely inspired sisters.

What was new to them was the challenge to first link the opening of the Nicene Creed recited at Mass — "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty; **maker of heaven and earth**, of all that is seen and unseen" — with the renewed, post-Vatican II understanding of the deep connection between the doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Redemption, and the ecological spirituality of their particular charisms, e.g., [Cabrinian], Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan. Secondly, sisters needed to assist the faithful in discovering a religious and moral imagination for their Christian vocation to care for God's creation.



While caring for victimized people, they frequently experienced firsthand the powers that created the planetary degradation and destruction that was exposed on that first Earth Day. The situations Rachel Carson's 1962 New York Times bestseller *Silent Spring* unveiled were familiar to sisters, [some of whom] accompanied migrant farmworkers suffering mysterious illnesses and deadly cancers. But the official church had said little about the environmental issues that Carson raised.

In the new millennium, a deep integration of their religious vocations and renewed spiritualities empowered Catholic sisters to creatively focus their mission on ecological justice issues.

Sisters became as articulate in solar technology as they are in the Gospels. With diverse education and training, they now fill new roles, challenging structural injustices in new ways. Today, grounded in their Catholic faith, they model the Christian ecological vocation, restoring life to people and the planet.

Authenticity and inspired commitment are contagious. Nothing is more convincing than the [actual witness of women religious](#) — they practice what they preach! To learn more, click [here](#).

Prayer Requests

Judy Brown

Please unite in prayer for Judy Brown, a longtime friend of Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC and of many Missionary Sisters. Judy has been hospitalized and is undergoing tests.

Cabrini Retreat Center

Please pray with us for the needs of Cabrini Retreat Center Friends: All families and their health; a cure for Corona virus and those suffering with COVID 19. Repose of the souls of all who have died from corona virus including Aldo Pedraja, medical workers and all essential workers and immigrants who are struggling; students, especially, seniors; those in 12 Step recovery programs; consecrated men and women in Chicago and throughout the world; and those who have lost their faith but continue to seek God.

Covid-19 Pandemic

Let us continue to unite our voices in prayer for our global community as we ask for healing and strength during this extraordinarily difficult time.

A.H.

Prayers are requested for a young woman who had to undergo emergency surgery yesterday. Please pray for a good outcome and a complete recovery.

Maria Theresa

Our prayers are requested for Maria Theresa, a nurse in the ICU Department at St. Anthony's Hospital in Chicago.

Nicky

Prayers have been requested for a special intention for a young man named Nicky.

Catherine Bradley Portland

Please unite in prayer for Catherine Bradley Portland, the mother of Cabrini (College) University alumna Cassie Bradley Woestman '67, who is now in hospice care at her home in Havertown, PA. Let us pray for Mrs. Portland's comfort and serenity at this time.

Special Intention

Prayers are asked for a very special intention.

Staff at Sacred Heart Convent and St. Cabrini Nursing Home

You are asked to pray for the staff members who so faithfully have been taking care of the Missionary Sisters and all the residents at Sacred Heart Convent and St. Cabrini Nursing Home. May they and their loved ones remain well as they tend with love and kindness to all.

Florence Wingerter's brother-in-law

Florence Wingerter, alumna and trustee of Cabrini High School, New Orleans, is asking for prayers for her brother-in-law and his surgeon. Her brother-in-law had back surgery yesterday. John is very spiritual and has a lot of faith and knows he is in God's hands. Please pray for his complete recovery.

