

CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS, INDIA

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To
All the Major Superiors of Religious in India

SUBJECT: SOFT COPY OF MAGNET, APRIL 2020

Friends,

Because of the 21-day lockdown of the country announced by our central government (for a good reason), the printing, packing and dispatch of MAGNET cannot be done this month. But we do not want to deprive you of MAGNET, which, for many religious (and others, including bishops), is your favourite magazine.

We decided, therefore, to send you the soft copy of the April issue. We hope to get it printed as soon as the lockdown is lifted, and to send it together with the May issue (which should be posted on April 28).

Till then, enjoy the soft copy.

Feel free to share it with others by email or WhatsApp.

While sending you MAGNET, I feel urged to add this very inspiring (and challenging) news item from the Vatican about the truly heroic service of some women religious in one of the worst-affected areas of the world—Northern Italy.

Under the caption, "**Coronavirus - the women religious on the frontlines**," two reporters, Federico Piana and Linda Bordoni, wrote:

'In Italy, a Covid-19 hotspot, the Daughters of St. Camillus, whose charism is to dedicate themselves to nursing the sick and the elderly, have been in the trenches since the start of the pandemic. The Camillians run five important Italian Hospitals; they are to be found in Rome, Trento, Treviso, Brescia and Cremona, the latter three at the heart of the crisis in the north of the country.

'Ready to give their lives for others - In an interview with Vatican Radio, Sr. Lancy Ezhupara, Director of the San Camillo Hospital in Treviso and Secretary-General of her Order, said: "In all our structures, nurse nuns are selflessly risking their lives." But the sisters, she said, are not afraid... on the contrary! "We Daughters of St. Camillus make a fourth vow, in addition to the three classic vows of poverty, obedience and chastity: that of serving the sick even at the cost of our lives." This vow, she continued, has become even more meaningful today as the Sisters go about their work in isolated hospital wards coping with the Covid-19 infection. Sr. Lancy explained that in the Treviso hospital there are over a hundred beds for infected patients, "but the difficulties are countless because there is a shortage of equipment." As religious, whose mission is to continue the ministry of Jesus as healers, she said, the Daughters of St. Camillus find comfort in their common fearlessness and readiness to do anything to be close to those who suffer. "Their total availability and commitment is moving. They are aware that they too can die, but prayer and the intercession of St. Camillus gives us strength," she said.'

While living in safety and security, don't we need to ask ourselves what to do for those who are in greater need or in critical conditions? In Europe, where everyone has medical insurance, people need not worry about the cost of treatment, and the government hospitals are excellent. In spite of that, there are so many deaths and so much suffering. In India, many sick people will need financial support. Secondly, given the fact that 92% of India's workers are in the "unorganized sector" (with no government support or insurance or pension schemes) and many of our employees are in this group, they will need urgent help. Many will have no work these weeks, and hence no earning. Some religious and dioceses have taken good initiatives: A Coronavirus Fund to help the needy, giving the monthly salary (or more) to those who cannot come for work; buying provisions for poorer communities and for poor neighbours, ...

Trials and emergencies bring out the best and worst in people. May it bring out the best in us. While we may not be doing heroic service like the Camillian Sisters in Italy, we can all do something for those whose lives (and health) are seriously affected by this pandemic.

As a spiritual director once told me, "In whatever happens to us, the Lord has a message for us. We need to find that, and respond."

I am sure you agree. May we respond with faith, love and courage.

In fraternal support and prayers,

Fr Joe Mannath SDB