On March 15, 2020, Our Lady of the Angels (OLA) closed its doors to the public. A *novel* coronavirus ... a pandemic ... was sweeping through our nation and around the globe. New protocols were put into place to protect our Sisters living in the Motherhouse, and the staff essential to the care and well-being of the Sisters. All other staff and Sisters went to their homes grateful to be safe and secure. Restrictions were put into place based on what was/is known by the scientist and medical professionals. It wasn’t easy, and sometimes is still not easy. As a global human population we were asked to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Mark 12:31). To be thoughtful and considerate in decision making involving groups. We were specifically asked to consider the care of the most vulnerable populations—older adults and people with severe underlying medical conditions.

We were reminded

- To wash our hands often resulting in the creation of prayers and songs to help us do so mindfully.
- To not touch our eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- To cover our coughs and sneezes
- To clean and disinfect frequently touch surfaces daily
- To monitor our health and to not go around others if we are not feeling well

In retrospect, we can look at all of these reminders as what might be considered common courtesy or social etiquette. Then it got more difficult ... we were asked to “avoid close contact” and to maintain 6 feet of distance between ourselves and those who do not live in our households. For social beings, this physical distancing remains a challenge. As scientist and medical professionals learned more about this *novel* virus we were asked to “cover our mouth and nose with a clothe face covering when around others outside of our household.” Our talented seamstresses turned to mask making, and others turned to cutting out patterns, fabric, and filters. We comply for the sake of others.

As a Wheaton Franciscan Community, we have been blessed. In the United States, we have not lost any Sisters, Covenant Companions, or staff to COVID-19. We have found ways to connect and to share our gifts with the people of God. We know that our lives have been disrupted and that we are not as free to move about as we may have been before, I wonder though, if this is not a “reminder call” from God to, “Guard my common good: Do what’s right and do it in the right way.” (Is:56:1)

In response to this pandemic, we started publishing *Blessings* weekly to help share messages of gratitude, hope, joy, and blessing. With this issue of *Blessings*, we have run out of *timely* photos, poems, and inspirations. So please consider sending us “your blessings”. Let’s continue to hold one another in thought and prayer.

*In Gratitude,*

*Covenant Companion Jeanne Connolly*
Birthing Paradox

there is hope
in the dynamics of death, and the miracle of re-birth.

in labor pain
followed by the joy of life.

in caterpillars eating mindlessly,
weaving a web of transformation
and a cocoon of possibility

in humanity.
consuming voraciously,
to fill its immature desires,

while seeking more,
a deep call,
Within the mystery of the heart

Ah, the heart of humanity,
born to reflect
the glory of it’s maker,
the beauty of love

the call to birth a new
consciousness in our midst,

Pat Irr, osf

View of Our Lady of the Angels from the prairie. Photo by Sr. Fran Glowinski.

Freshly stained doors
at entrance #7

Photo of Painting by Sr. Georgene L. Wilson,
Dialogue with Sister Water