
Germany: COVID-19 crisis in two female Franciscan monasteries

The pandemic has struck at the heart of German monasteries: 76 Franciscan nuns have contracted COVID-19 in the convent of Thuine, Lower Saxony, as well as 48 friars and assistants at the Franciscan monastery of Reute in Baden-Wuerttemberg. The situation is complex in both cases because the two monasteries serve as care homes for elderly Franciscan brothers and sisters who are in need of assistance. Sister Maria Reiker Cordis, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George in Thuine (a female institute of pontifical right), told EPD press agency that for now none of the 76 sisters who were infected had to go to the hospital. The Superior General, too, tested positive and is now quarantined together with the other sisters who contracted the virus. All other sisters (another two houses for sick and elderly nuns are connected to the mother house convent of Thuine) tested negative. A total of 170 nuns live in Thuine. The Sisters of St Francis in Thuine, who started out as Hospital Sisters of St. Francis during a typhus epidemic in the mid-19th century, are today serving in ten countries, mainly in the fields of education and social affairs. Even the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of Reute, in Baden-Württemberg, has been severely hit by the pandemic. COVID-19 entered the Gut-Betha-Haus nursing home for elderly sisters, and 38 elderly nuns and 10 employees tested positive for the virus.

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