

KOLPING INTERNATIONAL Kolpingplatz 5-11, 50667 Köln/Germany

To all Kolping members worldwide

KOLPING INTERNATIONAL

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August 19, 2020

COVID-19, a worldwide pandemic – KOLPING, a worldwide family

Dear Kolping sisters and Kolping brothers all over the world,

in all sixty countries where there are Kolping Families, people must cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Some months have passed since we heard about this virus for the first time and when it started to affect everyday life.

We all experience it differently, the risk of catching coronavirus and the measures taken to protect people from this infectious disease. In some countries medical infrastructure is very good and many people who got infected with the disease can be treated rapidly and intensively, whereas in other countries there is a shortage of ventilators to treat patients with severe symptoms. Some countries were able to subsidize companies with billions of euros or dollars to help them through the lockdown and to save jobs at a time of reduced economic activities, whereas in other countries people cannot expect to receive any financial help to feed their families when they do not earn any money.



Slovakia



Albania

In this situation of a global crisis, we experience that more than 400,000 Kolping members worldwide accept responsibility for each other and for others in their region. Instead of focusing on themselves and on their own needs, Kolping sisters and Kolping brothers demonstrate solidarity with those who are not strong enough to cope on their own during these challenging times.

Throughout the world, Kolping members supplied people in the past few months not only with basic foodstuffs and water or hygiene kits containing soap and disinfectant products but they also helped with a few words of encouragement or a personal letter. They did not want anyone to feel left out or to be afraid of being alone and feeling lonely. All those pictures of thousands of Kolping sisters and Kolping brothers assisting those who are ill or old by calling them or visiting them (while practicing "social distancing") have made us all grateful for and proud of our international Kolping Family.

Kolping members who were not able to give personal help were often prepared to give a donation. At the outset of the pandemic, the General Secretariat set up a "Kolping Corona Fund" to help finance projects and support Kolping organizations that were able and willing to provide immediate help in their area. Within a few weeks, more than 750,000 euros were raised from donors in Germany, Austria, South-Tyrol and Switzerland. What an overwhelming sign of practiced solidarity in our international association!



Myanmar



Uganda

In making all those courageous efforts, we follow in the footsteps of Blessed Adolph Kolping: In summer 1849 there was an outbreak of cholera in Cologne, which also occurred continuously over time in many other German towns. From the very beginning, Adolph Kolping was among those who volunteered to care for those infected with the disease, some of who even reported on his help, such as Kurt Schnepfensiefen, a protestant copper-smith who wrote in a letter to his bride-to-be: *"I would long be pushing up the daisies if I had not be so fortunate to meet good old Kolping. You should see how he is slaving away trying to help us poor journeymen. He is taking such good care of us and he is the reason why I changed my mind about a Catholic pastor!"* (based on Hans-Joachim Kracht, Adolph Kolping, Leben und Werk).

This spirit of Adolph Kolping continues to mark the work of people who are active in our association. Lay people and priests, young people, children and bishops admire him as a person who made his life a success by living in the imitation of Christ – a life that never forgets to care about others and actively supports those in need.



Brazil

Nobody knows how long this pandemic will keep us in suspense. How many more people will die from this virus or associated secondary diseases? What we do know, however, is that our solidarity, our promise to accept responsibility for one another and to assist those in need will never die. May we all draw comfort from the fact that we are a strong community, an international family that does not let anyone down.

Stay healthy and courageous,

Yours sincerely,


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