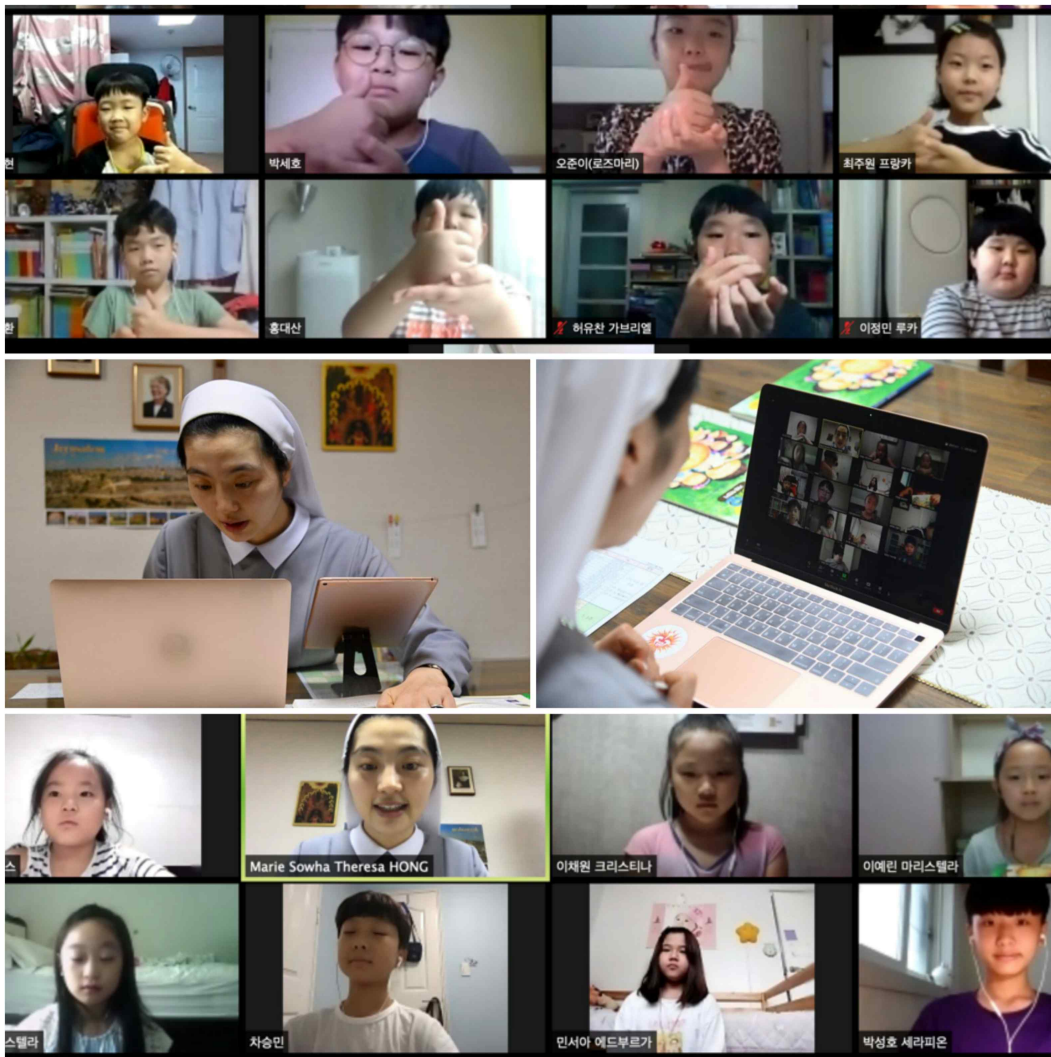


A small first step at St.James Parish, Incheon



“Lord, what shall I do?” Whenever I am faced with a big or small corner in my life, I have asked the Lord this question. Sometimes he has answered me through someone whom I met. This was one of those times.

When I planned my First Communion class in March, I thought COVID - 19 would be gone in May, but it wasn't. The situation in Korea was getting better and there were less than 50 cases each day. However, people were still seized with anxiety and fear. The virus had not only attacked our bodies, but had also infiltrated our minds. I had modified my plan for the First Communion class seven times. There were two choices; delay or cancel for the remainder of the year. Delay; who can be sure the virus will be over by autumn or winter? Cancelling; I couldn't betray my 16 children who were looking forward to receiving Jesus. I have prayed, asking the Lord. “What shall I do?”

The Lord answered me through Sister Maria Michaela who is the homeroom teacher of Incheon Bakmun Elementary School. She introduced me to a video conferencing program called ZOOM that has been used by all teachers for remote learning. Most public school online classes in Korea are still one-way. With ZOOM, the participating parties can interact with each other. Children can ask something of the teacher and the teacher can answer in real time. This was wonderful! I realized change had begun, even though I wasn't prepared. I needed to find the best way to proceed in this uncertain time. I decided to take the first step and design online First Communion class using ZOOM. The priest of St.James parish and my Sisters

encouraged me to go on this new way. The children's parents helped this students to connect using this new platform. Finally, on June 23rd I was ready to begin my first online class. And children and I were really happy to see and talk each other without masks. Now they are inventing new ways to play online during their break time.

I received an opportunity to share my story in Incheon diocese bulletin and Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation. It is my pleasure to help other people who are looking for creative ways to proclaim the Gospel during the COVID-19 crisis.

Sometimes God leads me to unknown places. I am not sure where I am going, but I know my destination is love. The important thing is to take a small first step.

Sister Marie Sowha Theresa SND
7th July 2020