



YEAR XCVI - N° 1/2020

SPECIAL ISSUE - TIME of PANDEMIC

# PACE E BENE



**FMSC in MISSION  
in the TIME of PANDEMIC  
ACCOMPANIED by the CHURCH**

**SPECIAL ISSUE - TIME of PANDEMIC**





*For months now, the words “pandemic” and “covid 19” have become very familiar and common. We hear them, pronounce them and immediately provoke in each one feelings of fear, insecurity, suffering, anxiety, almost distrust of each other.*

*While unwilling, we are “guided” in actions, decisions and our relationships by the invisible virus that has upset and is upsetting the whole world.*

*Yet even this “time” is a time “blessed” by the Lord. This is our Faith!!*

*It is inhabited not only by this virus, but above all by God, Emmanuel, the God-with-us, who has been, is and will always be the God of history and in history; the God who walks with us, who illuminates our “going” and protects us with “His Shadow”.*

*For us, FMSC sisters, called to be “sharers” of the redemptive Love of the Heart of Christ crucified, this time becomes a strong and urgent missionary appeal. It is no coincidence that, we too are here, in this time, part of this historical moment, of this world human drama.*

*No, it is no coincidence! It is God’s will! It is in his project of Love!*

*Our missionary charism that flows from the Heart of Christ, who loved us to the end, today becomes more than ever an urgent call to let ourselves be deeply touched by this experience. In order to find motivations and meanings, authentic desires and choices of faith and love. We are called to renew with solicitude the missionary zeal and embrace all the dimensions of our consecrated life, prayer, fraternity, mission, every cry of pain, every fear, every desire for good, for change.*

*The “Pace Bene” that we present here wishes to offer everyone the strength and creativity of the Holy Spirit who guided, enlightened the sisters and communities, to find “ways” and opportunities to be faithful to our charism of FMSC. In our commitment we are accompanied by the teaching and example of Pope Francis, the Shepherd of the universal Church who with great faith, certain hope and concrete love, is showing to humanity that God is with us! We do not have to fear!*

### Pope FRANCIS, Pontiff between GOD and HUMANITY in this time of Pandemic

**DO NOT FEAR.... I AM WITH YOU!!!  
(Jesus)**

We all looked at China with amazement and apprehension, those big white suits and over all the deserted streets seemed so far away that we certainly would not have imagined that we would experience the same things in such a fast way.

This is how Covid-19 entered into the life of all of us in different ways and with different consequences but brought us together in a unique way of “being”. We found ourselves stuck, in the activities, in the movements, but not in the relationships that made their way with new methods and kept us united even in the distance. Prayer, which has always united us, has done it even more, in a truly special bond that has gone beyond borders, times, spaces.

He, the successor of Peter, Pope Francis right from the start with his attention to the world accompanied us to pray for the brothers and sisters in Wuhan: *“a prayer for our Chinese brothers who suffer from this cruel disease. May they find the way to recovery as soon as possible”*. It was the end of January, only a month later we will hear him praying in St. Peter’s Square so that the contagion of the coronavirus does not erase solidarity and is faced with effective measures. This time he is talking about Italy.

This was the time when Pope Francis’ invitation to unite to pray all together entered all houses, touching believers and non-believers and uniting also in the religious diversity.



Pope Francis has made the drama of the world his own with fatherly solicitude; with participation and deep suffering, he has accompanied and is accompanying the Church and all humanity step by step. His frequent messages offer a reading “of the signs of the times” of this pandemic to rebuild a better world, to sow hope in the midst of so much suffering and perplexity.

The Pope does not reduce people to numbers, but looks at everyone; everyone unites in spirit and in common humanity, especially the poor, the invisible, the marginalized.

It encourages those who have political responsibilities, so that they work for the common good and, at the same time, addresses thoughts of gratitude and affection to those who work in hospitals and those who in the various fields guarantee the essential services for life, for civil coexistence.

The voice of our Pontiff has become a vehicle for strong prayer intentions; here are some that tell us how much his broad horizon of faith embraces every reality.

*“We pray today for the deceased, those who died from the pandemic and also especially for those who died being far from their loved ones”*

It calls for *“bringing together scientific capacities, in a transparent and selfless way, to find vaccines and treatments”*.

*“We pray for the nurses, men and women, boys and girls who make this profession.” “It is more than a profession; it is a vocation, a dedication. The Lord bless them, in this time of the pandemic they have set an example of heroism, some have given their lives”*.

*“We pray today for students, who study and teachers who must find new ways to move forward in teaching. May the Lord help them on this journey, give them courage and also a great success”*.

*“For those who perform cleaning services in homes, hospitals, on the streets, a hidden and necessary job to survive.”*

Pope Francis thinks about the poverty, unemployment and hunger resulted due to the coronavirus pandemic and prays for those already now trying to remedy it.

*“We pray today for men and women who work in the media. In this pandemic time, they risk a lot and work a lot. May the Lord help them in this work of always transmitting the truth”*.

*“In these days many people have lost their jobs; they have not been regularized, they worked privately ... We pray for these brothers and sisters of ours who suffer from this lack of work”*.

*“Let us pray for the people who care about burying the deceased in this pandemic. It is one of the works of mercy to bury the dead and it is not a pleasant thing of course. We pray for them that they also risk their lives and take the infection”*

A thought for the many priests and doctors who lost their lives to take care of people in this time characterized by the pandemic.

These words of the Pope echo in the heart and touch us deeply; go to move deeply our being “missionary” in the world. Because first of all being missionary means having a heart capable of embracing everyone, having a sensitivity that lets itself be touched, that knows to cry, knows how to suffer with all without distinction and therefore offer everything and everyone to the One who alone can give strength, hope: Jesus our Redeemer, our Savior.



Pope Francis has guided and is guiding the Church, humanity ... and also us and in a surprising, providential way. He is telling us how to “embrace” all humanity with our missionary charism in this historic moment so difficult for everyone.

In addition to his daily intentions and his homilies from the chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis has given us strong, unique moments that will remain in the heart, in the memory and that, in some way, must give a new direction to our being and giving.

*We retrace only some of these events to contemplate in them, the very Presence of God, which has always entered our history, assumes it, and lives it with us ... so that it becomes a “salvation history” for everyone.*

We keep in our eyes and hearts the image transmitted throughout the world of the prayer on **March 27 in St. Peter’s Square**, which touched the hearts of all Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers, seeing in him the icon of the shepherd who alone goes ahead carrying the cross.

Pope Francis appeared small, and even more curved with his face visibly excited by the sense of paternity that makes him feel the gravity of his task entirely, while climbing the steps of the churchyard not without effort and in solitude, interpreting the pains of the world to offer them at the foot of the Cross.

The siren of an ambulance, one of many that crossed our neighborhoods in those hours to help the newly infected, accompanied the bells with the moment of the Eucharistic blessing *Urbi et Orbi*, when the Pope, still alone, reappeared on the square deserted and lashed by the rain tracing the sign of the cross with the monstrance.



All the weight of the world hanging in the balance for the health emergency appeared on the shoulders of the Pope of the least, who made the apparent weakness the indispensable force to make words of authentic sharing heard, reiterating that we are all, including him, on the same boat.



The commentary on the Gospel is prayer, it is invocation, it is a profound expression of what we all live in the world, *“Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying, “We are perishing”*

And he, Pope Francis, our pastor and guide, the Pontiff (the one who acts as a bridge) between God and humanity addresses the prayer for us and with us, *“ Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: “Wake up, Lord!”*

Pope Francis always helps us to reflect and discern, *“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that You exist, but coming to You and trusting in you. You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. .... a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others”.*

With the final invocation of the blessing, Pope Francis enclosed all humanity in an embrace: *“From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, May God’s blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: “Do not be afraid” And we, together with Peter, “cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us”*



### THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

It was surprising to see how Pope Francis, always remained close to people in these critical times through his prayers and blessings. His prayer before the Holy Crucifix in the church of San Marcello on March 15, 2020, calling for an end to the scourge of the coronavirus, was a moving experience for the whole world. The venerated and miraculous image of this crucifix is very symbolic and has many stories that relate to the miracles of when the city of Rome was saved from the pandemic in 1522 when people cried out with faith to the Lord.

This crucifix accompanied the liturgical moments of Holy Week inside and outside the Basilica of St. Peter's, celebrated without the usual crowd of the people of God. The Crucifix, in several moments Pope Francis embraced and kissed, almost to give the embrace and the faith of all humanity, of every believer also of those who have been deeply touched by these gestures and entreaties !! That Crucifix ... to remind us as Pope Francis said, in the celebration of Palm Sunday:

Jesus says one thing from the Cross one thing alone: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*.... *These are powerful words. Jesus had suffered the abandonment of his own, who had fled. But the Father remained for him. Now, in the abyss of solitude, for the first time he calls him by the generic name "God". And "in a loud voice" he asks the question "why?" the most excruciating "why?", "Why did you too abandon me?"* These words are in fact those of a Psalm (cf. 22:2); they tell us that Jesus also brought the experience of extreme desolation to his prayer. But the fact remains that he himself experienced that desolation, he experienced the utmost abandonment, which the Gospels testify to by quoting his very words.

*Why did all this take place? Once again, it was done for our sake, to serve us. So that when we are cornered, when we find ourselves at a dead end, with no light and no way of escape, when it seems that God himself is not responding, we should remember that we*

*are not alone. Jesus experienced total abandonment in a situation he had never before experienced in order to be one with us in everything. He did it for me, for you, for all of us; he did it to say to us, "Do not be afraid, you are not alone. I experienced all your desolation in order to be ever close to you". Jesus served us to that extent; he descended into the abyss of our most bitter sufferings, culminating in betrayal and abandonment. Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us, "Courage, open your heart to my love. You will feel the consolation of God who sustains you".*



## The Way of the Cross in the embrace of the colonnade of St. Peter's Square

The meditation of the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday takes place every year in the Colosseum, and is presided over by the Holy Father and attended by a large crowd. It is truly a very significant moment in which we join the many martyrs and relive this great moment of the Lord's passion.

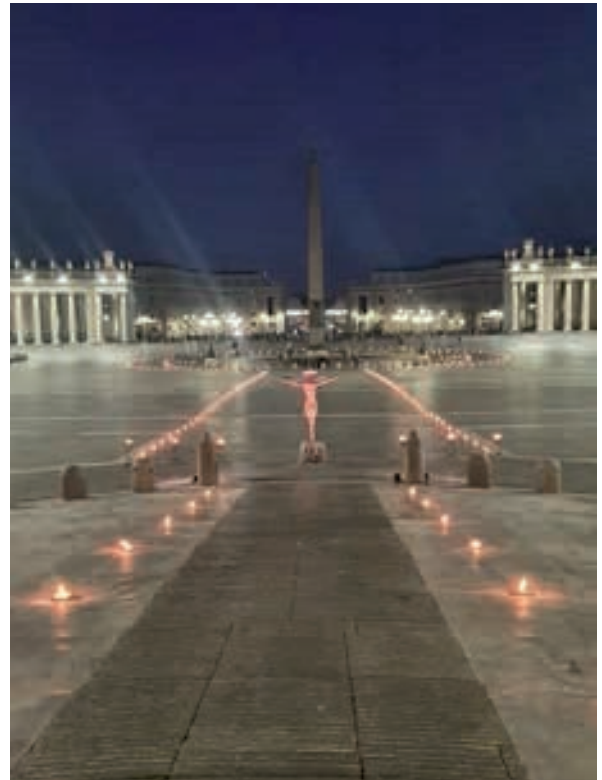
This year it was organized in the empty square of the basilica of St. Peter, and right there, through the media, 'World vision', the eyes of many people in the world were found ... in that empty square, filled with the suffering of all humanity, illuminated by solidarity, by the tenderness of love that knows how to welcome, support, share.

Many oil lamps indicating the direction of movement and the different stations illuminated the St. Peter's square.

The miraculous crucifix of the church of San Marcello was erected in the square. The figure of Pope Francis standing alone intensely in prayer, as if carrying on himself the agony of the whole suffering world, a truly moving and touching scene.

The inmates and the people working in the "Due Palazzi" detention house in Padua prepared the meditations on the Stations of the Cross. Fourteen people were invited by Pope Francis to meditate on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, sharing their experiences.

They were five prisoners, a family victim of murder, the daughter of a man sentenced to life imprisonment, a prison instructor, a civil magistrate, the mother of a prisoner, a catechist, a voluntary religious brother, a prison guard and a priest, accused and finally acquitted after eight years.





Accompanying Christ on the Way of the cross, with the direct voices of those who live behind the walls of a prison, is an opportunity to see the great battle between life and death, to discover how the threads of good and evil inevitably intertwine. People all over the world have witnessed these intense moments with great emotions.

The meditations of the stations of the Way of the cross lasted almost 2 hours and the experience of it remained in the minds and hearts as if we had made a real journey with Jesus and the suffering humanity.



At the end of the Way of the cross, Pope Francis gave only the blessing ... it was a silence of words.... but that transmitted love and sharing, and gives us an example of how we too will have to accept each other's sufferings.

Illuminating are the words that Pope Francis wrote to the prison in Padua after receiving the text of the Way of the cross, *"I have read the meditations for the Via Crucis that you donated. I dwelt amid your words and I felt welcomed, at home.*

*Thank you for sharing part of your story with me. God tells of himself and speaks to us within a story; he invites us to listen attentively and mercifully".*

## CHRIST OUR HOPE IS RISEN!

With Faith and joy, despite the great suffering of the moment we are living in, Pope Francis blew up the Easter announcement. It was proclaimed in an empty Basilica, from where, however, it seems to echo stronger almost as waves expanding to reach every corner of the earth,

*At dawn, the women went to the tomb. There the angel says to them, "Do not be afraid. He is not here; for he has risen" (vv. 5-6). They hear the words of life even as they stand before a tomb... and then they meet Jesus, the giver of all hope, who confirms the message and says: "Do not be afraid" (v. 10). Do not be afraid, do not yield to fear, this is the message of hope. It is addressed to us, today. These are the words that God repeats to us, this very night.*

*Tonight we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, uttered with an empty smile. No! It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. Over these weeks, we have kept repeating, "All will be well", clinging to the beauty of our humanity and allowing words of encouragement to rise up from our hearts. But as the days go by and fears grow, even the boldest hope can dissipate. Jesus' hope is different. He plants in our hearts the conviction that God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life.*

*Cristo è risorto!*

*Non lasciamoci  
portar via  
la speranza!*

*cfr. Mt 28,5-6*



*The grave is the place where no one who enters ever leaves. But Jesus emerged for us; he rose for us, to bring life where there was death, to begin a new story in the very place where a stone had been placed. He, who rolled away the stone that sealed the entrance of the tomb, can also remove the stones in our hearts. So, let us not give in to resignation; let us not place a stone before hope.*

*We can and must hope, because God is faithful.*

*He did not abandon us; he visited us and entered into our situations of pain, anguish and death.*

*His light dispelled the darkness of the tomb: today he wants that light to penetrate even to the darkest corners of our lives. Dear sister, dear brother, even if in your heart you have buried hope, do not give up: God is greater. Darkness and death do not have the last word. Be strong, for with God nothing is lost!*

## **A ROSARY CROWN THAT UNITES THE WHOLE WORLD**

At the beginning of May, Pope Francis, with his letter, invited everyone to pray the Rosary at home giving this motivation: contemplating together the face of Christ with the heart of Mary, our Mother, will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us pass this trial.



At the end of the Month dedicated to Mary, the recitation of the Rosary presided over by Pope Francis organized from the Grotto of Lourdes, in the Vatican gardens, was broadcasted worldwide. From the heart of Vatican, this crown of prayers, as deeply united rosary beads created a union all



over the world because the largest shrines of all continents connected directly, from Czestochowa to Fatima, from Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Mexico, in Lujan, in Argentina, from Pompeii to Lourdes. From the Shrine of Immaculate Conception in Washington to that of Elele, in Nigeria. A worldwide breath testified by the images of the Sanctuaries that could be seen on the giant screen near the Grotto.

Accompanying this strong moment, at the beginning and at the end, were the two prayers that the Pope wrote to the Virgin in this time of pandemic. Prayers that express the profound meaning of these gestures: placing the pains of humanity at the feet of the Virgin Mary to invoke her help and protection. *Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not despise the supplications of us who are in trial, and deliver us from every danger, glorious and blessed Virgin.*



Men and women who represent the various categories affected by the virus or committed to stop it prayed the decades of the Rosary.

They are a doctor and a nurse, representing the frontline healthcare staff at the fight against the pandemic.

A person recovered from Covid-19 and one who has lost a family member, to indicate how many have been affected. A priest who

is the chaplain and a sister, in memory of the priests and consecrated persons close to the sick. A pharmacist and a journalist to highlight those who have continued to carry out their precious service for others. A Civil Protection volunteer with his family to represent the whole vast world of volunteering and all those who have worked to cope with the emergency and a young couple for whom was born a child at this time, to offer the prayer for all the children who came into the world.

The rhythmic repetition of prayers was truly like a thread that kept the world together. A thread composed of the mysteries that followed one another, from the voices of prayer, from the tears that express the pain and anguish felt in this time, from the emotion and hope placed at She who is Mother of Jesus and our Mother and who never remained indifferent to the fate of men.

Over the centuries it has been used and we continue to entrust ourselves to it, guided by the very words of the Pope's prayer.



*O Mary, Comforter of the afflicted, embrace all your troubled children and get the Merciful Father to intervene with His Almighty hand to free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its daily course.*

*We entrust ourselves to You, who shine on our path as a sign of salvation and hope, o merciful, o pious, o sweet Virgin Mary.*

Pope Francis is guiding the Church and humanity with strong faith and firm hope, certain that love is always the truest answer to every situation.

Let us continue to welcome his blessing as a sign of God's blessing on the world today!

*"I pray for you, I pray with you and I ask God our Father to bless you, to fill you with His love, and to protect you along the way, giving you that strength that allows us not to fall and that does not disappoint: hope".*

## A LETTER TO ALL

Peace and Good - Alleluja!

Dear sisters, near and far,

I reach you with a greeting and with a word that flows from the bottom of my heart: THANK YOU!  
Thanks for your prayers and your affection.

Three months in the hospital have left a mark on my life.

I can say: "I was, I was not, I am"

I will never be able to express my gratitude to the Lord for the gifts I have received. The gifts of "the life, the vocation, the gift of belonging to a religious family that I love, the gift of many sisters who live my own ideal, the gift of a missionary experience with emigrants like a beautiful mosaic and not least the gift of healing from CORONAVIRUS. Evil took me by surprise.

Coronavirus, a word that seemed even difficult to pronounce, a disease that I barely followed because I felt exempted from this experience, but the virus did its part.

March 6: meeting of the Board of Directors of the kindergarten with two heads of Public Education.

A few days later, a phone call informs me that two members of the Board have tested positive.

The alert was not in vain, because I too had a fever that did not leave me. Tested positive!

A shock and a moment of perplexity when the Doctor gave me two hours to prepare and then go to the 'Center Hospitalier' clinic. I was worried about leaving Sr. Anna Maria Borsato alone.

I then took up my courage and abandoned myself in the hands of the Good God by presenting to Him many intentions.

An ambulance arrived with two nurses who looked like astronauts. My doctor who understood the gravity was waiting for me to greet me. I remember his worried face and a word: "dommage!" which means 'What a pity!' ... then the rush to the hospital...!

The next day (March 15<sup>th</sup>) was my birthday. The good wishes of the doctors, nurses, my brothers, sisters and the various messages received made the day less heavy.

I was serene, prayed and waited observing the comings and goings of doctors and nurses.

After a few days, a doctor told me that they had to put a tube in my mouth to help me breathe, after which I do not remember anything.

Three weeks in intensive care, then the miracle came: the awakening!

On Easter day, I saw the face of Sr. Stefania on the tablet, smiling, who greeted me and invited me to thank the Lord for giving me a new life ...

What a thrill! I did not realize.

Little by little I discovered how close you were all to me with your insistent prayer, how great was the concern and suffering of the Superiors, of you sisters, of my family members and of so many people who prayed for my recovery.





Jesus said, “If you had faith as much as a mustard seed, you would move the mountains.”

You with your faith, you have won! I must say that my faith has also strengthened because I felt a strength inside me that I cannot explain. I only know that I was the most serious, the oldest and the first to be healed. What satisfaction for the Doctors!

Doctors and nurses followed me day and night with much love and dedication. After six weeks, they transported me to another clinic (Steinfort) for rehabilitation and here, like the children, I learned to eat, walk and stand again, always followed by competent and kind physiotherapists and ergo therapists.

Now I will have to continue physiotherapy because the muscles have suffered. I went to new life, from Good Friday to Easter and now I can sing the Easter alleluia with you.

Another exciting moment was waiting for me: to leave Luxembourg forever and quickly (like the Jews ...) because, due to the coronavirus, one could not enter the school. Forty years and nine months in Luxembourg have left an impression on my life. I met many people in kindergarten and in the parish community. I shared joys and sorrows with them. The relationship with everyone, with religious and civil authorities will remain indelible in my heart. Prayer will remain that golden thread that has united us over many years.



Sisters, thanks again to you all and in particular to Sr. Paola and Sr. Stefania who followed the evolution of the disease with trepidation and who made me feel the warmth of a real family.

Sr. Stefania with Sr. Eleonora came to pick me up and their presence was providential.

I left with a swollen heart and with tears that I could not hold back, but at the same time with the joy of returning to the Mother House.

The meeting with the sisters who waited for me with open arms was moving. An affectionate encounter that I will never forget.

I love all of you!

*Sister Luciana Cividini*

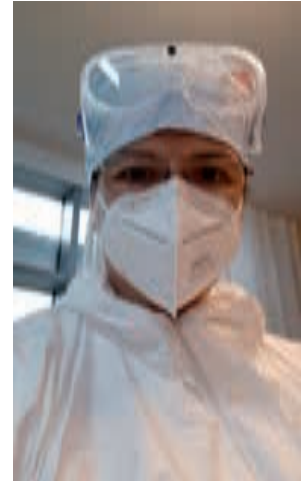
## **36 DAYS OF ISOLATION**

### **AN INHABITED SOLITUDE**

In late February, covid 19 began to enter our lives.

I remember the amazement of many ... who thought it was all an exaggeration, who waited for clear indications, who was already afraid. It did not take long to realize that it was serious and in the 'home for the aged', it immediately felt very strong.

The closure to the outsiders the rush in the search for personal protective equipment, the control of every minimal sign or symptom, then the first fevers. The white suits, which seemed to belong only to the news, have also entered our daily lives, isolations, operators of the sick, deaths. The home for the aged seemed to have become a "bubble" where all this happened. Moreover, unfortunately like us, other structures also lived the same situation, the most fragile were in fact the most affected.



Then on March 19, the test result came for me: POSITIVE.

I had been in a room of the Oratory of Dro for a few days because at the appearance of the first sick people I thought it was better to protect the fraternity of the sisters.



Many of my colleagues made similar choices to safeguard the family, some slept in the garage, others in the holiday home, and others in structures that had been given to accommodate the sanitary workers.

I stopped in Dro in isolation, my 36 days, I did not feel alone but it was not easy. I had no serious symptoms, twice a day the local nurses called to hear how I was. I had a cough, wheezing, a strong weakness; I did not taste and smell, often a great headache, little appetite.

Like me there were many colleagues at home in solitary confinement, we felt the need and we made the video conference every day to support each other a little. It was also a precious exchange in a sharing that made us better understand what others felt.

In fact, it was not known how the disease would evolve in the course of the days and this fear remained inside.

I organized the days between prayer, reading, some art, some jobs, and some letters that I sent to colleagues at work. Helping to work was difficult, but even small things were important for helping out in such a difficult time.

Two men in particular accompanied me at this time: the Disciples of Emmaus.



I felt the same disappointment, incomprehension, sadness, I felt the fatigue of colleagues who spent themselves without reservations, the constant deaths, the family members who could not greet their loved ones, those who were sick and aggravated, the loneliness of many.. Hope seemed to find no place despite the multiplication of prayer initiatives that embraced everyone.

Finally, Easter has come despite Covid!  
Nothing could stop that light of the Easter night that humbly but persistently knocked at the hearts and made its way reminding me, like to many others that from every darkness you can get out, that from every wound you can look through.

In the same as for the Disciples, a journey of return begins with new eyes that have been able to grasp the newness of the Gospel that is incarnated and walks alongside us for a long time.

In fact, many were the signs of life lived in this time. Solidarity, heroism, prayer, unity that has been felt in a world united by the pandemic. In my small way, I received simple but big gestures: some lunches at the door of the oratory by the families of the village, some drawings, the numerous letters from the high school boys I had met, the messages from sisters who got really close despite the distance, of my Province but also of the world.

The latter was the sign of closeness that gave me more amazement and gratitude, made me perceive a different and enriching sense of family. In this way, I would like to thank in particular Sr Stefania and Sr Paola with the sisters who, also from the other Provinces, have continued to pray and await healing with me.

Healing was a step, followed by returning, first to work and then to my fraternity. At work, the impact was very strong finding empty beds and missing faces, long-term fatigued colleagues, elderly people still isolated. Now we try to start again with courage and hope, certain that we do not want to lose what suffering has taught us in this time. Solidarity, sobriety, care, being close, bringing a smile made only of eyes, the hope that we are not alone but God always walks with us even when we do not recognize him as happened to the disciples of Emmaus.



*With gratitude. Sister Barbara*



## **FROM THE GENERALATE HOUSE**

*There is a time for everything and for every deed... Ecclesiaste 3:17*



We are all aware what is happening now all over the world, we heard and saw through the media what trouble and chaos brought by the coronavirus in all parts of the globe. Thousands of people died, many families have lost their loved ones because of the said Pandemic, including doctors, nurses, health workers, volunteers, priests, religious sisters, etc. have risked their lives for the sake of others, and until today there are these people selflessly working and doing their job to save lives. They are on the front line and it is right to consider them as ‘Heroes of this time’.

The Government leaders have to look ways and means for the safety and protection of their country and people, and continuously trying to do their best for the common good of all, for which necessary precautions have been implemented such as quarantine, lock down, health instructions, etc., in order to avoid the spreading of the Covid-19 virus.

We all find ourselves in a tragic situation for a sudden change of the usual life and activities; the students, teachers, employees, workers in the different fields of work have to stay at home to avoid contagion of the virus, this situation becomes difficult for all. Most of the time we cannot avoid to feel anxieties, worries, sadness and uncertainties of what the future awaits us all, this is a reality of today’s world. Despite of these problems, life must go on and we have to face this situation with hope, courage, strong Faith and trust in the Lord who never abandon His children.

We take this time of ‘pandemic’ as **an opportunity to be closer to God**, to spend more time to pray. Pope Francis considers and believes that the Covid-19 pandemic is a “place of conversion,” a chance that we must not let it escape. He says to an interview: “What we are living now is a place of conversion, and we have a chance to begin. So, let’s not let it slip from us, and let’s move ahead. (interview with Catholic media by Austen Ivereigh)

Here, in the community of the Generalate house: sisters of the General Council, of the community and the international juniorate, lock down brings more spiritual union and enthusiasm in prayer life and other activities.

The young sisters of the 'international juniorate', who cannot go to the schools for their lessons, help in the liturgical and communal prayer, making it more animated. Every day the Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Rosary in the community are precious times that gathers the sisters together in prayer, spending time to be with the Lord besides of the personal prayer chosen by each according to her convenient space, to be alone with Jesus.

When the celebration of Holy Masses was suspended both in the public churches and in the religious communities, the community follows and participated the live-streaming celebration of the Holy Mass of Pope Francis every day on the TV.

His homilies were for all a true spiritual journey that has sustained and accompanied us each day, helping us also to pray for the most needy people; his intentions have also become our intentions of the day remembered in the Eucharistic adoration and in the recitation of the Holy Rosary. All the special celebrations of Pope Francis for this situation and those of Holy Week were also followed on the TV channel which has been broadcasted live.



As Pope Francis in his Letter to the Faithful for the month of May 2020, encourages everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Holy Rosary either as a group or individually. The whole community, General Council, sisters and juniores made this traditional devotion also with a procession around the campus of Asisium carrying the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It was really a heartfelt participation with love and devotion to our Lady entrusting to her all our intentions particularly for this 'pandemic' crisis- situation and the material and spiritual needs of all the people of God.

Despite of the lock down the school activities of 'Asisium', continues by having 'online classes'. After a time of fears, of uncertainties, everyone managed to fit into this new modality by offering children and teenagers a well organized school timetable with lessons for all subjects. Teachers, students and many parents have worked to make this time truly become a period of growth in knowledge but also in "wisdom" and in deep understanding of how to learn to "live" the situations that sometimes life asks us to face.



*Here we share some expressions of gratitude from the parents of our students:*

*My thanks is really addressed to your whole structure not only because it has managed to activate in an extremely short time and without notice an excellent teaching solution for our children and young people, but because once again you are making us all feel part of the same big and beautiful family. The continuity and contact with the school on the days of our children and young people in this moment of isolation is taking on a very important meaning, THANKS !!!!*

**As a parent, I cannot fail to grasp all the effort that you, the religious community, teachers and secretarial staff, use daily in your duties and I can only be grateful to the Lord for the example and the love you put into this work.**

**In this difficult moment for the whole world, a part of quiet and tranquility our children continue to have it through your "virtual" and active presence in the school activities that are carried out daily.**

We parents also grew up alongside with our children and it was an honour to always participate from "far" in the lessons of all the unique and precious teachers!

We look forward to returning to your institute and singing with joy "Thanks !!!"



The sister students who study at the Antonianum university and in Pro lingua to learn Italian also continued their “online lessons”, so much committed with a timetable very similar to what they had to follow going to school. Really, everyone has done their best to prevent the pandemic from “stopping” school programs, exams and thesis preparation.

The help of this modern technology has been invaluable for all and perhaps may have helped us to understand its positive value and learn to use these tools for the good.

In this period of health crisis and now also of economic crisis, the community has been able **to support and help even families in difficulty.**

It is good to know that we were able to be included in the list of beneficiaries at the Food Bank of Lazio as the Tau Onlus Mission and the members of the board have generously made themselves available for the realization of this new service.

The president, Sabrina Vivan, has delegated Flavio Dessy as responsible of the food bank which refers to the community of the ASISIUM institute. Living in Rome, Flavio Dessy with Aurelio Giulianelli, members of the board and parents of students from our school, can follow this activity closely.

The superior general Sr. Paola Dotto and her council supported the project by preparing a room following the safety standards required by the management of the Food Bank. After the supervision we were granted to be able to have food to distribute to about 15 families as of now. Others have already application to avail for it..

In March, April and May, as we know, the health situation was very critical, but having scrupulously observed the indications received from competent personnel, we were able to continue with the distribution of food to families. The joy of their faces is the reward for the service rendered to those who were hungry; they wrote “that hunger does not go into quarantine”



Many other aids have come to us: Aurelio, from his client and friend, received 500 masks as a gift and they were distributed. Nadia Vanno, another mother of our students, offered a pack of GEL for sanitizing the hands.

Sr. Laura Leon, superior of the community always answers those who knock at the door of our community to ask for support. She is also given food received from the Food Bank.

God's providence continues to manifest itself and to ask us to be instruments that from our hands can reach the heart and life of so many poor and needy.

This "pandemic" period that is upsetting the whole world can help us and make us more fruitful in our prayers, in the life of the community, in the apostolic service requested of us but also on the small occasions of every day life attentive to when the Lord knocks at the door of our heart through unexpected people and encounters.

With confidence we lift everything to the Lord with hope and trust in His merciful love ... and with the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary we pray that this difficult situation ends soon and resume to normal life condition.



### In this time of Pandemic... with the Blessed Virgin Mary

In this month devoted to Our Lady, we sisters of Asisium on 3<sup>rd</sup> May had celebrated a prayer together to Maria at the Generalate campus. The whole community was entailed in this participation, sisters from Generalate, community and of the juniorate. With devoted heart, we prayed the Franciscan crown. In each mystery, we made intercession for different intentions.



As 3<sup>rd</sup> May is dedicated particularly for the World Day of prayer for vocation, we prayed also for the religious vocations.

Our intentions wanted to embrace the whole world, for the dead and the living, those who are affected by the covid-19.

We implored for the mercy and consolation for the families who lost their dear ones, for all the departed souls especially of doctors, nurses, priests, religious, volunteers, and all the guards who sacrificed their lives for the sake of others. We remembered in our prayers those struggling for the economic problems cladding by the world right now. We also offered our prayers for the government, political leaders and for the people who are living in an egotistical horizon having no concern for the poor and suffering that they may rationalize the dignity of the human person and extend the helping hand for those who are in need.

We initiated the prayer, thanking God Almighty who had been protecting us at this hard time, full of affliction, and confusion all over the world, due to the pandemic COVID-19.

It is well known through Medias that there are huge number of houses, where people are tinned in their small apartments. It is a great possibility and a privilege that the all-powerful God has granted us a gorgeous and large garden full of trees, colourful flowers and the birds singing melodiously. In our prayers, we also think of those people forced to live in few square meters and while, walking around the garden we imagined to reach all of them and bring them to the Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary, with their sufferings, their sacrifices, their hopes.



We recited the Franciscan crown with much devotion. The Holy Statue of Mother Mary was carried in a procession by the sisters two by two.



With the first mystery the joy of Mary we began in front of our Chapel, and then we continued to move in a procession in the park around.

At the conclusion of each mystery we reached a table already arranged with white cloth and the candle, in order to place the Holy Statue of Mother Mary for a while to conclude the mystery and to introduce the next intention.

While walking and praying with Mother Mary in a procession we preceded till the Chapel where we continued our prayer with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the prayer of Act of offering to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The prayer continued with Eucharistic Adoration and was concluded with the solemn celebration of the Vespers.

The whole day was spent in a prayerful atmosphere and we felt the immense joy and consolation of praying together with Mary for the whole humanity.



## From the Community of S. Vitale, Viole - Assisi

### *To stop and then to resume the journey*

We remember well that March 4, the beginning of a moment of great trial and suffering: the schools were closed and also the places of work and shops.

There was a great silence around us, each of us was forced to isolate ourselves ... the fear of contagion and of death involved everyone, and the rules forced us to shut ourselves in the house.

Our small community already reduced to two sisters with the departure of Sr. Marisa Vanin for Treviso (for health reasons on 17 February) tried to react immediately by intensifying prayer and adhering to the USMI initiative for a chain of worship. Joining also to many initiatives promoted both through the television network and also by our parish of S. Rufino, cathedral of Assisi. Sr. Marisa followed us with prayer from home, making her presence felt from time to time. To keep us awake and active, it came the proposal made for all the churches of Assisi to ring the bells of the Angelus with the singing of the Ave Maria. We,

not having this recording, we associated three times a day, with a sound particularly beautiful which meant the joy of the Incarnation of God among us and, through Facebook, by spreading the Angelus prayer in the families of the area.



It is always the “Queen of Roses” who accompanies the journey of this small town on the outskirts of Assisi.

*“In the years of the Second World War the painting became a source of comfort and hope for the families of the many young soldiers sent to fight on the Russian or African frontline. Around the altar of the Madonna delle Rose, parishioners gathered to pray, invoking protection for their loved ones far away. At the time of the passage of the army to Assisi the people of Viole begged the Madonna delle Rose to preserve them from serious devastation and promised to build and to name a kindergarten in its name, as a sign of gratitude. The army passed and Viole was saved”.*

(From the Chronicles of the Parish)

Therefore, in other moments of danger the people of Viole invoke and pray to His Queen!

It could not have been otherwise in this very serious and sad moment.

The parish priest Don Cesare Provenzi takes inspiration and makes us expose the picture of the “Queen of Roses”, usually kept in the closed church, now brought to the view of the people, to invoke her to protect our country from the coronavirus. It was on March 19, St. Joseph’s Feast. A beautiful gesture and much appreciated by the faithful who at any time of the day, taking the momentous walk, passed the church and invoked their protector...

“Under your protection we seek refuge ...”

Moments of prayer were organized. The courageous ones went up to the church to pray, the media and above all some experts from the town allowed the amplification and the streaming transmission of both the Holy Rosary and the Sunday Mass animated by the parish priest and by us sisters, which the people of Violo were able to participate. Above all, sharing was intense at various times of the Holy Week, on Palm Sunday after Mass with closed doors only for the two of us and the blessing of the palms. That were given to people in the two supermarkets, in Violo in



a small package containing the palm and the bishop’s Easter message; but most moving and attended was Good Friday. Every year, in the evening, after the liturgical function, the procession of the ‘body of Christ’ and the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows is made. This year in order to commemorate this moment, the community lit lights on the windows and along the streets where the procession would usually have passed. Some went up to the church to feel more united in invoking to Christ died for us. This is how our prayer continues on Easter Sunday ... until today, a time of slow recovery, but because He is Risen our purpose has been strengthened and we want to “Stay in His love” ... because he promised us, “*I am with you every day until the end of time*”.

There has been no case of coronavirus in this small center.

The people of Violo are sure, once more, to have to thank their “Queen of Roses”....



**Community "Porziuncola"  
Santa Maria degli Angeli - Assisi**

***"The Lord loves His people."***

Today, May 18, the doors of the Basilica of S. Maria degli Angeli have opened, allowing "us", his people, to participate in the morning Mass.

It seems strange, for ten years that I daily crossed this threshold and today I was deeply moved. It seemed as if I approached the Porziuncola for the first time! I felt a warm wave of beautiful sensations. Yes, I said to myself "the Lord loves His people", this people who have experienced the deprivation of their nourishing, and beautiful practices; to participate in the daily Holy Mass in the presence of many friars, of many people who have shared and share with me the work, prayer, commitment, enthusiasm. Suddenly everything ended within 24 hours!



At the beginning of March, we had to suspend the blessings of the houses, activities that with great enthusiasm we welcomed as an opportunity to meet the families of our neighborhood, to communicate the great joy and the immeasurable gift that Holy Easter is, for us Christians.

To these holy services are added the catechesis, the Sunday Masses with the families of the confirmation and first communion group, who all live the parish family on Sunday and the distribution of the holy Eucharist to the sick and the elderly. I have a thorn in my heart because I still cannot resume and for two of the women, it was also the last Eucharist. In fact, on Easter night Rita flew to heaven and last week Fermina, our neighbor and also Irma. For them it was the holy Viaticum. For the other sick people, the parish priests will replace us, in this time of Pandemic.

Even in the month of May, the Holy Rosary recited in our chapel with the faithful has to be cancelled. But thanks to the modern means of communication, there was no shortage of Holy Masses, nor Holy Rosaries, nor other forms of prayer and reflection.

It is precisely for this that I would like to express my thanks to the Lord. In our community, there was no lack of the usual daily moments of prayer, the Morning Prayer, with the possibility of receiving the Holy Eucharist, the Vespers and the night prayer in common. Besides these fixed schedule, each sister chose her own time for adoration in the chapel and in the Basilica.

The days were then blessed by the Holy Masses celebrated in Basilicas and chapels dear to us all: Holy house of Loreto, Santa Maria del Rosario of Pompeii, chapel of St. Giuseppe Moscati at the Gemelli hospital, the santuario of Divino amore. Recitation of the Holy Rosary almost everywhere from the Grotto of Lourdes, from the Basilica of S. Pietro, also from our brothers O.F.M. who put their celebrations online.

We took advantage of the means of communication to participate in the Holy Mass online, lived with a spirit of faith and offering to the Lord for the many sufferings of humanity. In particular to support the doctors who felt strongly their incapacity in front of the great scourge of lives torn before their eyes, the priests, all the health personnel, volunteers, all those who offered to help and especially in those terrible days full of requests for assistance.

We also thanked the Lord for the awakening of the church: the creativity of many priests, who felt deeply pastors of their flock. They have been able to use the means of communication to reach their faithful, to enter their families, with a simple approach, of felt closeness, of true pastoral care, always instilling comfort, courage, keeping hope high, ensuring the presence of the Lord, who never abandons anyone.

The parish priest took initiative, with his collaborators and with the leaders of the parish catechetical program, who followed the catechists, sending all the information of the initiatives that Pope Francis or the church proposed worldwide or internationally. Through WhatsApp they also send the Sunday liturgy prepared as catechesis, with specific indications; how parents had to follow and celebrate the liturgy of the Word with their children, a true experience of the Domestic Church. The responsible Catechists in turn reached the families of the group of children, who attended the catechism. Within our limit, it was possible to keep in touch with some lonely persons or worried about their dear elderly.

We will continue our journey with caution and attention, but we will not let ourselves be overwhelmed by fear or conditioning.

The Lord is with us, “Gathers his children” does not abandon us, blesses those who offer their energies to the relief of the brothers and sisters and we join their efforts with the prayer and sacrifice in this pandemic time, always trusting that, as says the psalm “*The Lord loves His people*”.



## Community Fr. Gregory in Grotte di Castro At the time of the coronavirus.

*“For all things there is a time set by God.”*

In this difficult time in which we are called to stay at home, we sisters of the Grotte di Castro community asked ourselves what we could do to help the people to live this difficult situation in a better way. In our mission we are used to live with aged men and women here in the village, by visiting the families, bringing the holy communion, visiting the various homes for the aged; we are mostly always out of the house. The condition of forced isolation has become an occasion for a strong inner experience. First of all the Holy Mass presided over by Pope Francis in Santa Marta every day has filled us with so much joy and strength to go ahead, reflect, and grow spiritually. He helped us to rediscover the little things of everyday life.



In this strange Lenten Season and Quarantine, the Pope’s invitation to welcome the Father’s love resounds: *“First of all I want to tell everyone the first truth. If you have already heard it, it does not matter I want to remind you: God loves you. Never doubt it, whatever happens to you in life, in any circumstance, you are infinitely loved.”* We, the community members decided to make an hour of adoration in the morning and about two hours in the afternoon, to pray for all the sick and dying, for all health workers, for our mission etc. ... We were lucky to be able to go on Sunday to participate in the Holy Mass, so we entrusted our Congregation and each sister particularly,

to Our Lady of Suffrage. When, after so many days without the Holy Mass, we went to the Shrine, unveiled the image of the Madonna and soon came to our mind our dear Fr. Gregory.

Surely, he, when he had some suffering, immediately went to the sanctuary to Our lady; so we too, with him entrusted to her, every mission of our Congregation. Every Sunday we had Holy Mass and you were all present and we placed you under the mantle of the Our Lady of Suffrage.

The coronavirus frightens us and pushes us to limit the relationships of our daily lives; but we, with the parishioners, the elderly people, the youth, the children, the parents, the adults, felt close to them by the telephone. They are happy to hear a word of comfort and someone’s voice just to speak a little. Every day we make about 15 calls on our mission. For the sister nurse in this lockdown, the requests for injections have increased, since they did not find anyone available and the doctor pharmacist suggested to ask Sister Mini. Therefore, with the mask and gloves fearlessly she went and did her duty as a nurse. This was another opportunity to help and comfort in this epidemic.



We share an experience of Sr Mini, *“An elderly woman, moved me with tenderness, where I was going to give the injection; it was the first day of total lockdown and she told me how the other years she used to celebrate the birthday of her only daughter who lived far from Grotte. Every year, the daughter comes to her mother to celebrate the birthday, but this time she could not come. She told me all this with such bitter pain of the heart.*

*When she finished talking, I told her I could show her daughter on her cellphone and she could not believe it. On the day of her daughter’s birthday, I made the video call and the joyful old woman could not understand how she could see her daughter inside the cellphone. She was so much moved and began to cry with emotion; she could not say anything on the phone.*

*Seeing the scene between daughter and mom, I was also moved. It was a wonderful experience to be able to give that joy. From that day, every time when I went to give the injection, I made the video call to allow her to see her daughter.”*

Some people with this situation were desperate, agitated with so many fears, we tried always to be closer to them by calling them on the phone every day and they were so happy to hear us.



In this time, we have not forgotten our poor.

We prepared some parcels of food and other things, with the providence we received.

For some, we delivered the parcels at their home and others came to get them in our house. Some good people brought us food to give to those in need, so we managed to prepare and donate the food packs, several times.

Regarding the youth, the catechism children, their parents, we have not forgotten them.

On WhatsApp chat we have tried to give comfort with a message or a video call.

Sometimes the parishioners themselves would give us the telephone numbers of other suffering and distressed people so we could also reach them by giving spiritual and moral support.

One day Sr Mini told some people that she had the desire to volunteer herself in service, in this time of pandemic.

Someone gave an immediate reply, *“we want our sisters here, and therefore better that you remain locked in the house, for volunteering there are many other people”*.

Our parishioners brought us many things, (various types of food) in this period.

Many called us to find out if we needed anything. Even from the municipality of Grotte, they were very kind in giving us shopping vouchers.

We thank the Lord for this time of quarantine, because we have had the opportunity to enter ourselves to reflect, meditate, pray and grow spiritually and fraternally.

Praise be the Lord!



*From the Community - Our Lady of Libera-New Jersey*

*A stronger experience of the presence of God in prayer and providence*

At the beginning of March, when the situation of China began to feel more emphatically due to the danger of the coronavirus, we thought it was something very harmful and difficult for that country and continent, and that it would soon be overcome thanks to their economic and technological forefront. When the first cases were announced in the United States with the rapid spread in a short time, especially in New York, and the sad news of many deceased, the New Jersey authorities began to adopt preventive measures such as mandatory social isolation. From one moment to the next among the shock and natural fear that surrounded our city, we found ourselves isolated following the prevention measures, for the personal and community good.

From our isolation, we have been able to accompany and spiritually encourage our elderly and sick, through the telephone calls that thank God allow us in these days to continue listening and supporting them. During the quarantine, unfortunately there were various cases of contagion among the members of our parish community, known to us about 15 cases. For them, we particularly offered our prayers and adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, for their speedy recovery; fortunately, many of them have managed to overcome the virus disease.

We regret with great pain the loss of Mr. Sebastian, brother of our beloved sacristan Juan Fernando and the grandson of our parishioner Patricia, who is not only a member of our parish but a faithful devotee of the prayer of the Franciscan crown of our community.

It was a very painful experience because they left orphaned children and widows; terrible pain since all the funeral homes had collapsed. Thanks to God, they had a Christian burial in the cemetery, obviously with a minimum number of participants, as indicated by the preventions.



In this difficult moment of pandemic, the Churches have also been closed as a precautionary measure, and this has prevented and prevents physical participation in the Holy Mass. Thanks to God and His wonderful Providence for us, we had the private Eucharistic celebration for our community, so from March 15 to today we enjoy this special grace.

We offered the Eucharist for the souls of those who died, victims of the pandemic and for all the sick who continually recommend themselves to our prayers. It was a great relief and consolation for those who lost their loved ones to know that a Holy Mass was being celebrated in the convent for their deceased.

For us it was an opportunity to share their pain and sorrow and feel in communion with them.

The days pass very quickly, almost two months of isolation, time that we have dedicated to prayer, to fraternal sharing that allows us a deeper knowledge of ourselves, to mutual service, to know and share our talents. We also learned new things; songs in English and Spanish which also serve as learning to strengthen the knowledge of the language and also for the simple things of daily life at home.

We also cannot neglect the generosity of our parishioners, who always left supermarket shopping at the convent door and always asked if we needed anything; we received a lot of attention and love.



This pandemic required patience, silence, hope and faith in the will of God. We know that He walks with us. We have been able to feel His loving protection in this experience so hard and difficult, and we confirm that our life is in His hands, which for good and adversity God remains faithful.

We spent a very blessed Holy Week; we experienced a different joy in His presence as the Risen One. He lives and we know he makes all things new.

We are very grateful to God for all that allowed us to live. We know that we are small and fragile.



We have become more aware that life is a gift to thank for, every day and for this, we must give value to everyday life, to look more with Franciscan eyes to the gift of creation, because we breathe, we are alive and we are part of the beautiful creation of the Lord.

We ask the Lord to continue to give us light to know His ways and His strength to walk together with Him!

## Community “San Antonio” BUYUKADA

### TURCHIA

#### “REMAIN AT HOME”

#EvdeKal

#Stay at home

The last day we were able to leave the island of Büyükada was March 13 ... after which we decided as a fraternity to make a voluntary quarantine, to protect ourselves and to cope with the spread of Covid-19.

We began to experience at the first sign of the consequences of this virus in the cancellation of Sr Miriam’s flight to Rome ... the airport had decided to close the borders to 3 countries, including Italy, where the infection had spread so much , especially in the north.

Here in Turkey, and more precisely in Istanbul, the information has not always been clear and precise. The government’s move was to safeguard the calm of the citizens and they decided not to declare compulsory isolation, but to suggest staying at home. With the hashtag #EvdeKal (stay home!), everyone was invited not to go out, but the confusion and fear slowly began to grow.

We as a fraternity watched and observed everything from the island, a little confused, a little uncertain about what we would do but sure that everything would be fine.

Daily life for us has not changed much; as a community of presence, our life takes place on two central points: prayer and fraternity, therefore, the activities continued in normalcy ... but physical closeness with friends was lost.

In addition, that is how we started thinking how to be close to people, and the endless calls of personal and community greetings were born, usually in the evening, we started a list to follow the people we care about, and to follow the pandemic all over the world through the news.

We cannot deny that at times it seemed all strange, it seemed to us that we were inside a film, and the sadness at the end of the day at reading and hearing the numbers of infected people and also of the missed people ... it was really a hard moment.

Slowly everything began to close on the island, no one came, and all the tourist trade went into crisis. It is impossible not to think of this, even in our prayers, too many people without the

necessities of life, too many families with nothing to eat ... and this is how “listening to the Providence in times when Covid-19” began.



So many calls from people asking for food, sustenance, help and then the endless calls of Sister Miriam’s friends from different prisons in Turkey.

At this time a family was born in “San Pacifico”

For some time the penitentiary pastoral ministry in Istanbul, that is Father Eleuthere Makuta and Sister Miriam Oyarzo, had begun to listen to the “cry” of the many prisoners who lived with anguish and desperation in this medical emergency, without knowing what was really happening outside ... in the world.



The news here in Turkey about

the amnesty law accepted in parliament during the month of April, and which gave the possibility of offering a “permit” to leave some prisoners out of the prison until May 31, 2020, benefited to some but others were struck, especially the foreigners. These are the ones followed by the penitentiary pastoral ministry in Istanbul.

This permit was to stay out of the centers for “46 working days”, that is 6 and half weeks, and if the pandemic continued, this permit would continue for another three months up to six months ... and so it was. The Franciscan fraternity of Santa Maria in Draperis - Istanbul, has accepted this call for help after receiving many calls, and has decided to offer and open the structures of the Church of San Pacifico in Büyükada and act promptly to the many requests and cries of despair of many foreign people who were in prison. We as a fraternity had already welcomed two women, who are in conditional freedom, and for a few weeks before Covid-19 they were with us, because they had no place to stay.

This is how, starting from 17 April 2020, our confinement and isolation has taken on another flavor and another rhythm ... these new friends have gradually arrived, and in total 18 people, 10 men - 8 women ... and even a girl of 1 year old, welcomed in the apartments of San Pacifico. Of different nationalities such as, Canada, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Colombia, Holland, France and Africa.

The first two weeks rigorously quarantined as this emergency calls for, although many of them had already swabbed and tested negative.



We moved with caution and attention, masks and gloves, prudent distancing and a lot, but a lot of welcome despite all these necessary precautions. They were able to feel our welcome in the smallest details.

In those two weeks, the police suggested that we do not let them enter or leave the apartments, so Sister Miriam was in charge of shopping and staying in constant contact with them through messages.

After the first two weeks, they began to get to know the apartments better and also to get busy, to arrange the rooms, and to work in everything they saw: cleaning the garden, cleaning every single room, pantry and even the church.

They also came to our house, to arrange the garden, to do small jobs and as soon as they arrived they did not stop praising and thanking the Lord for being here among us.

From the beginning, we have notified the island's authorities and we have also had the opportunity to meet personally some people who immediately gave us a positive response to our welcome service. Our municipality has provided us with masks, has also donated dinner during the whole time of Ramadan for everyone, and has provided us with the things necessary for the disinfection of the apartments and the church.

Even Caritas of Istanbul has supported our project from the beginning and has helped us with all the food every week; as well as some consulates and embassies showed up to help their compatriots, and even our Nuncio was very helpful and allowed us to have generous help from the Vatican.

Truly the "Solidarity Network" has been activated despite the fear and confinement ... there is always space and time to help those who are truly in need.

The apartments of S. Pacific are now full of life; a "family" was born as they called it.

We are learning to know each other, to be together, to respect each other and to learn to live free. We as a fraternity welcome them, listen to them, and give them the opportunity to be free and happy people.

The service done by the prison pastoral care in this time has shown more concrete signs, closer to those who suffer and much more active; we are happy to be able to collaborate in this through welcoming and listening.

These friends of ours always need listening, and in this Sr. Miriam who is the manager, she made herself available, helped by Sr Zita and Sr Gigi, to organize for them and with them moments of prayer, meetings, workshops and also, given the need, for personal dialogue because everyone has a story to tell and to heal.

We thank the opportunity that Sister Miriam had of being able to follow and continue her master of spiritual and relational accompaniment, online from Italy, because now more than ever we are in need the tools she had acquired to work with them.



We are grateful to the Lord for this time of grace, even if our days are full, and we must think of everything for them, we are full of joy despite the small difficulties we had to live when we want to do good in such a situation, and that is, in full health emergency.

We are here because our presence is significant and we know we can help everyone who knocks at our door.

## DOORS CLOSED, BUT HEARTS OPEN

### Experience in the Province Santa Maria degli Angeli

#### INTRODUCTION

This particular period has affected Italy and the world forcing families to close their doors and to remain in silent anxiety, waiting where this treacherous pandemic phenomenon would drag us. Even our communities lived the same experience that at the beginning created fear, apprehension, and anxiety.

It was impressive, said the sisters of the nursery schools, not to perceive the movements of the families, to enter the school environments that before were filled with voices, sounds, songs and now in perfect silence ... Everything seemed to disappear into thin air!



And the sisters at the service of the elderly in Borgo Cavour, or of the young as at the boarding house in Udine, or of the children of the catechism, of the youth, of the families in the parishes? ... Even they are all behind closed doors!!!

Yes, doors closed, but after the first few days, the hearts opened, overcoming the barriers of fear and meeting everyone again, small, young, adult, and elderly. A 'virtual' contact has been set in motion; it is said, made with the heart and therefore an expression of a true "embrace of love"!

After the first period, the sisters, also stimulated by Pope Francis, by the parish priests, by our superiors, tried to organize time inside home helping to motivate and enhance this emergency interval. To discover its opportunities to treasure a different way of 'living together', seizing the possibilities of transforming the 'present' into a 'time of grace and human and spiritual growth'.

This experience was more than positive, the communities and sisters of the Province expressed it by describing and communicating their experiences. It was discovered, among other things, that our missionary charism is suitable for being realized, in a different but intense and profound way, even today. All the communities were able to live the aspects of Consecrated Life according to the spirit of our charism.

## **COMMUNITY in the MOTHER HOUSE - GEMONA**

### **Beginning of Pandemic**

Since January 2020, when it was announced that the COVID 19 departed from Wuhan (China) had arrived in Italy, everyone prepared to deal with the virus that quickly spread.... disseminating fear among the people, overburdening the doctors with work, civil and religious authorities, and sowing death everywhere.

After the first moments of panic, all the communities of the Province were invited to make their contribution through obedience to the security measures issued gradually by those responsible of the public service for the containment of COVID 19. Besides that, we were also invited to what for us it is always fundamental as a religious community, prayer, the offering of sacrifice, the commitment of fraternal service among us and especially among the older ones.

In this time how we missed the Holy Mass!!! In the motherhouse, as in other communities, it was not possible to have the daily



celebration of the Eucharist, but every day we followed the celebration of Pope Francis on TV2000 at 7.00 a.m. We treasured the homilies that made us go deep into the Word of God in order to be able to live it later in the day. At the time of communion, we had the grace to receive the Consecrated Host every day.

The Superiors offered us a precious time of prayer and contemplation in the motherhouse. Everyday two hours, from 17.00 to 19.00 of community Eucharistic adoration was organized since this emergency occurred. We remained in front of the Blessed Sacrament in adoration concluding, then, with the prayer suggested by Pope Francis against the coronavirus.

The elderly sisters expressed themselves this way, "Jesus was very close to us, Jesus looked at us, and we trusted him. How He saved us from the earthquake of 1976, so He will help us to face this difficult time with courage"!

### **With Pope Francis on social media**

Last week Pope Francis announced the initiative to preside over a moment of prayer in the square of St. Peter's Basilica, with the square completely empty, to ask the Lord to listen to the invocation of all men and women in this marked time of the epidemic.

All the sisters of the mother house participated by being in front of the television in the prayer meeting which was celebrated from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm in St. Peter's square, by Pope Francis and at the end he gave the Urbi et Orbi blessing, with the possibility of receiving the plenary indulgence. Precisely for the fact that the current situation did not allow to be present at the celebration, Pope Francis granted, not only to people in quarantine, but also to families and communities like ours who are living behind closed doors, "Plenary Indulgence ... if they unite spiritually through the media to celebrate Holy Mass ... "

We connected via TV listened to the Word of God, raised our plea to the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, with which at the end the Pope imparted the Urbi et Orbi Blessing. Describing the suggestive images that were transmitted remains difficult. They communicated strong emotions and surprises ... Some elderly sisters after the celebration commented, “There was freezing, winter rain ... clouds that traced particular shapes in the sky that looked like angels ... Strange landscape ... Then the impressive silent empty square and the figure of Pope Francis who proceeded alone towards the altar placed on the threshold of St. Peter’s Basilica. We heard the sound of the ambulance siren passing in front of the square just as Pope Francis raising the Monstrance gave the Urbi et Orbi Blessing. Thus the passage from the Gospel of Mark 4: 35-41 read at the beginning of the celebration seemed to repeat itself, the storm in the lake of Tiberias and the apostles panicked; while Jesus slept peacefully in the stern ... We too felt like the apostles ... unwittingly, we felt our heart throbbing strong!”



Just as Pope Francis told us in his speech, we found ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples of the Gospel, we were taken back by an unexpected and furious storm. We realized that we were on the same boat, all fragile and disoriented, but at the same time, it was important and necessary, that all row together, all in need of comforting each other. On this boat, we are all there... Therefore, we too, like those disciples, realized that we could not go on each one on his own, but only together will we find the strength to seek and find salvation in Jesus.

## **Holy Week**

Holy Week, in the mother house the windows left opened so that people from the buildings opposite can look at the olive branches placed on the windowsills and perceive the acclaiming message that Christians on this day address to the Lord as once the people of Jerusalem, when Jesus on a donkey entered the holy city.





Despite the closed doors of our homes, surely Jesus passes into families, included in our mother house community, to bring his peace. In his resurrected condition, He does not need open doors, even in the upper room He has gone behind closed doors!

In community prayer, all the sisters asked Jesus to enter all our communities and families, leaving peace, joy and forgiveness. The olive branches were not lacking, having prepared them in time by our gardener, Mr. Galliano, who obtained them, as every year, pruning the olive tree that grows more and more beautiful in the inner garden next to the well.

During the Holy Week triduum, other significant symbols were also displayed on the windows.

The chalice and the host in memory of the celebration of the last supper on Maundy Thursday and the Crucifix on Good Friday to remember the death of the Lord, Saviour of the world. This too is a way to continue our mission by lovingly witnessing what we believe and living meaningfully!!!

## **Holy Easter**

We imagine the women, still afraid going to the tomb early in the morning, when it is still dark to avoid meeting the guards or people who could stop them!!!

All around is silence, closed doors, some light here or there ... a silent, suggestive landscape, similar to ours in this Easter still invested with coronavirus.

Women look for Jesus, but look for Him among the dead, like a dead man!

They search for Him in the grave, but the angel asks, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is risen, He is not here”!

In the community paraliturgical in the mother house (still without a priest) our answer to the Angel’s question was clear ... With the universal church, through the Easter Sequence, all together we affirmed our faith, “Yes, we are sure, Christ is truly Risen! Alleluia”





It has been an Easter that we will always remember, but not in the negative way ... In fact, it certainly served to revive and make our own the values that the Christian faith and consecrated life has always continued to present to us, especially regards to:

- the “Prayer” that unites us to Jesus and to all the brothers and sisters, we felt more than ever in communion among us and, as a small domestic church, to turn our hearts to the Lord, who loves us first, also on behalf of the brothers and sisters and of all humanity.
- the “Fraternity” which is expressed in communion and mutual service: the desire to grow in fraternity emerged from the heart, active in mutual service, in the fraternal sharing of joys, of labors, of the daily search for the will of God.
- “Evangelization” which allows us to open up to the whole world by announcing Jesus with the Word and the testimony of Life.

We understood how it is necessary to get up, feel and respond to the urgency of evangelization, to go out of ourselves, from our comfort zone to meet our brothers and sisters by witnessing the Word and life of the Gospel of Jesus.

People tell us that after the pandemic everything will return as before.

We, instead, think that we should find new strength, the courage to “get up”, to go, to continue the daily mission with enthusiasm ...

Pope Francis tells us just in sight of this that only by emergency we have had to live like this, but being a Church does not mean being only virtually present, but ‘truly together’ also physically.



## *The voice of the sisters in MAIGARO (Central African Republic)*

On March 16, a message from Father Tiziano Pozzi arrived from Niem (RCA) to our Motherhouse Mission Center through the newsletter of their Congregation.

He thus informed “*Unfortunately it is yesterday’s news that Coronavirus has arrived also in Central Africa. We really hope it remains an isolated case, otherwise it would be a disaster. In the whole Country, even in the capital, there is no intensive care unit, no possibility of a recovery for one person alone, and it is unthinkable to tell Central Africans to stay at home...*”

In addition, here in Maigarò, as Sr. Antonella Lago informed us, the path imposed by the emergency began.

Message from Sister Antonella, principle of the school of Maigarò - Central African Republic - March 28, 2020:

*Dear friends, also for us, in Central Africa, the order has arrived to close the schools, yesterday, in returning the children home (for how long?), I could not hold back the tears.*

*Seeing them, leaving with their hands raised in greeting, some with tears in their eyes was excruciating. What will they understand about the coronavirus, they who live by nature and in nature?*

*My great pain is that they felt rejected, turned away, they, for whom the school represents so much, guarantees a different future and that they are so happy, radiant, in crossing the large courtyard of their second home in the morning: the school.*

*The older boys and girls left dumbfounded.*

*The now empty, silent courtyard, without the cries or laughter of children and youth, reminds us that we are in battle, that Faith in God and confident Hope must be our weapons.*

*The Lord helps, the Lord saves!*



## *In the MISSION- BOARDING HOUSE of UDINE*

The Pandemic of the Corona Virus happened as a headwind, a storm on the World and on the Boat, which is the Universal Church.

This serious event is now changing the way of the daily life of the people and of the Church who are forced to live closed, “Staying at home” has become an emergency for everyone.

We are about to begin Lent when all doors must be closed ...

This reality is a cause of moral and spiritual suffering, but it has become for us Christians and Consecrated persons a priority to “keep our hearts open”.

Even in the boarding house, the thread of everyday life has changed with the closure of the parishes and the University for the girls who come and go every day.

However, we try to live this exceptional moment in living together and in getting closer to the Lord through common prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, the Way of the cross and the recitation of the holy rosary to be in communion of heart and spirit with our sisters and with suffering humanity.

With the girls who live with us, we also have the responsibility to accompany them in the prayer of every Tuesday and in following the Pope’s Mass and other prayers on TV.

We Sisters are lucky because we have the Eucharistic Celebration every morning. This is our little experience at this particular moment. (Sr. Elodie Semdouto)



A girl from the boarding school (Marisa) says:

“Few girls remained in boarding school after the outbreak of this war against the invisible enemy coronavirus.

Few students who are spending their days between university engagements and moments of prayer.



Despite the concern and suffering for the distance from families, a serene and familiar atmosphere has been created.

Thanks to the support of the sisters who always give loving and comforting words.

From this forced segregation emerged the beauty of knowing more deeply the Chinese culture and really understanding that one is not so much different in the face of a common evil.

It was exciting to participate in the celebration of Palm Sunday in communion with the Pope. His words were strong and certainly, they constitute important nourishment for our thoughts.

**# It will be all right**  
if this period  
is really needed  
to rediscover  
the profound meaning  
of Life.



## COMMUNITY in VITTORIO VENETO

### COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE IN EPIDEMIC TIME

The history of salvation marks events that have severely tested the people of God. It is with this reading criterion that we have tried to interpret what we live now. Suddenly projects, pastoral and catechetical itineraries, for which we had given time and commitment, were interrupted.

Emotions and feelings of panic arose in front of which each one tried to give an answer: my moment of meeting with the Lord, my approach to the Gospel with a stronger intensity, God allowed this not by chance.

We have become aware of our fragility and rediscovered the virtue of humility; we are nothing, we are not necessary and we need Him.

The fraternity has found itself to live closer interpersonal relationships and the reality of diversity has emerged more clearly. A diversity that has asked for sacrifice for a deeper awareness, for an effort of welcome and acceptance.

In the light of the gospel, we have sought answers for our fraternal life.

Jesus lived solitude in His extreme trial but He was not lacking in friends, some apostles, His mother and above all the presence of the Father...



We too have experienced the presence of friends, phone calls, providence that expressed in the form of daily bread, sent from shops and many messages of solidarity.

In the most intense prayer, we felt the support of Mother Mary and the personal and community prayers helped us to discover God present in our history.

Our God is a loving Father who does not want resignation but trust in Him who is present and accompanies our history...

By rediscovering our human poverty, we feel in tune with the different trials that our first sisters lived. With them, we feel strong in the hope that the Lord does not disappoint and we are in His hands and in His heart.

*THE COMMUNITY in PAESE shares...*

Everything came suddenly. The evil was far away, in the Far East ... we felt, as always, safe. Instead, the 'virus' was not only knocking but also entering, in an impetuous way, into our reality.

February 23: already the first ministerial restrictions were done! Within a few weeks, all of humanity has fallen into a situation of unprecedented paralysis!

At the first panic, the question arises for us too, what happens? What Lenten sign is this?

We realize that it is not easy, even for us, to reorganize the daily life, to live and to lead together time and community services, accustomed to working 'yes' in the name of the community, but in a personal way, our educational and pastoral commitment.

Our first concern was to give us new times for a healthy physical refreshment through rest and prolonged, pleasant time; to pray with an open heart with the Church and for all humanity.

Frightened and lost, we can only take refuge in the One who is certainty, the God with us, confident that we will not sink.



Now we live the prayer, which is more serene, more attentive and shared through reflection of the Word.

Spontaneously every formula and aspiration becomes universal, missionary, reaching out to share and offer the sufferings, solitudes, fears and silences, distances and voids of this humanity of ours, to plead the benevolence of the Father to assist all the health workers engaged at various levels by putting risk of their lives to protect 'your' life.

A prayer that becomes heartfelt plea for our sisters affected by the "virus" and for those who, for various reasons, struggle to manage worries and fears.

A prayer that alternates between praise, question, adoration - contemplation, request for mercy, support for our weak faith and, at times, tiring hope. However, God-Love is there, He is among us; He is with us and encourages us to walk in His footsteps. There is also a particular moment of the day in which we feel so privileged, daily participation in the Eucharist Celebration. Yes, it is a singular, strong and touching encounter; on that altar, we place all humanity; weak, vulnerable, in need of divine presence, and all the sister together we can live the daily life with gratitude, in simplicity, in true communion. We feel that the care of the relationship with the Lord renews the action of every form of apostolate. Following the various television broadcasts, we discover a 'new, unedited' Church capable of reaching every man of good will. It offers varied and rich proposals, strongly inviting more sober, simpler, truer, more essential behaviors. Pope Francis suggests to us "... choose what matters and what passes". He tells us that "It is time to reset the course of life towards You, Lord, and towards others".

Like Pope Francis, we too turn to the "Father because we realized we were on the same boat, all fragile and disoriented ... But" you tell us not to be afraid ... together with Peter we throw all worries and anguish in You, because You have taken care of us ".

Pope Francis' interventions give us courage; encourage us not to be afraid of tomorrow, they tell us that beyond that there is certainty.

Strengthened by the prolonged encounter with the Lord at various times of the day, also supported by the particular media broadcasts, TV 2000, Antenna 3, we can continue to pay due attention to others, despite the diversity of the present.

Continuation of the educational commitment through contact with teachers, families always in need of support or solutions to the arising problems.

Sr. Chiara is strongly committed with her being, as coordinator, a useful presence for the purpose of a profitable, engaging work to share with the teachers and parents. A compact and solicitous telematics contact network allows children to offer various activities, videos, narrations as support to parents and continuation of the teaching activity.

And contact with the pastoral world also continues: catechists, children and elderly people. Using

WhatsApp and other means of communication, we send proposals for listening, prayer and personal

commitment, helped by the suggestions of the Diocesan Center for pastoral care: catechesis and liturgy, but also prompted by the creativity of love.

A path of faith at a distance but effective because it is useful to maintain relationships and to discover, even in simple aspects, the “Christian community on the way”.



## **COMMUNITY OF SAVORGNANO**

In this time of emergency, in which participation in liturgical celebrations was suspended, while leaving the possibility of keeping places of worship open for personal prayer, we chose to keep our chapel open for a few hours, both in the morning and in the afternoon.

It has an access door on the road and is located along the path that people follow to reach the few open activities (grocery store, post office, bank).

In addition to the lectionary and some aids for personal prayer, we have also made available a notebook in which to write a thought, a reflection or a request for prayer.

Providence also often entered through this ‘open door’; several times, we have found bags with fresh vegetables, a cake or trays with ready-made food..





We experienced the closeness and concern of people: how many calls and messages to ask how we are, not to mention how many requests for news from Sister Irma who, due to a fall, was hospitalized !!!

We thank the Lord that she was able to recover. However, we experienced the pain of not being able to stay with her as we would have liked to. Due to the pandemic, visitors are not allowed in the hospitals.

We have tried to return all the attention that has been given to us, bringing everyone in prayer before the Lord and making ourselves close in turn with phone calls and messages to older people, alone, to families who have lived in mourning, to those who we know have already have difficulties. Furthermore, the food distribution activity linked to the Food Bank network was not interrupted. By respecting the required precautionary measures, we continued to receive the goods and distribute them.



### *COMMUNITY of PALMANOVA... guided by the WORD*

*What is the life of a Franciscan missionary of the Sacred Heart if not continuous prayer?*

(Venerable Father Gregory)

*“Doors closed, but hearts open!*

In times of Covid 19, how does the community of Palmanova live the path to Easter?

During this period, two questions moved our thoughts and feelings:

- 1) How are we experiencing the situation linked to the Covid 19 pandemic?
- 2) How could we keep the experiences of this time of the coronavirus in our life?

Here, we want to share with all of you what we shared among us in the local chapter on Palm Sunday and we do it by summarizing what we said to each other:

First of all, in us, there is immense gratitude to God for the hours, in which we took turns for adoration in our chapel.

Certainly, this is a lock down time in which there is so much silence, which served as an echo during the day, so much to enrich with the broken Word of God. There was a lot of time the prayer of adoration, both individual and community. The various moments mediated by the technology and lived with the clear awareness that the media favored to connect with the universal church, awakening the awareness that we are part of the mystical body in which God is

worshiped in Spirit and truth.



Thus united us to many people, we experienced, at the same time, the strong moments, such as the exercises, the plenary Indulgence whose images are alive in the mind and heart because they remind us of the emotion and gladness for the grace of forgiveness we have received.

To conclude with, we also have lived the quarantine, to be obedient to the various decrees (one of us goes out to do the food shopping) and to be in solidarity with the brothers and sisters. However, the heart does not go into quarantine but continues to love at a distance for this reason we have fasted to share with those who struggle to have food.

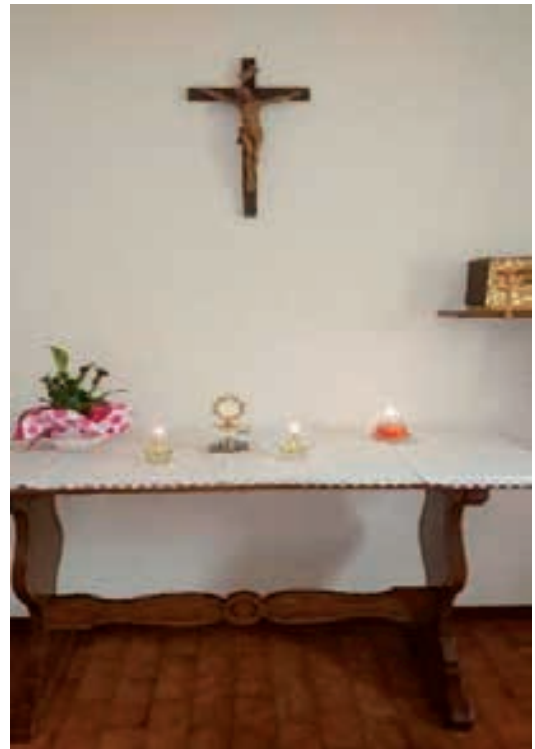
The mind and relationships do not become infected so we continued to reach out to others, especially the elderly and catechists, the animators, talking to God about them and also sending them a message, an image, the material (that the diocese offered us, or the Parish). ... .. so we were able to exercise even more the ministry of listening, discernment and consolation towards people ...

paradoxically, we are working more in this direction and more deeply now than before the coronavirus emergency;

- to find in us a greater awareness of our precariousness...
- to start to appreciate more the value of time and the little things of every day ...
- to feel part of a larger family, which is humanity, even those who do not know, to feel united with everyone and jointly responsible for all ...
- to recognize that everything is a gift, even what we considered normal in our life and that we are missing now (the meeting in the ecclesial community with the liveliness that belongs to it, confession, or going out, meeting people ...)
- to discover the value of each person, despite the “physical distance” and beyond the harmony or otherwise with others ...
- to respect more the creation, our common home, which has been entrusted to us to take care of it.

We are convinced that after the coronavirus emergency our life will no longer be the same as before ... we certainly want to say thanks to the Lord for everything and every moment of the day, because nothing is taken for granted in life.

*The sisters  
of the community of Palmanova:  
Sr Natalina,  
Sr Adeleangela,  
sr Valeria*



*The sisters in MISSION in AMPEZZO*

**THE CRUCIFIX EMBRACES  
THE PARISH COMMUNITY OF AMPEZZO**

*Our time during coronavirus: Reflection*

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a large wooden crucifix dating back to around 1400 has been exposed at the entrance to the church door so that every person passing through the street can see Him and express a prayer, a simple greeting, a request for help. It was a happy intuition! Many people liked this exposition of the Crucifix; it was welcomed as a force against the epidemic. The Crucifix thus exposed is also a call for us that invites us to pray, to reflect, to review our daily choices.

Even for us time has stopped a bit, being forced to stay inside the house.

All this allows us to live a more fraternal and shared community atmosphere. We live this experience with serenity trying to support those who are on the front line.

Each of us has made a commitment to find time to devote to personal prayer.

Our days are marked by community and personal prayer, small services to the church and neglected things during the year.

It is a precious time to do the things that are often put aside during the busy times of the year.

However, we try to treasure this time that is given to us, rediscovering the essentiality of our life as Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

*The sisters of the Community of Ampezzo*



## *COMMUNITY of RAUSCEDO*

### **DOORS CLOSED, BUT HEARTS OPEN**

#### ***The community of Rauscedo shares the time of the coronavirus...***

Never would have expected a pandemic so bad that it is battering thousands and thousands of brothers and sisters in the world!

We sisters would never have prepared to retire to the house and go out only for extreme necessity with masks and gloves ... avoiding meeting and possibly for a fleeting moment of greeting waiting for us at least one meter away!

How we three sisters of the Rauscedo Community live within this long period. Sr. Lina Maria, Sr. Renza and Sr. Giannantonina?

Since the early days, noting that the contagion was on the rise, we organized the day and this still helps us to live within a program with respect for all.

First, prayer: it expands both over time, offering the intentions of the day.

In the morning, we get up half an hour later, pray for a more relaxed time, followed by breakfast; then day by day, in agreement, we carry out work in the house or in the garden, in the reorganization of remote places and spaces long forgotten! In the afternoon we dedicate ourselves to personal rest and prayer, to the recitation of the Rosary in common, to the short time of gymnastics that Telechiara offers for the elderly. At 17 in our church with only the parish priest Don Giancarlo Parutto and we celebrate the Holy Mass in direct filming to encourage the participation of our people. Follows the Vespers, relaxed dinner and community accomplishment.

The activities?

- We have accepted the request of our municipality to sew many masks for the inhabitants of the area. All three of us have been busy for days. Who cut, who sewed and who ironed (chain work, see photos and article from *Messaggero Veneto* below).
- We make and / or listen to some phone calls from elderly or suffering people due to bad, physical or moral situations such as the mourning of the last period.
- Regarding the two kindergartens in Rauscedo / Vivaro where we work alongside with lay teachers, we enter the families to make ourselves present by staying at our house by turning on our creativity. We create some videos / filming on face book, or photos, we send greetings with placards or illustrative religious images or with stories read from the Gospel and / or dramatized, followed by prayer or singing....
- We reach our Catechism students digitally, daily with a religious activity and the corresponding prayer entitled "FIVE MINUTES WITH JESUS"



We feel alive among our parishes and perceive that the youth expect these activities; we take the pleasure of parents, children and young people.

We put ourselves in the hands of God the Father, we ask Him for serenity and a big heart to embrace those involved with this deadly virus that is still swallowing up many lives and causing so much suffering to relatives and acquaintances.

15 APRILE 2020  
MESSAGGERO VENEZO

SAN GIORGIO DELLA RICHINVELDA

## Mascherine: tutti mobilitati Sono al lavoro anche le suore

Il sindaco: abbiamo già 1.500 pezzi, entro domenica ne saranno pronte quattromila. Tagliano, cuciono, stirano le francescane e persino "nonna Gina", che ha 100 anni



Una suora impegnata nella realizzazione delle mascherine

Giuglielmo Zisa

SAN GIORGIO DELLA RICHINVELDA

Una catena di solidarietà al femminile ha abbracciato l'amministrazione Leon nella realizzazione di un piccolo miracolo: mascherine per tutti.

Nel silenzio delle strade vuote e dei paesi fermati dall'emergenza coronavirus da domenica mattina si sente un solo rumore: quello del-

le macchine da cucire. C'è chi taglia, c'è chi cuce, c'è chi stirava e chi confeziona, rigorosamente ognuno a casa sua o al massimo in due (in massima sicurezza e rispettando le distanze) in quelli che sono diventati settanta "atelier del cuore". Il progetto, denominato "Sai, sorridi con gli occhi, 150 mani, cuore e passione per proteggerci" - è partito lunedì mattina e già martedì sera 1.500 mascherine

confezionate con l'obiettivo di arrivare a domenica con 4 mila mascherine autoprodotte. Un miracolo che ha dimostrato ancora una volta quanto sia radicato il valore della solidarietà nel nostro territorio.

«All'iniziativa - aggiunge Leon - partecipano tutti, dalla casa delle suore francescane alle signore più anziane, anche la nostra neo-centenaria nonna Gina. Conclusa la produzione delle mascherine altre signore hanno stirato nuovamente a 100 gradi le mascherine prima del confezionamento con la lettera accompagnatoria e con le istruzioni».

«Abbiamo ricevuto anche tante donazioni che ci hanno permesso di recuperare in tempi rapidi ulteriore tessuto ed elastico - sottolinea l'assessore Susanna Fornasier, che ha tenuto i rapporti con l'esercito delle volontarie -». Ho visto il sorriso nei loro occhi. Da qui il nome del progetto "Sorridi con gli occhi", visto che la bocca è coperta dalle nuove mascherine per dare grinta, forza e coraggio a tutti in questo periodo».

Importante è sottolineare da parte degli amministratori che la mascherina fornita non è un dispositivo medico, ma vanno indossate nelle uscite per fare la spesa e sono realizzate con tessuto non tossico. Questo è un primo dono a tutte le famiglie del Comune, cui farà seguito una seconda distribuzione di quelle che mano a mano la Regione fornirà.

### IL COMMENTO

**Leon: «È un prodotto "made in San Giorgio"»**

«Lo potremmo definire un prodotto "made in San Giorgio" - commenta il sindaco - una dimostrazione di sensibilità che va oltre il momento d'emergenza. Le mascherine saranno distribuite a partire da oggi dai volontari della protezione civile e dagli alpini».

## Experiences of the Pandemic in the PROVINCE ST. FRANCIS - US

### “Grateful for the blessings received”

Here in the St. Francis Province we join with people throughout the world who are dealing with the fears and the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic. It has been a time for us to step back, focus on what really matters, and do all that we can to stay healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Amid the difficult times, we are thankful for the many unexpected blessings that have been shown to us and are grateful to be alive and hopefully virus-free.

Not anticipating that the virus would directly affect us, we were a little surprised when the Archdiocese of New York issued a statement that all Masses and church services would be suspended until further notice.

We knew how the Sisters in Italy were sheltering in place and no longer had Mass celebrated in the convents; we

were saddened that Sisters no longer could receive the Eucharist and had developed other ways to pray together, but we didn't expect that we would also experience some changes.

Many people knew that we had daily Mass in our Chapel, and the calls began to come in asking if our Masses were open to the public.

We immediately realized that we had to take precautions to protect our Sisters and Villa ladies, and made the decision to keep visitors out of the convent.

Only essential workers would be allowed in and they get their temperature taken at the kitchen entrance.

If anyone had a fever or signs of illness, they would have to return home. Our cleaning ladies, switchboard volunteers, part-time kitchen help and any visitors would not be allowed in until the dangers have passed.

Mail and packages are left outside and sprayed with Lysol before we bring them into the building. Disinfecting doorknobs, elevator buttons, and lots of other common spots has become a daily challenge.



One of our biggest challenges occurred when our chaplain, Fr. Charles Reinbold took ill.

Father was fighting a cold for quite a while, and also had a fall which put him out of commission. For about a month he stayed in his rectory, trying to get better.

His doctor sent him to the hospital, where he was admitted, and we were notified that he had tested positive for the Corona virus. There were five people exposed to Father during the last week: the two priests living in the rectory, Sr. Veronica of the Villa, Sr. Lisa Grace, and one of our Infirmiry aides, Kelly.

All had to be quarantined for 14 days.

Thank God all are healthy and have no signs of infection, but it was a rough time for all of us. Father is now in a rehab facility recovering from this ordeal.



Suddenly our kitchen took new steps for our protection: no salad bar, all fruit, desserts, etc. had to be individually wrapped, no self-serving, and lots of cleaning in our now Lysol scented dining room.

Many people moved to less occupied tables, and if anyone dares to cough or sneeze, all eyes are upon them. **AND WE ARE ALL HEALTHY!**

With our priests in isolation, we had to change our ways of praying. Sister Anne James created a list of the many channels and times where Mass was televised.

We adjusted our schedule so that we could have our communion service daily in our chapel and be available to participate in the televised celebration of Mass.

Each day Sr. Laura conducts a Communion service, and all are grateful to receive the Eucharist.

Praying the Rosary together with Christians around the world was a powerful experience for us. We have decided to continue this practice each afternoon at 4:30, for the intention of a cure and vaccine for the virus.





As we entered Holy Week, Palm Sunday enabled us to proclaim the Passion. On Holy Thursday, at the time of the Washing of the Feet, the recording of “Jesus, You Are the Bread We Long For” became the background as we personally imagined Jesus washing our feet.

As we ended the service, the Eucharist was placed in the tabernacle for adoration for the evening, as we sang “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”.

On Good Friday we again proclaimed the Passion of the Lord and prayed the Good Friday petitions of the Church. Each of us brought our own crucifix to the prayer and as we listened to “Behold the Wood”, we were able to venerate the cross without risking infection or illness.

How blessed we were on Holy Saturday when Anna, one of our Lay Associates, brought us a huge number of fresh flowers for the Chapel. Sisters Sylvia and Pascaline decorated the church and brought the beauty of Easter morning to all of us. We did so well with the limitations we faced to remind us that Jesus is alive, even in the midst of all our problems.

Supplies run low, medicines have to be reordered, doctor appointments are postponed, some of us are mourning at the loss of friends and family, but trust in God, belief that there is a reason for everything, and hanging on to hope keeps us going.

We pray, we reach out by phone and mail to those we cannot be with, and we try to look for the blessings and the little gifts that God send us daily.

We have found supplies, food, and even chocolate Easter bunnies at our front door, we have sisters making face masks, taking walks and encouraging our neighbors (from a distance!), and trying to support each other as best that we can.

We have agreed as a province that we will never use our large cemetery for the few sisters we have.

So we have contacted our local undertaker and offered the extra land as a burial place for those who have lost loved ones and have nowhere to bury them. It will give closure and serenity to families who are suffering from the loss of a loved one at such an unusual time.



We spent an evening making care packages for the ICU nurses at Peekskill Hospital. A simple ziplock baggie of granola bars, graham crackers, snacks, along with a “God Bless You” message and a prayer card of Fr. Gregory hopefully brought a little smile to those risking their lives and working so hard during these germ-filled days. Our Lay Associates are very special friends of ours. On Saturday, April 25th at 1pm many of them joined us with a “Drive Thru”.



A parade of cars, smiling faces, banners, and best wishes descending upon the front of Mt St Francis for a social distancing gathering. It was wonderful to spend time together outside, on a beautiful sunny day, and talk, laugh, and visit together. We continue to pray for Ray and Vickie, our Lay Associates who are recovering from the virus, and Linda, who is near the end of her chemo treatments.



Our Sisters in Fairview have seen firsthand how God provides for those in need. Sr. Anna Maria and Sr. Gloria realized that their supply of food for the needy was depleted. Early one day a gentleman approached Sr. Anna Maria with an envelope of a big sum of money to help out. The next Saturday morning, the mayor, fire men, and police men arrived at the center with huge pallets of rice, pasta, juice, canned food, cereal, and many other items. Two days later more food arrived and they were able to distribute all of it to many hungry people in their neighborhood. People are so generous, especially in times like these.

Each day we pray for all who suffer from this virus, all who have gone home to God, all who risk becoming infected because of their dedication to their professions. We beg the Lord for a cure and we give thanks for our own safety and good health. It has been a time of testing which has enabled us to count our many blessings, and to focus on the things that really matter in life, and to always rely on Divine Providence as we continue this journey.

We hold on to God's promise: *"Behold, I Make All Things New."*



### *The sisters of the community of Fairview share their experiences*

As for many, the month of March 2020 in Fairview was unprecedented! Area hospitals were in a crisis as they were short-staffed and overwhelmed by the massive number of COVID patients. On March 9, the Governor of New Jersey declared a State of Emergency to "contain the spread of COVID-19", March 14th, the Franciscan Community Development Center moved to cease its IRS VITA Tax program and all of its public out-reach programs, March 18th, schools in New Jersey were closed and finally on March 21 all businesses as well construction sites were indefinitely closed and a stay at home order was in place for all NJ, NY and Connecticut residents - a complete Tri-State shut-down. The once vibrant streets with people shopping and men standing on corners looking for a day's work were silenced. The routine daily movements of individuals, churches, businesses, and more were on a grounding halt. Shelves stood empty inside many stores and most restaurant owners posted 'Closed' signs.

Realizing the magnitude and uncertainty of the Pandemic many folks were not only concerned about having enough resources to survive, they were personally concerned for the survival of themselves and loved ones amid the crisis. From one moment to the next and at alarming rates calls were coming in of people being hospitalized and dying. One of our Board Members, along with his elderly Mom and Dad were also hospitalized with COVID-19. His wife and two children were stricken with fear. Hour after hour...call upon call... the news was heart breaking. Everyone was isolated, everyone was vulnerable, some were in a panic, others filled with anxiety but no matter what, everyone was alone with their own thoughts and fears. Realizing that for many, the Center serves as a safety net, a life-line for folks in troubled waters we tried to reflect on how to soothe their wounds. We decided to put together a GROUP CHAT for PRAYER. Every evening at 8PM the Franciscan Board Directors check-in and collectively pray. Together we pray and together we are ONE and together we are one ...united by faith and trusting in God's plan.

In a panic Clients were calling the Center looking to complete their 2019 Taxes and some who had already fallen prey to the virus were asking if we had any food to spare. Honestly, the only food remaining in the Food Pantry were the left-overs from our Thanksgiving drive from November.

Frightened to go grocery shopping their pleas of help were heartbreaking but, grateful and relieved when we embraced their food request. Despite the spiraling increase in COVID-19 cases in our area we knew we had to continue our Mission of serving the most vulnerable. Caring for the safety for both ourselves and the Clients we established strict guidelines- masks and gloves were to be worn at all times, NO volunteers at the Center and we would have NO-PEOPLE CONTACT policy. Clients would pick-up their 2- week food supply outside the door and we would distribute food for as long as our supply permitted.

Bergen County quickly became the epicenter for coronavirus in New Jersey, and the calls and demand for food grew exponentially.

Based upon the number of calls we realized that we would only be able to sustain 3 days of food for approx. 60 people. The situation became increasingly grim... the businesses that once employed the undocumented workers were now closed. Besides COVID, children were at home and we were facing a massive unemployment rate. Our phones were ringing constantly, the demand as we expected was significant and our supply was disappearing but, we prayed.



One morning as we were placing food bags outside for a Client pick-up we noticed that our Fire Inspector had returned. Our hearts began to pound rapidly as he approached, asking if he could inspect the damaged Fire Alarm.

We told him the Alarm had not been replaced yet and we were still waiting. He asked what we were doing and we explained that we were giving food to those in need. As he entered the Center, looking around he said, "I'll be back". We thought we were getting a fine. That evening a friend pulled his pick-up truck into the driveway...he said, "I thought you might need this", ...\$2000.00 worth of food for our Pantry.

Later that evening the Police came with a request for three families in need of food. So just as God would give to us, we were able to give to them. The next morning, the fire inspector returned with a truck full of food, masks and gloves... and so it began. He reached out to every business owner and restaurant in Town.

He informed our Mayor and he too came by to record a video from our Pantry requesting food and monetary support. The video was posted on Town website additionally, he reached out to all Town employees as well as other municipalities. People from all walks of life began dropping off food and monetary donations.

As the number of COVID cases and mortality increased in our area so did the number of Clients. To accommodate the exponential need and to remain COVID-free we decided to redesign our plan. We employed the help of our Board Directors ... VIRTUALLY.

Using a Google phone number, we established a call Center for our Clients.



All Client information such as address, number in family, specific dietary needs and appointment scheduling were done remotely.

We quickly began using Zoom and Google Meets to conference and outsourced responsibilities to our Board of Directors. (Everyone became involved) All information is live via google drive for all to share. Maintaining our no-contact policy Clients are now scheduled every 15 minutes for food pick-up, beginning at 9AM and ending at 9PM.

Implementing the virtual portion allowed us at the Center to remain focused on the Clients as well as our food inventory.

Two-weeks after establishing our virtual no-contact policies and procedures, the United States Treasury Department and IRS awarded the Center the “US Northeast Region -Scanned Document Pilot Program” for both Taxes and Pandemic Stimulus refund (money given to low-income individuals/families by the government).

Since we had a virtual system established for pandemic food we simply rolled in the Pandemic tax and stimulus refunds for all our Clients.

Concerned about the welfare of many of our homeless folks we decided to reach our Friar friends at the 31st street Breadline, in NYC.

After a short conversation with Father Michael he said he had an idea. In a follow-up conversation we were informed that the Friars would send over some grocery gift cards for our Clients! We received a miracle...two hundred and ninety gift cards, with a value of \$100.00/card!

Additionally, the State of New Jersey Food Bank and the County of Bergen sponsored a one -day food drive for 1020 of our Clients.

Every Client received 40 pounds of food, meat and fresh fruit and vegetables. Currently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) and Worldwide United Way offered a substantial grant so we can sustain our Pandemic Pantry.

We are serving the municipalities of Fairview and Cliffside (population 60,000) and averaging over 500 Clients/ week. In collaboration with Felician University and 2 of our neighboring COVID hospitals (Hackensack and Palisades Meridian Health) we will be offering virtual Pandemic COVID–19 Counseling for folks who are having emotional and physiological difficulty recovering from COVID and/or those grieving and experiencing closure difficulty from the loss a loved-one due to COVID-19.

Daily prayers continue at 8PM and prayer group requests are proportional to the amount of food given out. As Francis found Jesus in the Lepers of his Town, many have touched the wounded of this Town during this Pandemic. God has certainly blessed us abundantly.

“Start by doing what’s NECESSARY, then do what’s POSSIBLE and suddenly you are doing the impossible”.



## ORIENTAL PROVINCE - ST. ELIZABETH

### *A time of silence for the life and tenderness of God*

For months and months, we have been doing nothing but listening to the broadcast with the devastating news because of Codiv-19, which is affecting the whole world. At the beginning, we followed the spread of the epidemic by praying for China, a distant Country. The virus has subsequently affected the whole of Italy and many other countries, and then the problem has come to “our home” in Cyprus. In two words: dealing with this invisible enemy has aroused great fear and concern in our community in **THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE IN LIMASSOL.**

How can we live this unprecedented experience of fragility and vulnerability? What attitude should be taken in the face of an emergency? The expansion of Covid-19 has changed our lifestyle, our daily rhythm, pastoral activities, the school is emptied and remained deserted, empty spaces, silence, a great silence has spread inside and around us.

If, however, we have to give an evangelical meaning to all this, we want to call it sacred space, silence for life, tenderness of God. With this certainty, we lived the time of Lent, so different and at the same time full of new opportunities. Yes, we found ourselves a little uncomfortable, between fear and suffering, because “forced” to withdraw into our personal desert, to self-separate ourselves from the world and from society to avoid contagions. However, for us Lent or quarantine - always at the number of 40 - were days of great benefit. We accepted Pope Francis’ invitation to live this time as a “time of choice” and reset our lives regarding “what matters and what passes”.

The commitment on the part of all was great, because together we chose to keep this time of grace. Certainly identifying the modalities, planning the daily lifestyle, animating time and space, collaborating and being cautious about the restrictive measures by those who govern us at the State and ecclesial level, all this has called into question our faith.

Yes, that is right: rethinking our faith in completely different ways, in a limited space, not being able to participate in sacramental life in our parishes, without meetings and activities, with the proper fast of physical contact. Silence was the best way to look inside, to focus on ourselves and get to know each other.



It may seem like a paradox but “thanks” to the time of Covid-19 we are experiencing the concrete love, mercy and tenderness of God.

Within this story, we are rediscovering some specific values and traces that are refreshing our consecrated life. Moreover, these give stability to the ground under our feet and to our faith.



Prayer in our fraternity is the expression par excellence in this special time that we are still trying to take care of and keep it. Prayer was the immediate response on our part to humanity’s desperate cry. We have rediscovered the beautiful and true meaning of incessant prayer and our community has turned into a praying community, into a community of listening disciples.

Only in this way has it been possible for us to identify with people affected by the virus, with those forced to stay indoors, with elderly people alone, with families in difficulty, with doctors, nurses and front-line volunteers who risk life for contagion. Moreover, while the school and the internal spaces that surround us have remained immobile and strangely silent, our Chapel has become a privileged place of listening and continuous intercession for the needs of the world through continuous Adoration. We rediscovered the taste of a four-eye encounter, face to face, without haste. Even if at this moment it is impossible for us to go and meet others, in front of Jesus the Eucharist we are holding many hands, we dry tears and we give what we have most precious: our being there.

With greater commitment, during Lent, we dedicated ourselves to the practice of the various forms of piety, which have characterized us from the beginning. Through the Way of the cross and the Franciscan Crown, we found ourselves “gathered in silence on foot of the cross with Mary our Mother”. Our common prayer is concentrated in the Liturgy of the Hours - Lauds, Sixth Hour, Vespers, and Compline - like a breath in harmony with the universal Church and everything takes place punctually and creatively. We are realizing that our life itself becomes a liturgy of praise, which asks God for the gifts of his mercy especially in this time of suffering. In the Psalms, we reached the trust in God and rediscovered the answers of this great trial.

The time reserved for prayer is truly sacred and the disposition of our heart is changing; it helps us to live things differently every day because within the events that are hitting the world there is the person of Jesus Christ.

We are more attentive, welcoming, alert, and spiritually aware but the greatest gift we are rediscovering is this, God himself is sanctifying every moment of the experience of Covid-19.

We continue the fraternal sharing meetings - local chapter, verification, lectio divina - safeguarding our charism and strengthening our fraternal life, encouraging us also in sharing the gifts that each one possesses. Recreational moments, manual work for the benefit of the missions and the poor, as well as communication with the sisters of our religious Family, make us experience how beautiful it is to feel like a family, to support and encourage us to live joy even in trials.

There was no shortage of distance lessons not only to maintain contact with pupils, but also to help them continue their education so as not to miss the school year.



The restrictive measures put in place by the government have closed our doors and our priests cannot regularly come for the celebration of the Eucharist.

All this has left us a great void, we felt disoriented in front of the TV and the computer to follow the celebrations broadcast live but slowly we became familiar with the new means available.

For the first time in the history of our Province, we experienced Holy Week and Easter behind closed doors but we were privileged because we were able to celebrate the hard times and the Triduum in the atmosphere of the domestic Church.

A simple Easter, without gestures, but for us life opportunities. Finally a time for us in which God works!

Finally, the Covid-19 experience calls us into existence because we are made for life; Covid-19 urges us to ask ourselves what matters most in life; Covid-19 urges us to reconsider our priorities:

- we are made to exist,
- we are fragile creatures but our life is precious,
- every crisis asks us to take a position with respect to life,
- we are part of the great human family,
- we are creatures in relationship.
- Freedom is pure responsibility.

Therefore, if we trust in God, if we listen to his Word, we are sure that this experience will also do us good *“because everything contributes to the good of those who love God”*.  
All! Also this page of history!



This common thread of disposition and thought is also accompanying the sisters of our missions and it is nice to note how the whole Province is walking in the same direction, fixing its gaze on “He, who has been pierced”. What is striking in our missionary sisters is the great effort to give relief to parish communities through various initiatives.

The sisters of the two communities in Bulgaria are primarily committed, through the media, to educating and supporting people to see in this great trial the presence of God who can transform evil into something beautiful, good and useful.

During the Covid-19 period, forces are concentrated in sacramental life, remote pastoral care and material support. From the first day of the emergency declaration by the Bulgarian government, the sisters of the Rakovski community together with the pastor and deputy pastor transmit the Holy Masses celebrated behind closed doors and the Eucharistic adorations online for people who want to feed on the word of God and participate spiritually in the liturgical celebration. Every day the priests offer a written reflection on the Gospel of the day and publish it on facebook and on the parish website. Covid-19 reaffirms in our missionaries the awareness that this is the favorable time to witness the Risen Christ, and also the priests of the Parish are anchored in concrete choices and offer their availability.

The visits to the sick have never ceased. Commitment to bring them Communion, to celebrate the sacrament of the sick, funerals and baptisms, always with prudence, following the prescribed norms.



Regarding pastoral activities, **THE SISTERS OF RAKOSKI COMMUNITY** express themselves thus: *All pastoral activity has been redirected in a virtual way. The catechism of children, young people and families takes place on time and so, even if at a distance, we remain in contact with them.*



*In the community, we began daily Eucharistic adoration and we pray in common the Rosary to know how to live and overcome this social and moral difficulty for the whole world.*

*On Easter Sunday, the parish priest made an appeal to all parishioners for the collection of food products for people in need.*

*From the funds raised by the charity market, we were able to take the batteries for an elderly person's cart. In the Franciscan style, we planted tau-shaped flowers in the garden, next to the mosaic of St. Francis, as an expression of humility and environmental responsibility! In our free time, however, we are sewing liturgical vestments and renewing ecclesial attires.*

*It is true, the pandemic has deprived us of many things, but it has given us the opportunity to grow humanly, morally and spiritually in times of trial. We try to train in our parishioners the certainty that isolation due to Covid-19 is above all a time of knowledge, of themselves and in the family; it is a time of acceptance and pacification, it is a time of growth and grace.*



Likewise, the sisters of the **COMMUNITY OF GITNITZA**. How are we experiencing the Covid-19 experience? Have we realized what matters most in our life? What does the Lord want of us? From their sharing the great pain and suffering shines through: *so many people suffer, the Church is empty, poverty knocks on the door of many families and all of this we cannot give an answer except to believe and hope only in the Lord.*



*We lack contact with children and young people, we are working through the internet to do the Catechism and to contact them. In Gitnitza we have many elderly people, sick and lonely people, families in difficulty. We feel responsible for them and we all look for the ways and means to support them: a phone call, a hot meal, a remote visit, and above all our daily prayer before Jesus the Eucharist.*

*The spiritual life of the Sisters of Gitnitza is concentrated in the chapel and in the parish. They are lucky because, we participate and animate the Holy Mass in the Parish every day with few people, according to the government's provisions. At home, every day, we have Eucharistic adoration and offer the problems and concerns of the people to the Lord. With Covid-19, the hope grows in us that the best days are approaching and that after this experience we will be more united, more understanding and good, firm in faith, hope and charity.*



What happens instead with our border sisters in Turkish-occupied Cyprus? Since this part of the island was occupied, the sisters have never abandoned the Maronite Christians of **KORMAKITI** and Karpashia the only Catholic villages on the occupied side. Even now, with the spread of Covid-19, the three missionaries remain in Kormakiti as a sign of hope for the elderly isolated in the house. There is a special mission and from the suburbs, we welcome their voice: It seems to relive the years of the Turkish occupation, when the borders were closed and communications were interrupted.

As soon as the government announced the emergency, the Turkish police arrived early in the morning giving precise orders: meetings are prohibited, everyone must stay at home, and the church bell must not ring. To think that the church bell never stopped ringing throughout northern Cyprus even during the years of occupation.



This meant for us to suspend all contact activities with the villagers, no visits to the elderly at home, no gatherings in the school of manual work with our elderly women.

The only sign of life remains the church and the daily liturgical celebration behind closed doors broadcast online. The sisters are the “lucky ones” to be able to attend Holy Mass. Certainly this is not accepted by the

elderly. Just imagine! Not being able to go to the Eucharistic Celebration, not being able to participate in the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. Yes, they miss the Church a lot, even if everyone has access to the internet at home and is following the Holy Mass live, but it is not the same!



The spiritual life goes on like this. With the Liturgy, the parish priest's homilies, Eucharistic Adoration and the Way of the cross ... as if the church were full of faithful. In community, the sisters make use of the means available and live the quarantine by praying, listening, and doing good.

Sr. Elsapaola Pudussery, nurse, visits the sick people of the village every other day: a wonderful opportunity to meet people at home, listen to their worries and fears and ensure their spiritual accompaniment.

For the sisters, the telephone remains the only means of communication with the people and sisters of the Province.

Many people speak up and express their closeness. Sisters, how are you? Do you need something? Do you have anything to eat? How can we help you?



The Providence has never failed! Despite the fact that the borders have remained closed, every 15 days, the United Nations arrives in Kormakiti and, with the help of local volunteers, they distribute food to all the residents of the village.

The simple people think of us missionaries: they bring us eggs, vegetables, bread and much more!

Even the Provincial Superior Sister Angelica Hadjihanni has found a way to send us every good thing.

Our feelings are an expression of gratitude. We are isolated, with the doors closed, even the borders are closed, but we are here, with the most vulnerable, to witness and serve life in the Risen Christ!



Covid-19 respects neither borders, nor seas, nor oceans. Travel without a visa or passport; enter without knocking on the door, without notice or permission. Also in **LIBANO**, as in the whole world, the spread of the virus was looked at with a little lightness. Instead, very soon, the infections also reached the borders with Syria and our missionaries were in their quarantine, with masks, gloves and sanitizers.



We closed the doors of the school. It took a week of thorough cleaning, sanitizing the rooms and we, “à la maison” (at home). Coronavirus or Covid-19.

We know it as a crown. A crown of thorns, of suffering, of pain, of concern but above all of fear! A time that everyone as Pope Francis said, we are in the same boat. Rich and poor, small and big! Hospitals filled up, while protests against the government increased on the streets. It is the worst political-economic crisis, but also humanitarian. The doors of the churches and mosques have closed. The voice of our parish priest is heard through the megaphones placed on the bell tower. We were left without the Holy Mass where we could meet our people. What can we do? The answer is, stay indoors.

The Sisters know well what it means not to have the necessary tools and the minimum structures for survival. The fear is great because it is feared that the virus could result in a massacre.

Staying indoors? And when the house is a tent, a heap of cardboard or plastic? The pandemic in the refugee camps becomes the most urgent challenge to face.

The Menjez mission is not far from the Tel Abbas camp in northern Lebanon and the infections could cause a catastrophic crisis.





Even in Menjez and neighbouring villages, the situation is difficult to manage, especially for poor families and those without work. The majority belong to this category. Thus, the mission of the Sisters has extended beyond pre-established boundaries by seeking sensitive hearts. We are committed to animating our parishioners so that they are sensitive in helping the poorest, especially those who have lost their jobs. Here it works like this: everything is concentrated in the big cities, while the poor of Akkar are satisfied with the products of their garden. No difference for us - we too, like them, eat what Providence gives us. Unfortunately, there is a lot of poverty in our villages.

We sensitized some of our benefactors, who offered us an economic contribution and various food items that were distributed to the poorest families.

The Dispensary, managed by Sister Martina Volpato together with her assistant nurse, is a very important point of reference for all people. Sister Martina is faithful to her work and tries to provide everything that is required to avoid contagion, we have obtained machines for the control of the sick, to see if they are positive or negative. Among other things, Sister Martina is the only one who can go out to provide what is needed, to go to Beirut for medicines or for the delivery of patient lists to the Ministry of Health, thus putting herself in danger.

The spiritual life of our missionaries in the suburbs, incidentally, is being enriched. In Menjez they have never had a stable pastor and the sisters with all the people have always had only one Holy Mass, Sunday Mass, and on occasions like this one of isolation - no possibility to celebrate Mass.

With Covid-19, they tell us we are recovering all the Holy Masses we missed in these 32 years of mission in Menjez. We follow Pope Francis' Holy Mass and other celebrations until late in the evening. We have the time to enter into ourselves and discover what we are, and offer it to the Crucified Christ to rise and be free with Him.



This is their identity card of the present moment; we are poor with the poor. No income since February but thanks to the benefactors we have kept the dispensary open with various aids of medicines, clothing and food.

Sister Beatrice Skorti participated as a member in the meeting of the municipal committee. During the meeting, measures were taken to protect Menjez and neighbouring villages. It ensured the prayers from the Sisters throughout the Akkar area, without distinction of religion and belief. Today we thank the Lord for protecting us. Not a single case in Menjez and its surroundings. We managed to pay our teachers and collaborators even if with half salary. We are poor in money but rich in faith, love and joy to have discovered that the Risen Christ always walks with us!

Moreover, when we have the elderly, the most vulnerable to coronavirus infection, at home, how can we protect them? How to secure their safety? These basic questions involved the sisters of the **COMMUNITY OF LARNACA**, engaged in managing the retirement home for older people.

Of course, the sisters they took a good “shock” because guaranteeing relatives that frail elderly people are “well” is not easy and they have not ignored the emergency that has come home. The



doors of the institute were closed immediately to prevent the access of people from outside. Thus the sisters found themselves guarding the fragile human life with due caution and accuracy towards the elderly.

This mission is very delicate: we are confronted with the person’s own illness but also with the emotions caused by the inability to see loved ones again. The sisters, as good Samaritans, still manage this manifold reality on a physical, emotional and spiritual level and find the right words and ways to cope with the anxiety and bad thoughts that assail the elderly.

Having to tell them “everything will be fine” and continually thinking about how to make them feel safe is the most demanding task for our sisters. In addition to the assistance that is guaranteed daily, the sisters tell us that, our prayer have taken the attitude of Moses with raised hands. We are praying a lot, we implore to end the pandemic. We have the opportunity to have Holy Mass at home every morning and so also the Eucharistic adoration and the recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Ours is a continuous prayer, from the Tabernacle to the room of those who suffer. Certain that among the corridors, between the beds and the people we assist, the Risen One walks without noise.

We go forward with courage and with great confidence that our mission of charity is constantly updated, according to the heart of Christ. Charity is silent but active; charity is proximity; charity is relationship!





At the end of our experiences of this sad pandemic period, together with all the sisters of the Province, the provincial superior, Sr Angelica Hadjihanni, feels the need to thank the Lord who has watched over our Congregation and our Province and has preserved us from dangerous virus.

Our suffering was not so much the one experienced on our skin, as the pain of all humanity, which we made our own, participating in so much suffering and often despair, feeling that we are members of a single universal family.

She then thanks all the sisters in the province who with great sense of responsibility have been able to manage these critical moments, remaining subject to the orders and prescriptions of the civil authorities.

We pray and express our deep gratitude to all those who, defying all difficulties and putting their lives at risk, have been and continue to be at the forefront of safeguarding the health of all of us, without forgetting those who have left us, the great ones, heroes of this pandemic.

We are immensely grateful to our religious and political authorities who have been able to guide all of us with great wisdom and responsibility with the necessary measures to overcome this worldwide calamity.

In this month, we pray to the Virgin of faith and hope that she may intercede for those who are in suffering and arouse in all the courage and certainty of a renewed humanity.



## **PROVINCE SAINT LOUIS IX**

**CLOSED GATES ...  
TELEPHONE and INTERNET OPEN to the WORLD...  
in DIRECT LINE with GOD!!!**



The confinement decree declared on the same date for the three countries in which we operate: France, Switzerland, Lithuania, perplexed us.

From that moment the whole Province has lived privileged moments; each of us had to 'stop', take stock of our spiritual and fraternal situation, and remake a new face.

The announcement of the total closure surprised us well, even though it had been announced. Sr. Elizabeth Varikakuzhyil, Provincial Superior, had already warned us not to move and to wait for government decisions.

We were prevented, but when the news became real we were amazed, paralyzed! The sisters of the Paris community tell us.

We are all witnesses to the benevolent love of the Lord and the assistance of Providence who accompanied us throughout this trial period when the whole planet made Lent.

The particular role we have now, more than ever to dedicate ourselves to prayer, living in community, but attentive and open to the world.

During this difficult period of closure, our Province was visited by "our sister corporal death". In fact, after a long illness, the Lord called our dearest sister Raymonde Favre to Himself.

At the time of her death our provincial superior, Sr. Elizabeth, and the sisters of the provincial community were at her side.

The confinement decree surprised Sr. Alice Karothu Narothu since she was with her family in India for the holidays; excluded any possibility of returning to the Province until the borders are opened. This reality created a unique situation.

Sr. Sicily Mathew, who had left the community during the absence of Sr. Alice, now lives in the provincial community.

There, with great availability, she offers her service in favour of the sick, especially since the nursing staff had to resort to partial unemployment to take care of their school going children remained at home.

Two significant moments characterize what we experienced during the confinement period. The spiritual impact that this situation has provoked in the personal and community life of our realities, then, the ‘apostolic-missionary’ activities held in this period of total closure.

Throughout the Province, we intensified the time of prayer, with the recitation of the holy rosary, as Pope Francis has indicated daily Eucharistic adoration, meditation, spiritual reading, personal and community formation. A ‘confinement’, which was for all a time of grace and blessings from the Lord.

Therefore, closed ourselves in the house, with the total suspension of all apostolic activity outside. It is not indifferent challenge that we accept with courage and availability, challenge, of reorganizing fraternal life according to the new provisions that have come to us, from the respective governments and from the various episcopal conferences..

### **A very special experience was lived by the sisters of the PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY in Le Mans**



Here is how they express themselves: *“A favorable time to get closer to the Lord respecting the safety rules required by the government.*

*The provincial community has scrupulously implemented the slogan, ‘stay home, respect the distances ‘, with the good fortune of being able to take advantage of the adjacent park.*

*We try to have a positive outlook and to be in solidarity with the whole world.*

*At the time of writing, everything is going well, especially the resident guests and the nursing staff of the “San Giuseppe” retirement home.*





In the service that is now required of us, with the chronic illness of some of our elderly women and sisters. We discover every day our typical way of announcing the Good News, *“Following the example of St. Francis, he began to follow Christ by bending over the suffering of lepers, the Franciscan religious, called to the charitable ministry. We fulfill it with the compassionate love that draws from the Heart of Christ and helps the brothers to understand the redemptive value of solitude and pain”*. (Const. N. 74)

Our relationship with Divine Providence appears a little modified but the conviction of our Founders “trust in Divine Providence” helps us. At this time when the churches are closed, we experience the meaning of Eucharistic hunger, although fortunately, our chapel works and, even more so, we adore and praise His presence.

In this difficult contingent, our dear sister Sr. Raymonde Favre passes from this world to the Father at the age of 91. She has lived through a long illness, recently locked up in her room, but has kept her smile until the end and every morning wished us her ‘Good morning’.



Being forbidden to move and travel, the sisters of the other communities virtually participated in the celebration of the funeral by joining the Eucharistic celebration that took place in our chapel.

The parish priest of our parish, Père Hervé Marie Cottin, offered to celebrate the Eucharist and lovingly underlined the motivation that in her younger age had guided Sr. Raymonde to a life choice of consecration to the Lord. She had recently celebrated the golden jubilee in 2019.

Her smile and her openness to the world had made her a happy religious.

Her grand niece, Emmanuelle Pastore, a consecrated laywoman residing in Paris, was able to participate in the funeral celebration. Having obtained permission from the police to make the trip, she represented the deceased’s family currently confined to Switzerland. Then some sisters accompanied her to her last home.

We hear the particular experience of the confinement of **SISTERS PRESENT** in a parish on the outskirts of the capital **PARIS**.



Each parish priest immediately got busy and organized himself in the best way in order to maintain contact with the faithful. Starting from Holy Easter, in our parish it was possible to broadcast the Holy Mass live, so that the parishioners participated and felt united. Priests under the age of 60 were able to visit the sick who urgently requested their presence. We sisters of the community had the grace to participate in the Eucharist celebrated every morning in the chapel in front of the church, after which we celebrated the liturgy of praise; in the evening the celebration of Vespers and

the Eucharistic adoration led by the priests of the parish, the most beautiful experience we had during the Easter Triduum. We are aware that we have been the only privileged in our Province to live this experience. We participated in it with great emotion and in fraternal fervor.

- Thursday: the parish priest, accompanied by his two collaborating priests, celebrated the Last Supper of the Lord, in simplicity and fervor all felt a deep pain due to the absence of the faithful; then followed the Eucharistic adoration, which lasted until 11 pm.
- Good Friday: with deep recollection and devotion, we prayed the Way of the Cross according to the tradition of the Church and of our Congregation. In the late afternoon, we join the priests who organize the celebration of the Lord's Passion and the veneration of the Holy Cross. A moment of strong spiritual intensity and communion with Catholics throughout the world. Undoubtedly, we prayed for all the sisters of the Congregation.
- Holy Saturday: in great simplicity, but with true devotion and joy we participate in the Easter Vigil, of course, without the faithful. The blessing of fire has projected us into the light of the Risen Christ. A unique and unprecedented vigil performed with so much emotion. In the chapel, the Alleluia resounded more strongly than ever, as we wanted to unite our voices with those of Catholics throughout the world deprived of the song of Glory to the Risen Christ.
- Easter Sunday: the solemn celebration of the Eucharist was our joyful thanksgiving that we raised to the Risen Christ in the name of all Catholics and in close communion with all the Sisters of the Congregation.





What a great opportunity to be able to recite the Franciscan crown in the **MOUNTAINS OF SWITZERLAND**, when spring explodes, the trees are dressed in the most beautiful colors, the birds chirp harmoniously day and night and the wheat fields praise the magnificence of the Creator; this too is confinement.

The **SISTERS OF TAVANNES** tell us, *“Nobody knocks at our door. It is a good opportunity to put into practice the exhortation of our Founder Laura Leroux de Beauffremont, ‘We must knock, often knock on the door of the Ciborium ... - Pulsate ut aperietur vobis- Knock for it to be opened to you as the Redeemer promised and for the graces which He has prepared and which He wants to offer you. We had the great gift of participating in the solemnity of the celebration, “In Coena Domini”- the Last supper- which the parish priest Hilaire Mitendo who celebrated in the parish church with the only participants, three of us sisters and a catechist.*



*In the same way, we had the joy of celebrating the Easter Vigil. From that moment on, the episcopal vicar gave us the opportunity to participate the weekly Sunday Mass.*

*We are very grateful to the Lord for this exceptional gift.*

*In this time of confinement, we have kept alive contacts with lonely, sick or disadvantaged people through telephone messages or the internet.*



*This period of “direct pastoral inactivity” allowed us to take care of the formative aspect as well by dedicating forty minutes every day to resume and deepen the session on self-knowledge and our congregational Charism that Sister Tiziana, vicar general, had held Years ago. This was also a way of feeling in tune with the whole Congregation “.*



The sisters of the **COMMUNITY “SAN FRANCESCO” IN CARLEPONT**, among the woods and beet fields tell us: *“closed gate, telephone and internet open to the world listening to all the people who need and to reach those alone ..., in direct line with God!”*

We started the confinement and quarantine time on March 16. After a first moment of disorientation, we are ready to reorganize ourselves to make Quarantine a time of grace and evangelization.

This period has allowed us to devote ourselves more to prayer, to resume spiritual reading, to read again our life and to ask ourselves what is the **ESSENTIAL** for us today. “

From the shores of the Baltic Sea where is located our **COMMUNITY “PADRE GREGORIO” IN KRETINGA** the sisters send us another message that makes us feel the close bond that unites us. There have not been many cases of the sick and deceased in this country, but the entire population has strictly followed the restriction and confinement directives.

*“It has been a long Lent, a privileged time of preparation for Holy Easter and we seemed to enter and live a long ‘Holy Saturday’ full of unknowns, but open to Hope.*

*‘I am staying at home’ has opened up new possibilities for spiritual life.*

*The limits of space and time have forced us to focus better on what to do, how to do it and the purpose of our ‘going’*

...

*We have come up with new forms of prayer, created and lived the Way of the cross in the backyard.*

*At the invitation of the episcopal conference every evening at 8.00 pm, we united spiritually with all the Lithuanian faithful in the recitation of the prayer to Saint Joseph.*

*Then ... here is the surprise, for the first time, after the 25 years of presence of the sisters in Kretinga, we had the celebration of the Easter Vigil right in our chapel, of course scrupulously observing the hygiene indications proper to this pandemic period.”*



## **APOSTOLATE - MISSION**

How to live missionary life when you are stuck and locked in the house? It is the question that we have asked ourselves and to which the Holy Spirit has not failed to give us an answer, arousing in us the creativity that belongs to Him and that always surprises us. This is how new initiatives flourish, gradually the various parish sites are put into action which allow us to be in relationship with the faithful and especially with lonely people.

*“The apostolate is suspended and we miss this very much. We get in touch with the most fragile people, who suffer from loneliness, who have no one who can visit them, who need someone who lends them a careful ear.” (PARIS)*

In the pastoral unit of **CARLEPONT** the “Lent in the city” initiative takes place in order to live Lent guided and supported by the Word of God and the testimony of many faithful. Then in communion with the catechists of the parish, we reach the children of the catechesis



and those of the missionary group, sending those videos, interactive games to deepen the biblical themes, illustrations of the Gospel to colour, songs and prayers in relation to the theme of catechesis. Finally, at Easter here we have some innovations; the Easter song proposed would be learned by everyone, therefore, with the parents they will have to choose a phrase, write it down on a sheet of paper, take a picture of it and send it to the catechist who will then create a “living, special cross”.

During the month of May, finally, we will all be spiritually united in the recitation of the holy Rosary.



“In **TAVANNES**” the Kindergarten has been closed, but ties have remained telephone and internet with families. In reality, we are experiencing semi-confinement in Switzerland.

It is still online and for WhatsApp that we maintain close ties with the children of the choir, we offer them nice reflections on the liturgical time, we live or the mimicking songs to learn with the help of parents.

The pastoral ministry of consolation takes place by telephone, but lonely people eagerly await visits and the comfort of the Eucharist so much that they do not hesitate to ask the sister who passes by and ask for the Eucharist from the window of their home.

To the delight of children, parents, sisters, the doors of the kindergarten reopened on Monday, 11 May.

It was an emotion for everyone despite the fears of having to follow the directions received by the government to protect the good and health of all.



The apostolic life of **KRETINGA** moves to the virtual world, psycho-pedagogical formation courses for one sister, computer science and pedagogy for another, Lithuanian for the third. Then, when all teachers are ready, online lessons are started for the pupils. A personalized work that requires time, dedication and patience. Drafting, sending, and correcting pupils' homework, synchronized courses that require strict compliance with timetables.



A difficult but challenging time for everyone. However, the limits of the quarantine have opened the doors to new horizons of apostolate, this is how, requests to collaborate in the “San Francesco” cancer center of the nearby city of Klaipeda, we made ourselves available, always virtually or by telephone, two days in a week, for listening to lonely people, in need of a word of hope. It is true that when you close a door, windows open. We would say that we have nothing to do, but in reality, it is a precious pause, which, as in music, gives our life a very particular colouring, favours and improves fraternal life. “

This time of confinement has been a rich life experience for each of us. Living trust and abandonment ... has taught us to make unexpected events and contradictions of an opportunity to live with more patience and docility, to appreciate and realize mutual help in small daily services.

Above all to live in an attitude of action of grace since, looking at the reality of many families confined in their apartments, we have had the opportunity to better enhance the richness of community life. We intensified the prayer of solidarity towards the people in pain because of the loss of a loved one, for the sick and health workers.

Now, new perspectives open up before us, the economic crisis that is looming and that is already knocking on the doors is a challenge. The virus has affected everyone, though in a different way. In a global way, we rediscover our frailties and the fact of experiencing dangerous uncertainty.

At this moment for us Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the preferential option towards poor and fragile people, concretely means setting out towards them, and being attentive to what they have to say to us...

Today we are called to reaffirm our trust in the Lord and to listen to the Spirit, which blows where he wants and we do not know where he comes from or where he goes. In dialogue with Nicodemus Jesus says, “It is necessary to be born from above”(Jn 3, 1-9).

It is all what we are called to be today. In this time of crisis, we must be born again. Like Nicodemus, we too ask, “How is this possible?”

Being reborn from above does not mean starting over as before. How can us to be Nicodemus today?



*Blessed are you, Lord, our God, how great you are!*

## PROVINCE "MARIA IMMACOLATA"

*Coronavirus: a challenge and an opportunity.*

### The Richness to read in fraternity the sign of COVID 19

In such tragic emergencies, such as those experienced from February onwards, we rediscover the dimension of humanity that unites us and that makes us rediscover bearers of the same emotions, feelings, fears.



We religious have found ourselves deeply sympathetic and close to any person, finally sisters in the flesh also, because we have the same fragility, the limit that made us experience illness, suffering and ... death.

In each community of our Province the first reaction, on the entrance on the scene of the famous VIRUS which for more than three months has been the only protagonist on the world scene, was that of a vague interest, not knowing what it was and we felt it far away.

The interest has risen to 1000 grade with the sudden growth of infections in Italy and with the first victims in a few days...

Of course, the situation developed in a different form depending on the type of community, the average age of the sisters present!

Let us start from the educational works, where the dramatic climate of solitude, disease and death, created by COVID19, has been weighed down by the problem of having to manage the formation of children and young people in an almost unreal situation.



## **COMMUNITY OF COLONNATA (FIRENZE)**

*“Have courage: I have overcome the world” Jn. 16:33*

In the community, where all the environments have recently been renovated to make life and pastoral service of kindergarten more functional and qualitative, the sisters suffered the closure of the school and the inability to follow parish activities.

What to do? How can we accept the question that the Lord poses within this terrible event that invests all humanity with pain?

The only solution to the urgent question can be found in prayer, in listening to the Word...

“In fact, we have all the time available to devote ourselves to prayer, given that the insistent invitation to STAY HOME comes from the Government and the Superiors, to prevent the spread of the infection. Hence, the need to discuss in the fraternity with greater intensity, meeting times, even in meals, have expanded the discussions. The long time taken away from the care of children, we spent on the arrangement of community environments inside and out, to take care of what there is never got time to do and then ... unavoidable! We gave ourselves two hours of Eucharistic adoration every day to invoke the grace of healing, for all those who work and work for the good of the sick, doctors and nurses...: we feel it our mission now.



The forced quarantine has caused us to ask ourselves how our faith is in the face of the mystery of death, the measure of our dedication to God and to our brothers and sisters, the strength of hope, trust in the promise of Christ, have I overcome the world? ...

We can say that we all went through is the darkness of the night, for some, nights of pain, for others nights of panic, for others of loneliness, for others still the night of no return.

From Easter day for everyone, it is a day of resurrection because everyone can count on the One who said, *“Have courage I have overcome the world”*.

## COMMUNITY of CENTOCELLE

*"Everything contributes to the good for those who love God" Rm. 8:28*

The second community that still exercises an educational-school service is located in the provincial house: Mary Immaculate. Of course, the situation is more complex since we have the presence of young sisters in the formation and a good number of elderly sisters, including a small infirmary, but ... adjacent to everything is the educational community of the school. Given the seriousness of the situation, we were afraid of contagion. All the more when it was known of two Congregations of sisters here in Rome and the surrounding area, which had, several sisters with virus-positive among them in the community except two! So staying at home to protect the community, especially the many elderly sisters we have, was the priority.



However, the seclusion of the quarantine has pushed us to open ourselves with compassion, to the need of the people, to the neighborhood, to be together, to show gratitude to the doctors and nurses, who risk their lives for everyone and to express the desire to sing the joy of living, banishing the fear of Coronavirus. In fact, even a group of us went down to the courtyard at regular times, set at noon and in the evening. The phenomenon of this planned neighborhood party began in the alleys of Naples, and in Rome it found wide diffusion.

Our institute Maria Immacolata, born and raised in the Centocelle district in the 1950s, is located in the center of a row of buildings overlooking our courtyard and playgrounds, that is why during this period it was possible to create a kind of distant dialogue with the neighborhood.

At the beginning we started with the participation in the exhibition of the tricolor and with the choral singing of the national anthem, ...

Beautiful and choreographic to see the balconies and windows wide open and alive with families determined to team up, to be stronger together, win over the fear and say thank you; then it all turned into prayer.



This kind of pastoral ministry of ... courtyard with speaker, and a lot of heart, continues today with the prayer of the Rosary, the community moving around reciting on the Saturdays of May. The whole community, including the sisters of the infirmary who can get off in a wheelchair, meet to share the Marian prayer outdoors, even with our neighbours, who have expressed much appreciation and encouragement. For us it was an important sign, we understood that people need God so much and need to relate to Him, they are in search and in this our vocation for them makes so much sense!



The lack of the Eucharistic celebration is a heavy fasting to date. More was felt at Easter, but fortunately an exceptional alternate who we found; thanks to the new

media alleviated the absence, Pope Francis! Every morning, the Eucharistic celebration at Santa Martha was projected into the Church. It was a truly enriching experience, due to the habitual contact with the person of Pope Francis, so human, rich and profound. His, few words of daily homilies, were tracks of spiritual and faith formation. A truly unexpected gift to bear fruit.

The blocking of the practice of worship and the normal use of the church, forced us to skip off a very important celebration in March.

The perpetual profession of Sr. Annabel and Sr. Aileen was suspended a few days before its celebration. It is indeed another fast, which they accepted, with availability and trust from the hands of the good God and Father, as the right thing for them!





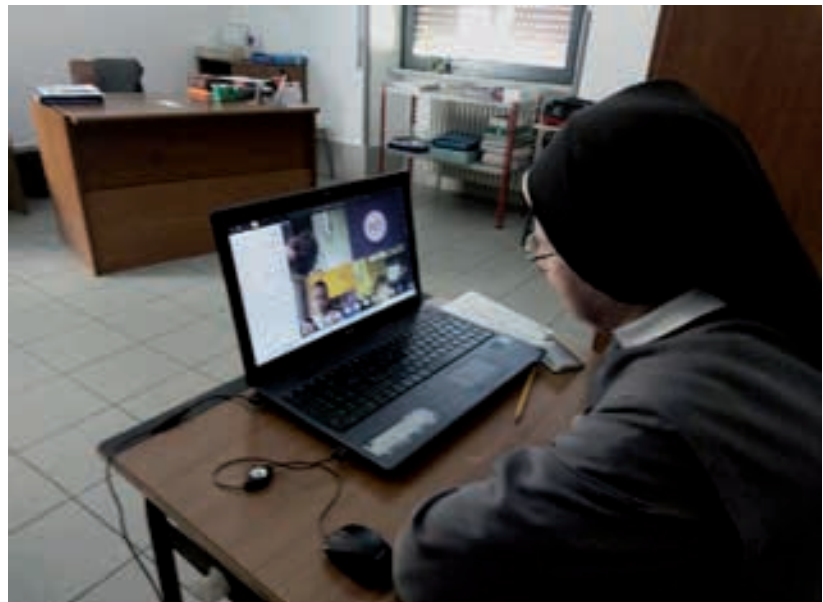
For those who are directly involved in the field of pastoral work, they found themselves opening a new chapter with new ways and strategies to invent, according to the needs that the moment of emergency requires.

Since the start of the lockdown, we have tried to make ourselves as close as possible and present to the families of our students.

In a spirit of community discernment, we started researching, involving lay teachers, to find the formula that best suits the needs of pupils and families.

The research certainly involved the teaching area, but also and above all the human and pastoral one, to keep alive a relationship of support and availability with families in various situations.

Technology has been a useful tool. For the first time we measured ourselves with the use of an informatic platform, video lessons, remote teaching colleges, videos, photos and e-mails ...



A great surprise for many of us, but we dedicated ourselves with great commitment and seriousness, even though we are aware that nothing can replace direct contact with the students.

## COMMUNITY of LIDO DEI PINI

*"Even if I go to a dark valley, I fear no evil,  
because You, Lord, are with me. ". (Ps 22,4)*

Looking at the other educational side of our provincial community, we listen to the experience of the sisters of the children community and the sisters who lead the way with them and take care of them together with the family home team.

After the first days of joy for the novelty of not going to school and breaking the daily routine, the children began to know the consequences of having to stay at home, no school, no friends, no walks, no visits from parents and ... many tasks to perform, many more than those that must be done at normal



school days. The sisters and educators accompanied them in this difficult phase of the pandemic and they were good. They reacted well, they regained their serenity and now life goes on quietly between studies, online school with video lessons, various games, a little prayer, and time spent outdoors. In the solitude and deprivations of the quarantine, the children react with creativity, inventing games, nursery rhymes like the one against the Corona virus, which will be defeated:

“Etcìù!  
Just a sneeze  
and everyone runs away  
a kiss or a caress  
and straight to the pharmacy.  
They call you crown  
but you are not a king  
you are a domineering virus  
which is not worth much.  
They said “it won’t come to Rome”  
and instead, take a look, here you are!

It’s a little scary but maybe you don’t know  
that we will fight until you disappear.  
And even if it is no longer carnival  
a mask we must wear.  
We think about hygiene and wash our hands  
and we also try to stay away.  
We do everything we can to not get caught  
and you, virus, will not be able to infect.  
Our Italy will be saved  
and there will be a happy ending.”

It seems they want to deny the reality of suffering and death, but television continues to offer them, secretly instilling fear.



*“Holy Week, a good experience, thanks to the Easter volunteer, who organized a simple reconstruction of the Jewish Passover dinner for them. We imitated the Jewish Easter. The Star of David and a dish with the symbol of an egg, of life was distributed to all.*

*A piece of unleavened bread that recalls the exodus of the Jews, bitter herbs like the bitterness of slavery and lentils symbol of poverty. Even the children, educated by Emilia, consumed the extraordinary dinner with devotion.”*



## COMMUNITY of FROSINONE

*“Take care of these little ones, because, I tell you, their angels in heaven, they always see the face of my Father” Mt. 18:10*

Our home for children from Frosinone, having to interrupt all contacts with the outside world, suddenly found itself aware that, together with the real and dangerous risk of being infected, a new situation arose which had to deal with some more problems that created new lifestyles for all members of the house. The sisters, the educators, the staff, but above all the children, a fundamental element to be protected, not only from a physical and hygienic point of view, but also psychological with the effort to keep the balance, sometimes fragile and exposed to various dangers.

Faced with this, there was a good collaboration of all adults to focus on the children with their needs, insecurities and, sometimes, fears.

While maintaining a serious rhythm of educational interventions for their formation, they have always tried to create a serene atmosphere, often fun, with activities, new experiences and simple duties to perform.

To direct them to new behaviors imposed by the serious health situation created by the pandemic, the game was used, with which children, almost unconsciously, assumed the new hygiene rules, reconciling themselves with the fact of having to wash their hands often, keep them under control because they do not continuously touch the eyes, nose and mouth.

They too, though small, are aware of the danger that threatens world health and know perfectly well the correct behaviors to be followed.

By now seeing their educators in perfect safety uniform, though at the beginning it made them smile a little thinking about astronauts, today it is perfectly normal, like using a mask when you go out and get in touch with strangers.



In this difficult time, our children have shown that they have good energy to face the difficulties of life.

The instructors, staff and sisters were very good, but also very well prepared, who are the element of safety because they are always present, dedicated to the children.

Now even more they are committed to prayer, pleading to God to free humanity from all evil and protect their children, just as a mother does for her children.

## COMMUNITY of MONTALE

Sister Oliviera and Sister Rosassunta not at all discouraged by the situation, feel deeply affected by the painful events we are experiencing, but not overwhelmed. They lead their daily lives confident in the help of the Lord, they find strength in prayer, in His Word long meditated and contemplated. They are committed in facilitating and spreading people's prayer, keeping the Church open and disinfected during the day, allowing fellow villagers to go to church to meet the Lord freely.

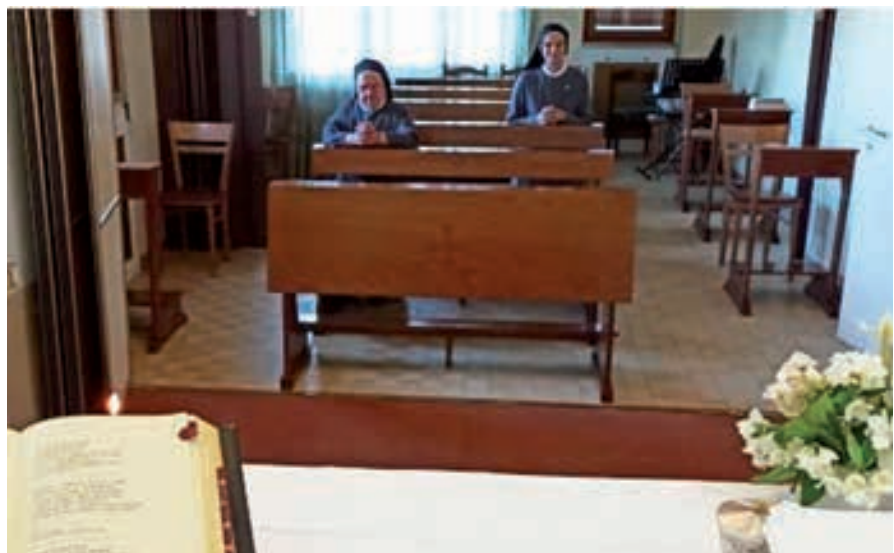
*“Given the situation of greatest emergency for several families, without work, we paid more attention to the poor; always thanking of Providence and making ourselves present. If necessary, deliver a parcel of food at the gate, but welcoming everyone with joy and offering a word of faith and encouragement. The apostolic commitment of this period would have been concentrated above all on the catechesis of the youth, so we also used new computer communication techniques”.*



Following the indications of the parish priest Father Luciano, together with the other catechists, the sisters followed the catechism children, sending them prayer cards and reflections, which they returned and so the sisters could verify their commitment.

Particular attention deserves the singular Way of the Cross of Good Friday, a sincere expression of faith and collaboration, the result of the commitment of the whole pastoral unit. Each youth was committed in reproducing a specific station of the Way of the cross; a young expert has inserted them all on the site of the parish for the meditation of the Passion.

The particularly harsh moment did not distract the Montale sisters from the normality of everyday life. Confident in the help of the Lord, they find strength in Him, in prayer, in his word, but also in manual work especially in the care of the beautiful park and garden, hoping to be able to collect the products when they welcome the sisters for the Spiritual Exercises.



## **VILLA SERENA REST HOUSE in Duronia**

*"Do not be afraid, little flock because to your Father he liked to give you his Kingdom" Lk 12:32*

In the community called Villa Serena, this time of so much tension due to the pandemic has been read in a key of faith, in the name of VIGILANCE. This is not a wakeup call, beautiful and strong that will also serve us religious, to recover clarity and the right priorities, putting your certainties in the hands of the One who is the true and only Savior! He invites us to be awake and ready not to be surprised, but to recognize the right time the Lord who passes, through different people and events, even sad ones in history.

"Despite everything, the terror and fear of being infected, together with the old ladies, we know the" invisible enemy "was great, but with the help of the Lord, the blessed Virgin and all the Saints in Heaven, we are there feel protected as in a fortress. Here too, as in other communities, prayer from the beginning was put at the center. For the Eucharistic adoration and recitation of the Rosary our elderly women did not even let themselves be invited; but, willingly and regularly they participated with us in prayer for the good health of all, for a particular protection from evil.



We spiritually accompanied our parish priest in the prayer of the Rogations, to implore healing from this deadly pandemic. On Easter day, then, fr. Gino and the Mayor of Duronia went to the families of the village and to our community, leaving two Easter signs: the blessed palm and an Easter egg a sign of good wishes for everyone for peace and good.

In a sad climate, due to the absence of visits from relatives and the dramatic news from Italy, the birthday party of one of the ladies lit up providentially on March 25<sup>th</sup> so, in the midst of all the news



on the infection and deaths we celebrated 100 years of life.

Very simple, compared to the plan to have celebrated with all the relatives, the Bishop, but the warmth of the whole community and the affection served to repay everything.

At the end we can only thank God, because after all that we have heard about nursing homes, we are all well, thanks also to the preventive recommendation scrupulously observed by the whole community".

## COMMUNITY of QUEZON CITY - PHILIPPINES

### "NEW WINE TO NEW WINESKIN"

We came together as community and discussed about what radical changes should we take in this experience of covid-19 and quarantine time. This time has provided us an opportunity of new horizons and realizations, one of which is a deeper appreciation of prayer. As our government authority required us to stay home, we commit ourselves to obey; and we follow the liturgical and devotional prayers proposed by the Church. This time we assumed as time for our spiritual nourishment and participation in the mission of the church, focusing on Jesus, pleading to heal us; bringing the intentions of those in need and embracing all humanity in prayers.

In our actual mission, we assured our spiritual presence and affection to the parents and children of after-school classes calling them through cellphone, asking about their situations and conditions, and encouraging them to follow the directives of the government. We listened to their fears and difficulties, and then we gave comforting words to go on and to be strong in their faith in God. We bring all of them in our prayers, especially during our daily Eucharistic Adoration.

In a very simple way, we express our faith and hope by putting a symbol and message on our gate.

We invited our boarders, the two Vietnamese Dominican Sisters, to join us in prayer and in the participation of the online Holy Mass, applying the required social distancing policy. With this, we are able to create a deeper communion and unity with another Congregation.

For our pastoral activity in the parish, we participated series of online sessions, together with the core group of catechetical ministry, including the program preparation for the Christian formation of the children who will be joining the Sacrament of Confirmation and for the next catechetical year activities.

As personal commitment, we offer our daily work and assignment for the intentions of the universal Church.



Every Wednesday at 9:00 o'clock in the evening, we are joining the healing rosary for the world initiated by the Manila Cathedral, and every week animated by different diocese to be led by the Bishop of that diocese and of various religious men and women in the Philippines.

In addition, the present pandemic situation provides us an opportunity to focus more on our blessings and not what is missing. For this, as community, we are living and enjoying a life of austerity, searching the maximum use of minimum resources. Here we discover how to be creative even in meal preparations. Austerity, therefore, is to live creatively and joyfully following the Divine Providence. We articulated the following formula:

$\sqrt{(\text{BEL}+\text{TREP}-) \text{C}+\text{C}} = \text{Radical Conversion}$

**This is how we gather our experiences and encounter with one another:**

$\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$  is a radical symbol showing a call for a radical change. The Variables (or the letters) represent our experiences of God.

**BEL stands for Best Experience of Love,**

**TREP means Thanksgiving-Reflections-Experiences-Prayers and the**

**-C stands for negative Chance or lack of commitment and**

**+C means Change or Transformation.**

**As community, we are fully aware that this event is an invitation  
to be a new wine for new wineskin...**

### COMMUNITY of BOSO BOSO - PHILIPPINES

*"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and halleluiah is our song!" St. John Paul II*

"At the beginning, how much anxiety, how much pain, how much poverty and how much fear! We cannot deny that these are the feelings we experienced and experienced together with our people at the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic".

The suspension of all activities, as everywhere, forced the sisters to suspend catechesis in the villages, but unlike the rest of the communities, the priest there, allowed the sisters to participate in the celebration of the daily Holy Mass transmitted online for the whole Parish.

The sisters specialized in the choir of the celebration, trying to do their best for the faithful, at least those who had a cellphone!



Let us listen from the sharing of the sisters:

*“We felt lucky, but we suffered from the lack of the people.*

*They did not see us in the filming; they only heard our voices in song. In this Easter season, despite everything, we were able to sing with faith and joy the “Alleluia” of the Risen Lord, who freed us from all sin, while we continued to have trust and hope that everything would pass.*

*Before the “lockdown”, when it was already clear that we would soon be in quarantine, we had provided the children of the distant adoption with certain things necessary.*

*To keep themselves hygienic we gave soap, shampoo, toothpaste and a small amount for each one for the maintenance.*

*We knew for sure that the parents would no longer have jobs. For example, a dad who worked in Manila in a construction company was stuck there ...*

*The mother with her three children stayed here, in their little house to look after the children.*

*They have nothing to eat and we tried to get them what they needed.*

*We must express gratitude to the Missione Tau Onlus, which helps us to support these poor families. Many people come to ask us for food and we give what we can and what we have. The head of the Barangay has also given us, like every family, a card, which is called the “Home Quarantine Pass”. A kind of pass that can be used when we are in need; however, the card is of little use because there are no public means of transport ...*

*With everything we see on TV, in the mass media, some nights we cannot sleep, or we cannot eat when we think of our poor, the children who are hungry.*

*We also wake up at night and it is difficult to go back to sleep. Some people and our neighbors, according to their possibilities, gave us vegetables, fruits, a piece of meat and someone some money. In addition, from Barangay (headquarter of the village) they gave us 3 kilos of rice and 4 boxes of sardines, then for the second time 10 kilos of rice. Also from the church, from “Caritas”, we received 10 kilos of rice, sardines, instant soup, 2 packets of coffee and milk. We are happy because we can share all this with the poorest and seeing children smile when they receive something, gives us a lot of peace and joy.*

*Thanks to “Divine Providence, the only patrimony of the Institute” (F3, p. 211) that does not abandon us and we are not lacking of anything!*



## **COMMUNITY OF CALBAYOG CITY - PHILIPPINES**

### *Frontline: the prayer against the coronavirus*



Our sisters in the Philippines like formulas to summarize or explain some particular situations or programs.

It is a typical way of programming something as our sisters in the mission of Calbayog did.

Here their meaningful points of reflection from the word: coronavirus.

- C** - Contemplating on the Father's Mercy which we experienced through constant relationship with Crucified Christ and Risen Lord, we
- O** - Open ourselves to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and with complete trust in the Divine Providence, we received the relief goods from Calbayog City mayor and from some generous people of Calbayog, for our physical nourishment and with Franciscan simplicity and perfect joy, we also generously shared our freely received benefits with those who most need. As we also
- R** - Re-vive our spiritual life regularly (taking the opportunity even during lockdown period,) with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at Calbayog Cathedral, with our personal as well communal prayer, half day of daily individual Eucharistic adoration and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which concludes with midday prayer, with the recitation of 3" clock prayer with Divine Mercy chaplet, and daily at 8 P.M. recitation of the Holy rosary of the parish community at a distance.
- O** - On behalf of the wounded humanity we offer to God, the merciful Father, our supplications and the prayers of deliverance against the corona virus. In order
- N** - Not to remain indifferent in confronting the pandemic crisis, which brutally attacked everyone in the world without distinction. In response to the afflicted humanity,
- A** - All of us in fraternity aspire to live a life of intensive prayer, penance and sacrifice, community recreation, rest and cultivation of vegetables in our garden, fostering to all God's creatures the mercy and compassion of the
- V** - Virtues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- I** - Intimate touch with the living Word of God during the daily Liturgy nourishes us and animates us to
- R** - Respond to the needs of our poor brothers and sisters with simple and genuine spirit of minority.
- U** - Undertaking an authentic personal conversion path, each of us in the community with
- S** - Sincere and true fraternal dialogue, with reciprocal love, forgiveness and mutual understanding, we continue to strive to live joyfully the beauty of consecrated life and our being missionary first of all in our fraternity and then in our mission field.



Here we are reminded of a line that is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: *“Preach the Gospel at all times, use words when necessary”*.

Thus, to underline that the main instrument of preaching the Gospel is the witness of Life and in this way we want to continue our mission.



## COMMUNITY OF SCUTARI - ALBANIA

*“Do not be troubled in your heart. Have faith in God...”*

An invisible virus that produced the pandemic generated fear, pain, insecurity, and the impossibility of reacting, every person felt equal to the other, nothing more made the difference, not even power or money. With the succession of increasingly serious and dramatic news, with the increase in contagion in China and Europe, the Albanian government has closed the nation’s communications with the whole world. As everywhere, the sisters, impressed by the events, immersed themselves in the Mission of the intercessory prayer for the healing of all the sick and the cessation of this scourge.

As a community, the sisters decided to join the daily Eucharistic celebration of the Holy Father Pope Francis, via TV.



There was also the opportunity to follow, as a national church, including Kosovo and Montenegro, the daily prayer of the Holy Rosary, animated by one of the bishops, in turn, and broadcast by Radio Maria.

The prayer could only push us to open our eyes to the situations of greatest need of which the sisters are aware, especially of the people who have lost their jobs.

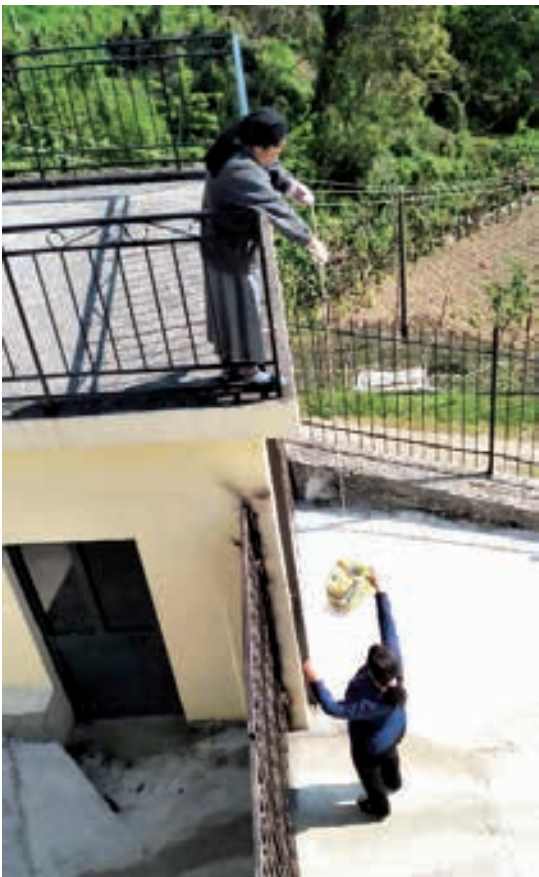
One cannot fail to share what one has! They did it with joy!

## **COMMUNITY of DUSHAJ**

*""Hope, the Smallest but Strongest Virtue"" (Pope Francis)*

The community of Dushaj also immediately felt the need to devote more time to prayer, in addition to the personal one, decided to recite the Ninth Hour and the Holy Rosary together, stop for a long time in Eucharistic adoration and present to Jesus the pain of the world. Great commitment has been to remain attentive and to be well documented on the decrees established by the government and by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The direct apostolate has also been suspended here, but with the new means of communication, we have tried to keep in touch with families, with young people, sending short messages of faith and hope. Following an initiative of the diocese, on Palm Sunday, the sisters exposed a green branch to the window, with an appropriate message. Once the Easter feast arrived, the chapels of the villages where the sisters celebrate Sunday service, could not be forgotten. For the occasion, they created banners, to be placed in front of the churches to announce to everyone that, despite the pandemic, Christ is Risen.



Precisely to make the Lord's Easter concrete, they continued their service, increasing, indeed, their work, because those who suffer most in times of crisis are precisely the poor. Bags were prepared containing basic necessities like, pasta, oil and sugar. Original initiative! The gift packages were also supplied with various packets of vegetable seeds to be planted, to stimulate in the people the desire to start working the land and rekindling hope. The missionary work of the sisters is also positive because in their charity service they involved shopkeepers and anyone who could help, share. Traders helped with the distribution of the sacks of flour. Many poor people instead received the food through a basket that went up and down from the terrace, so they were served and the sisters avoided contact. Even the dispensary remained closed, but in case of need, the community provided what the poor requested. The sisters themselves have been the object of attention by the people of the villages. Many have called on the phone to find out about their condition and for them there has also been charity by some, who have shared the little they have like milk and the cheese.

## COMMUNITY of VIALE SAFFI

The sweetness is at the end...At ... last but not least!

We have reached the community that welcomes everyone in the Province, bringing every effort, good work, progress in offering the disease, powerlessness and incessant prayer. In the infirmary community in Trastevere all the sisters, advanced in age, have known the war with all the tragedies it brings, pain, hunger, misery, death, hatred ... but none even knew the name "pandemic". After the initial dizziness in the face of the bombardment of news, in which we felt immune in our place, protected and always taken care of to the best of our ability, then slowly the awareness grew that the problem also concerned ourselves that for seniority we are at risk.

Fear and bewilderment reinforced the conviction of the importance of respecting the rules that were recommended by the authorities: distancing, hand hygiene and avoiding contact with the outside as much as possible. It was understood

how important it is to receive, from the beginning, human and civic education, to know and obey the laws enacted in this time of grave danger and personal responsibility. A good Christian is always a good citizen as "Letter to Diognetus" already remembered in the first centuries to Christians, *"Christians obey the established laws, but with their way of life they are superior to the laws. They are despised, but in contempt they find their glory"*.

The period quarantine we suffered in particular from the non-availability of our doctor who is giving a constant assistance to the sisters at home. Contacts with them remained by telephone or via the internet. This fact has increased the sister's responsibility in managing sickness and ailments. Fortunately, the Lord assisted them and there were no serious cases, needed to reach the emergency first Aid center, a place deemed dangerous, at the risk of contagion. It was continually recommended not to attend it. To ease the tension a little, there was on 25 March, the 100 birthday of Sr. Silvana Rosin.

A special preparation had been foreseen, according to the wishes of Sr Silvana, the choice of a celebrant she preferred and the participation of her grand and great-grand nieces and nephews with

their families. In reality none of this happened, instead so much fraternal feast, strictly within the confines of the house, with so much emotion for the joyful presence of Sr Silvana eager to sing her thanks to God for her life, vocation and ... for that of her sisters.



*“With the growth of contagions and the dead, prayer and adoration, the daily recitation of the Rosary in common, have become more intense to accept what God allows and wants from us.*

*On the recommendation of the Holy Father, we continue to pray with all our strength and in different ways so that the Lord may have mercy on the suffering humanity and grant serenity and peace for all”.*

The sisters comforted each other by communicating reflections, thoughts, and trying to extend their gaze to reach the most suffering, the poorest, the dying. *“Man is nothing in front of his Creator who can do everything and direct everything according to his Divine plan. Man is fragile, he has nothing certain and nothing can without submitting to the will of God, if he wants, he can return to his image of the beginning, he is the only one among all creatures able to thank and praise God ... “*

Some took the opportunity to devote themselves to the constant reading of Sacred Scripture and other works by valid authors such as Cardinal Martini, Jean Lafrance and Benedict XVI in preparation for Easter. Contacts with known people have not been neglected, especially in the parish, giving comfort, a word of hope, ensuring prayer..

### Conclusion

The “Pandemic event” has imposed radical changes. We welcome them with the words of the Holy Father who invites us to new paths:

*“Have the courage to open new ways and not to go back .... It is the breath of the Spirit that opens horizons, awakens creativity and renews us in fraternity to say, “Here I am!” before the enormous task that awaits us. It is urgent to discern and find the movement of the Spirit to give impetus*

*to dynamics that can testify and channel the new life that the Lord wants to generate in this concrete moment of history. This is the favorable time of the Lord, who asks us not to conform or be satisfied, let alone justify ourselves with substitute logics that prevent us from sustaining the impact and the serious consequences of what we are experiencing.*

*This is the right time to find the courage of a new imagination of the possible, with the realism that only the Gospel can offer us.*

*The Spirit, who does not allow himself to be closed up or exploited, proposes to unite us with his movement capable of “making all things new” (Ap 21:5).*



Pope Francis

“Life after the Pandemic. A plan to rise again”

## MISSIONARIES in LATIN AMERICA in the time of the pandemic

### The sisters of the Province “SAN ANTONIO” PROVINCIAL HOUSE - SANTIAGO DE CHILE.

#### "When praying is the door of hope ..."

*“Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing” (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.” Pope Francis.*

In everyone’s heart there was a desire for “normalcy”, the social pandemic had already passed and we were starting the new year, our hearts were full of optimism.

Three months have passed and no one would have ever imagined the paths we travel; we have heard closely what our smallness means with the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Our eyes have never rested on ‘the only one’ who can make life arise where everything becomes adverse and painful; the times of prayer have intensified, the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was planned in an interior path and Community life was acquiring the tones of concern, with the nuances of distance, prudence and care.

Life in these three months has been involved in a whirlwind of different voices, but not with the power that the voice of God has in the poor, in those who suffer, in those who ardently want to manifest themselves.

The strength of faith, the certainty of his presence and the light of his Holy Spirit, which illuminates the most terrible darkness.

The liturgical times were certainly “special” and treated with the usual attention but individually celebrated, from Lent, Easter to Pentecost and with those equally significant feasts of our Congregation

as it was on April 21, which praised the Lord for the Founders and lately for our special protector Saint Anthony of Padua keeping in mind the whole Province.

Surely the Lord will continue to invite us to take new paths, one thing is certain that the lamp must always be on, from the heart we continue to make our own the pain of many brothers and sisters who silently live their waiting; we are their voice to continue to ask the Lord the miracle of life.



### **“On Line” with the Holy Spirit**

Prayer has always been the force with which each believer must walk and the Rosary has been individually the prayer that concentrates meditation on the mystery of the Life of Jesus; in May, this prayer acquires significant significance.



Everything took on new modulation, it was necessary to reach children, families and teachers, to make them participate in this Marian month, as has always been the case. Sister Zulma Ayma, pastoral coordinator of the “Mother Cecilia Lazzeri” high school, the sisters who work in the educational area with the sisters of the infirmary started the Rosary with the aim of praying for each child and his family. With the lists in hand, the names of the students were

pronounced, accompanied by the recitation of the rosary, pleading for the Virgin to intercede with her protection and to protect them from all evil. However, what was extraordinary about this rosary? If you look closely, the Internet has many proposals for this Marian prayer. God raises with his Holy Spirit what is not expected; this prayer has become so important that the voice of the needs of families began to emerge with the hope placed in this prayer. So that it would be even more personalized, projecting photos of families and children.



The collaboration of the sisters in the infirmary was a joy. The joy of sharing the feelings of the families with their needs, allowed the sisters to feel missionary in a testimony of unity, welcoming their situation through prayer, filled their hearts with the joy that only the Spirit provokes and the certainty that the Lord with his mercy is reaching every heart that joins the prayer.



In fact, from the month of May the sisters of the infirmary go online to pray the rosary at 17:00.

This has given them so much enthusiasm,; every day they receive intentions and join families who ask for prayers.



## IN SANTIAGO - COMMUNITY' SANTA CLARA

*"I will be with you until the end of the world".*  
(Mt 28: 20)

From March 12 until today, our religious community and our pastoral service have undergone great changes because of this pandemic, which is causing much suffering worldwide; the beginnings of this evil were seen so far from us, only on the screens of our TVs, and yet its arrival in our country has shocked everyone's daily life.

Moreover, in our religious fraternity, we had to adapt to the circumstances, looking for creative ways to continue carrying out our educational and pastoral work.

On the educational level, thanks to the precious collaboration of the administrative staff and the teaching staff, we started the virtual lessons with the students, meetings with the Board Council and the professors, with the aim of being in constant communication and offering answers in our work for the sake of our students.





In the pastoral field too, in the same way, we have sought a creative way to maintain communication with the children and parents of our catechism, especially during the time of Holy Week, inviting everyone to live the celebrations as a domestic Church, making and creating gestures that could help us live those days better. We have received a very positive response from everyone.

As a religious community, we had the grace of having the Eucharistic celebration, celebrated every day by the Franciscan fathers, especially the celebrations of Holy Week.



We also intensified the moments of prayer and adoration, asking that the pandemic be controlled and could end as soon as possible.

We invited the entire educational community, members of the lay associates, to participate in the various moments of prayer and to participate in the Eucharist through the media, especially Facebook that has allowed us to be close to people who find themselves alone and distressed and who need stay close to the Lord.

We infinitely thank God who during these months has accompanied and protected us, making us live his words every day: *“I will be with you every day ...”*

**FROM THE COMMUNITY IN PUERTO MONTT**

The reality of the Coronavirus pandemic, social distancing, school without educational activity: all of this was not an obstacle to continue exercise different religious activities and celebrations with our students and their families. For this, the use of technology and digital activity have been essential. An account was created on the social network Facebook “Pastoral Arriaran Barros” <https://www.facebook.com/arriaran.barros2020> Since the beginning of the “social distancing” we have transmitted



the Eucharist from our chapel in the community, with the intentions of each class through this medium, which many people are following.

A great gift of Providence for our community and a unique missionary opportunity!

**THE HOLY WEEK**



The students and the family were motivated and invited to take part in this great celebration together with the whole Church, and although we were physically separated, we felt the spiritual communion that filled us with joy.

The students together with their families prepared the bouquets of the palms for the celebration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, adorned the doors of their houses

with green branches to join spiritually to the Church and participated in the celebration of the Eucharist online with the family and with prepared branches.

On Holy Thursday, teachers, administrative, auxiliary and religious staff participated via online platforms in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper led by Sister Lilia as coordinator of the school’s pastoral care.

We all participated in the Passion of the Lord and in the adoration of the Cross presided by Archbishop Fernando Ramos and we followed in transmission via Facebook.

Equally, we celebrated with much enthusiasm and joy the Holy Saturday Vigil, the Lord’s Resurrection.



**PASTORAL ACTIVITIES**



For the celebrations, we led the families of our students to prepare the altar in their homes and we sent the prayer to be done together.

We have created spaces to accompany children to pray through the online platform.

Also the activities of Missionary Childhood, the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation were done on line.

They were conducted with new technological means trying to involve children and young people as much as possible.

The catechesis of confirmation is a moment of growth in faith; the young people listened to the invitation of the Lord and responded freely to prepare to receive the Holy Spirit.

The meetings are also held through teams that help to work and reflect together.

The apostolate addressed to the parents of our school has also started its monthly meetings to prepare and share the prayers that will be held in the respective courses.

We ask the Good Lord to continue to accompany and strengthen the great Arriaran Barros family.



## SOME SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY OF PUERTO VARAS

### HOLY WEEK 2020

This year has been very special and different to live Easter since government authorities, as in all countries, have taken some precautionary measures against the COVID-19 pandemic and have banned all meetings.

Not being able to participate in the Eucharist and processions, it was possible to motivate people so that on Palm Sunday, they could prepare some laurel branches in a creative way, hanging them on the doors or windows of their homes, to demonstrate their faith and union with Jesus, proclaiming that He is the King of our lives and that he would practically go through our streets ... even if in a virtual way.

As initiative taken from the parish, the branches were blessed from above by a helicopter.

People were all informed, so that they could participate in all celebrations through the media and make our homes small domestic churches, preparing a small altar.

All this because Covid-19 does not take away the right time to be with the family, praying together and also making this a time of grace, prayer and hope in the Lord. Various families accepted the invitation.



On Holy Thursday, in the community, after participating in the Eucharist via the internet, we met in the chapel to reflect and remember the great gift that Jesus left us in the Eucharist, his presence and himself as Bread of Life.

We prayed for the priests, who give us the opportunity to receive him and to feel His Presence, which continues in every Eucharist and in the Sacraments.

The love of Jesus is so great that has broken himself and handed over to us. We asked ourselves, *how many times have we been broken bread and a real presence of God's love for our last brothers and sisters?*

The presence of Jesus challenges us to make welcoming gestures at this moment towards each sister and brother, and this prolongs the Adoration of Jesus the Eucharist.

We expressed this with an affectionate embrace.

We continued our reflection, meditating on how Jesus lived, on his great love that invites us to give ourselves, to go out from ourselves and causes a transformation of love that invites us to follow his teachings.



The sister who led the prayer invited us to remember and rejoice for the different expressions of our free gifts that exist around us and that we carry out every day. She invited us to think about the different missions where we have been and where we have done a loving service as Jesus did, and this was the offering of our consecrated lives.

We had a moment to bless the Lord, for all the times we felt his gaze, with His presence and with His Spirit accompanying us. In the Eucharist the lips and hearts are raised to praise, to bless; the whole Eucharist is a blessing to God for the Life that he gave us in Jesus even to the point of giving us His Son, the most beloved.

With a psalm of blessing, we have presented the reasons, that, from our Christian experience, invite us to praise the greatness of the Lord. To each verse, we replied: *Blessed be you, O Lord.*

Afterwards, we prayed the Vespers singing and thanking the Lord for the wonders, He does through us every day, asking for His grace and His blessing.

**Another special moment during the pandemic was April 21 when we celebrated the 159 anniversary of the foundation of our beloved Congregation of the F.M.S.C.**

*"This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes"*

On the same day, we celebrated the Risen Christ, an announcement that rang out all over the world. This message becomes very significant for all our religious Family born to announce the Gospel as disciples of the Kingdom.

Today we are experiencing a new foundation anniversary. The seed of the Kingdom has been spread over these 159 years, in various countries of the world, where many sisters over time have been and are announcers with the testimony, with the word and with the life of the true WORD that saves. We thank God for choosing our Founders, Laura Leroux and Father Gregory Fioravanti, who, with their examples for people of strong faith, have been able to transmit to us so much love of Jesus Crucified, from where we draw the "Redemptive Love, profound benevolence and Apostolic zeal" for souls.

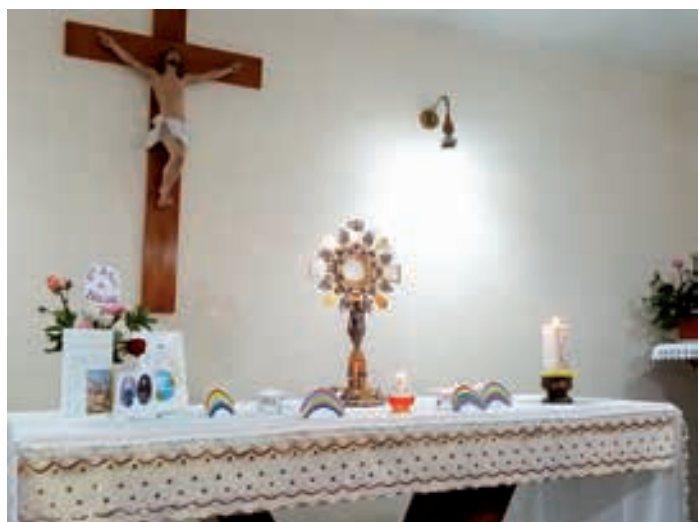
### ***First moment: Admire the past with gratitude***

We thank God the Father who called us to follow Jesus in this religious family of the FMSC.

Pope Francis in the letter to the Consecrated tells us, *"Each of our institutes comes from a rich charismatic history. At its origins, there is the action of God who, in his Spirit, calls some people to follow Christ closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular form of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith, to respond with creativity to the needs of the Church."*

The experience of the beginnings subsequently grew and developed, incorporating other members in new geographical and cultural contexts, giving to new ways of living the charism, to new initiatives and forms of apostolic charity. It is like the seed that becomes a tree that expands its branches. "

Together we thanked the Lord for his call, prayed for our Congregation and for what He gives us every day.



***Second moment: Living the PRESENT with PASSION and ENTHUSIASM***

We offered our prayers for the needs of the society, especially in these days of pandemic, suffering and death.

We also remembered that, at the beginning, our religious Family experienced moments of pain, anguish for lack of food and for many sisters who returned to the Father's house due to illness, but they said, "We prefer to live in the paradise of Santa Maria degli Angeli".

Even today, fidelity, boldness, courage and dedication are the pillars that have brought us in service and in giving to the Lord. The example of our sisters who preceded us gives us the strength and courage to grasp and transmit Franciscan values with certainty and simplicity.

We have communally renewed our 'Yes' to the Lord among the FMSC.



***Third moment: Embrace the future with hope***

Pope Francis tells us, "Precisely in these uncertainties, sufferings and pandemics, which we share with our contemporaries, our hope arises, the fruit of faith in the Lord of history, which continues to repeat, "Do not be afraid, because I am always with you"

Jesus is with us, this is the hope that never disappoints and that will allow us to continue writing a great story in the future, and we must continue to look at him, being aware that, in Him, the Holy Spirit takes us to continue to do great things.

The sister in charge of adoration gave us a drawing with the rainbow, there we had to write the hopes we have in our hearts for the future of the world and our Congregation and present them to the Lord.

At the end, we prayed with Mary " the first disciple and consecrated", we entrusted our journey of personal and community response in fidelity to the God of Love.

*O Mary, we say you are happy because you believed and recognized the traces of the Spirit of God in all the events of your life ...*

*Sr Manuela Villaroel, sr Vittorina Colla,  
sr Gabriela Mamani, Sr Elena Bilibio*



## **COMMUNITY OF SAN FRANCISCO - COCHABAMBA - BOLIVIA**

Covid - 19 has also arrived in Bolivia!!! For this reason, government authorities have had to take measures to prevent the health of the entire population.

Since 13 March, school activities have been suspended and exits have been limited, and after a week, the total quarantine was declared, for the reason the activity at the medical clinic also was suspended. In this situation of confinement, the Community has dedicated more time to prayer, fraternal life, recreation and moments of being together, without the daily hustle and bustle that sometimes suffocates us.

We start the day with our community activities, in this special moment, we follow the transmission of the Eucharist and the prayer of Lauds via the Internet from the Shrine of the Virgin of Urkupiña in the city of Quillacollo, and we make communion with the consecrated hosts that our parish priest made available from our parish. We meet in prayer, joining the intentions of Pope Francis, offering prayer for the pandemic to end soon, for the political authorities who have in their hands the decisions for the sake of the people, for the health personnel, for the military and the police who protect the city. Then for the countries most affected by this pandemic, for the elderly and children and for the eternal rest of the deceased due to COVID 19.

We also assist people who come to our community to ask for food and so we provide them with the food we buy for this purpose. The pandemic has also strongly affected the economy and made many people very poor.

### **HOLY WEEK in FRATERNITY**

In full quarantine, we began the celebrations of Holy Week in an exceptional way, placing the branches of the palms on the door of the community on Palm Sunday. At the beginning the environment seemed empty and cold, very different from what we were used to in the parish every day, always crowded with parishioners and in preparation for the entire liturgy, but soon we found that warmth and love of Christ which fills everything with its light and grace.

On Holy Thursday, we participated, as is already begun this period of quarantine, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper through social networks. We worshiped Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and then retired in silence, accompanying Jesus to the Garden of Olives.

On Good Friday, a helicopter flew into the sky from which the priest Rolando Laime blessed the city with the Blessed Sacrament together with the Patron Santiago, and other priests crossed the streets giving the blessing. People from their homes received the blessing by kneeling. So here, we have experienced wonderful gestures that led us to live a Holy Week in a truly unique way. All this makes us feel that, if we are united in community, the Lord is present.

On Easter Sunday, the chapel was filled with beautiful flowers and the light of the paschal candle reminded us that the light of Christ fills everything, including our human frailty tested in this pandemic and can be overcome by the Resurrection of the Lord.





### DAY OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE MISSIONARY

The IAM (Childhood and Adolescence Missionary) Day of April 26 took on a special character following the invitation of the Synod of the Amazon, where Pope Francis asked to be actively involved in the care of our sister mother Earth. In the context of the pandemic, we had to live and celebrate from home. In collaboration with the initiatives of the Archdiocesan Office for missionary children and adolescents, work was proposed in preparation for the missionary day, at the School of Jesus. Via WhatsApp or Facebook, to the small missionaries were sent the activities they had to carry out and in turn, they shared their photos or videos. The boys and girls of the missionary childhood “Santa Clara de Assisi de Cochabamba - Bolivia, lived this preparation from their homes, with a cheerful and demanding spirit and involving all the families in this preparation.

The activities were divided into four areas:

1. *Missionary Catechesis* with the theme: God the Father asks to take care of creation as children; the goal: To increase awareness of the care of creation as children of God.
2. *Missionary spirituality* with the theme: Through baptism we are children of God and disciples of Jesus; the goal: to help children and adolescents to internalize and make alive the commitment to be children of God, in the care of creation, following the example of Jesus.
3. *Missionary projection* with the theme: sent to serve the poorest children and take care of the common home and the goal: children and adolescents, conscious of being children of God and with a missionary “outgoing” mentality, put themselves at the service of the poorest children and they teach them to value and take care of creation.
4. *Group life or missionary communion* with the theme: God the Creator makes us children and brothers in harmony with his creation and the goal: Children and adolescents, starting from the missionary experience lived and shared in community, strengthen their vocation and their commitment as missionary disciples who deal with creation. For this reason, it was proposed to create; collages, videos or a mural of what they liked most about this preparation for our days.



## **COMMUNITY VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE IN SANTA CRUZ**

### **GREETING OF THE LAY ASSOCIATES to our CONGREGATION on the Feast Day**

*A cordial and fraternal greeting to all the sisters of the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart for their feast. As Bolivia's lay associates we recognize the love and tireless dedication that you carry out for our community, we admire the way you are committed to the mission that is why we take on the commitment to transmit the Franciscan charism and spirituality as lay people. We greatly appreciate your tireless work and total dedication, reflecting the loyalty you have to your vocation and the mission that has been entrusted to you, here in our beloved land. God bless you and the Virgin Mary intercede for each of you and for your needs. A fraternal greeting of Peace and Good.*



### **"VIRTUAL" EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION DURING THE HOLY WEEK**

As in the whole world in harmony with Pope Francis, the universal Church celebrates liturgies and Eucharistic celebrations; we wanted to accompany the faithful behind closed doors, during Holy Week, with Internet transmissions, due to the total quarantine in the country as a coronavirus or COVID-19 prevention.

Each parish broadcast their religious activities in streaming.

On Palm Sunday, all families were asked to place a green branch or palm on the door or window of their home or in a visible place and to follow the live broadcast of the Holy Mass from the Cathedral of Santa Cruz. During the celebration, the archbishop of Santa Cruz, Msgr. Sergio Gualberti, has blessed the palms.

For the parish of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, we transmitted the Eucharist of Palm Sunday, on line from our chapel, which our parish priest Father Juan Carlos celebrated with great pleasure to start the Holy Week.

In the same way, we celebrated Holy Thursday, the Eucharist of the Last Supper and the "Easter Vigil" together with our sisters of Divine Providence, but this time no longer in our chapel, but in our parish church, Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary.

## YOUTH EASTER 2020

Since 2010, the youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra-Bolivia has been celebrating “youth Easter” on May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. There gathered more than 4000 young people until 2019, and we met to celebrate Jesus Risen with all the young people of youth groups, movements, catechists, young people of confirmation, and from the various vicariates and parishes of our Archdiocese. This activity is under the responsibility of the Archdiocesan youth ministry team, it is a large gathering where topics for reflection on youth are developed, with dynamics of song, dance and the celebration of the Eucharist. One of the objectives of youth Easter is to meet, gather and share the Faith among young people, celebrate the joy of the Risen One and become infected with the joy of youth. The “youth Easter” was born from the motivation and leading role that Pope John Paul II had for young people, the trust and enthusiasm that he has transmitted to young people and that to this day our young people continue to announce the risen Jesus with joy and commitment.



## COMMUNITY' IN TAMBOBAMBA PERU'

*In this time of pandemic, God tells us  
"My children, it is not a time to panic but of faith,  
I am the God of life"*

Prayer in this moment of pandemic is the winning weapon of all celebrations; through prayer, we give hope and encouragement to all the people of our city, since as consecrated women we are called to be a voice of hope and tranquility, proclaiming that God is with us. The Augustinian priests broadcast Holy Mass every day on Facebook and on the radio, praying the rosary from the speaker every day in the afternoon. Our religious community prays the Franciscan crown every day through the I.E. (Educational institution) Facebook page. Sant' Antonio di Padova.

The different activities that we are carrying out during this period of quarantine as a religious community are the following:

- \* For the celebration of the anniversary of our Congregation and our I.E. Saint Anthony of Padua, our parents were motivated by the media to participate in this great event through various expressions, such as: together with their children, they made banners greeting our Congregation for their 159<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- \* Palm Sunday, through the social networks the students of the I.E. Saint Anthony of Padua, together with their families, prepared the green branches and palms and hung them on the doors of their homes, as a sign of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.



- \* Easter of Resurrection, on this occasion families were invited to decorate the doors of their homes with flowers as a sign of the Resurrection and the joy of saying that Christ is Risen! Alleluia!
- \* Virtual lessons

At this time, the Peruvian educational process has changed, as in the whole world, since it works from the national platform “I learn at home”, where the ministry of education sends us the sessions every week, with the different areas for each grad, and this is broadcast at different times on radio, TV and the Internet. Teachers must provide feedback from these sessions through videos, tutorials and all the work is virtual. In our educational institution, there are 201 students enrolled and only 180 students work, since not all families have the means to make their children work. It is time, in the educational system, to change the paradigms of training in technologies.



- \* Month of Mary. We started it on Monday 4 May, inviting the entire educational community to unite via Facebook for the prayer of the Franciscan crown. On some occasions, they participated by telephone by answering.
- \* Vocation week. In this month of vocations we set ourselves the goal of celebrating the week of vocation starting from Monday 4 May, ending Saturday 9 May. On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> we asked our Bishop Msgr. Edison Farfán to start with the eucharistic adoration and the entire prelate joined via Facebook.
- \* Solidarity visits to the different neighborhoods of our Tambobamba village. We are aware of the main problems affecting our elderly, abandonment, malnutrition, social and economic exclusion and environmental problems, which make clear the need to prioritize and focus on the



problems emerging today in the face of the pandemic, that is currently affecting, which motivated us to provide help to the most abandoned, that is, the elderly. Faced with these situations, we have decided as a religious community to focus on helping them, the most neglected and abandoned. Some live in an inhuman way, faced with this we cannot be deaf and to ignore this issue. Therefore, we have started to visit them and bring them the food and sheets they need.



## COMMUNITY – ST.ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, CUSCO - PERU

### INTRODUCTION

In this article, we, the sisters of the community want to share some moments that are extraordinary for us and that we experienced in these times of the pandemic in 2020. We want to share some moments that were significant because they were something new, like the new style of evangelization and accompaniment of faith through social networks. Here are few news:

1. Adoration of Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday broadcast alive on Facebook by youth ministry, and by the adults of some groups, neighbours and acquaintances of our parish, Lady of Month Carmel.
2. Way of the cross, in the morning through the speaker of the parish, for all our parishioners in the sector and in the afternoon Way of the cross in community inside our house.
3. Adoration for vocations - broadcast alive via Facebook.

Through the media, it was a new opportunity and a challenge for the community, firstly because we were learning and secondly because it is a new way of evangelizing, using the technology that is offered to us today; to bring many brothers and sisters to the encounter with the Lord.

With joy and availability we organized these moments.

### PALM SUNDAY and HOLY THURSDAY

We find ourselves in social isolation due to the pandemic of the coronavirus, in these times of emergency in which all the Churches are closed without being able to celebrate Palm Sunday as was customary to do every year. We never imagined that this year we would have lived in this way from our homes, every family and community without being able to leave the house.

Faced with this situation and trying to live in the best way on Palm Sunday with the young people, neighbours and the rest of the members of the Parish were invited via WhatsApp to participate in a moment of prayer, since not being able to come to the Parish.

This is how the initiative was born; we began to share and transmit live on Facebook, the adoration that we usually do only in the community, but on this occasion, we could not be indifferent to the needs of our brothers and sisters and to these important liturgical moment of our Church.

For the moment of worship, we have made a scheme:

- With a background music we started the moment of prayer,
- A brief motivation invited us to pray for this moment of pandemic that we are experiencing. At the center of the prayer was the path that we would have traveled during Holy Week that led us to the death and life, Passion and Easter of Our Lord Jesus. A journey together with the many brothers and sisters who suffer the consequences of the Pandemic.
- A gesture was made, as a sign of accompaniment to the Lord; we asked all those who were connected, to join hands with the person next to them and to raise their green branch or another sign that they had prepared as a family for Palm Sunday and moving their hands sing HOSANNA EH, HOSANNA AH together from their homes.



- The Gospel according to Matthew 21:1-11 has been read.
- Afterwards we shared a small reflection of the Holy Father Pope Francis.
- We invited everyone to share a prayer in alternate choirs.
- At the end of the moment of prayer, a family member was invited to make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person next to him. Later they took the green branch or the sign they prepared for Palm Sunday, and hang it on the door or in a visible place while singing HOSANNA EH, HOSANNA AH.
- To conclude this meeting with the Lord, we asked always to have recourse to our Mother Mary, so that she can help us live the Holy Week with faith, in the family. She too was always present when Jesus entered Jerusalem acclaimed by the crowd; but her heart, like that of her Son, was ready to face sacrifice. We learn from her, the faithful Virgin, to follow the Lord even when his way leads to the cross and then we prayed an "Hail mary" together.
- Finally we thanked each participant.

The celebration of Holy Thursday was also made on Facebook live for the young people, neighbours and members of our parish, with the aim of continuing to motivate them to live Holy Week from home and as a family to meet the Lord today more than never. We organized this moment of prayer with the following motivation: *"Christ is present in the Eucharist here, we invite you to join in a moment of prayer to adore the Lord and thank him for his gift and presence in the Bread and Wine, Food for our spiritual life. Today is a very special Holy Thursday because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which we are all experiencing in the world; we ask the Lord to give us the strength and hope we need right now."*

### GOOD FRIDAY

Due to the social isolation and the health emergency that we are experiencing due to Covid-19, the Stations of the Way of the Cross were not organized as usual in the parish.

The parish Way of the cross was lived and prayed in the morning by the speakers for all our neighbours or at least as far as the audio could go and so people could listen and pray from their homes.



In the afternoon, however, we made the Way of the cross in community; we four sisters, and each, according to their creativity, prepared their station with visible signs that helped us to better understand the station and lead us to a bigger personal meeting with the Lord. This was a Good Friday new for us and we lived it simply and in the hope that the pandemic situation will end soon.



### **ADORATION FOR THE VOCATIONAL WEEK**

The community came together for the 57<sup>th</sup> day of prayer for vocations, and for the vocational week organized by the responsible sisters; so the community organized again for another moment of adoration, which was broadcast live on Facebook from our chapel of the FMSC community for all the faithful of the parish. For this moment of adoration, we prepared our chapel, praising and thanking God for the vocations that came out of this beautiful city of Cusco.

They are twelve sisters who today serve Him on different missions in our province of San Antonio, who are a gift of God. We wanted to remember them by inserting their photographs in the chapel and the sisters who today are part of the community of St. Elizabeth of Hungary - Cusco.

May the Lord bless us and accompany us always in this splendid task of being missionaries, to give our best with sacrifice, even if sometimes it is not easy but if we have the Lord in our hearts and we hold hands, we can do all His Will.



**COMMUNITY OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP  
LIMA / PERU**

**BELIEVERS IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC**

*“In a world of uncertainties, the hope of the Provident hand of God is not lacking”*

Taking the words of Pope Francis: *“The Lord challenges us and, in the midst of our storm, invites us to awaken and activate solidarity and hope capable of giving solidity, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be shipwrecked”*. (March 27)

*“Courage, do not be afraid”!* (Mk 6:50).

The current situation in which we have been for a long time as a society, as a Church, as believers, is of profound uncertainty, insecurity, sadness and pain, but this situation does not have the last word, because it has become a unique and new opportunity to enlighten humanity and give assurance that God is close to us.

How can we not see that providential love of God molded in hope and which illuminates the hearts of many brothers and sisters, with whom we continue our prayer and constant communication alive frequently, using the mass media that we have at our disposal, to guide the good of other!!!

This is how during this time of quarantine the spirit remained active and with the desire to bring peace, trust and serenity to all of us who find ourselves living this experience of compulsory isolation to take care of our life, a free and precious gift from the part of God our Father of infinite tenderness.



Throughout our country in Peru we see faces startled and with many questions: what will happen tomorrow?

This is what we heard here, in our small community in Lima. It is inserted in a neighbourhood where for some years we have started to form lay associates, many of them elderly.

53 days have passed in which we are isolated, each one at home. This was not a reason to distance us. On the contrary, modern means through technology have allowed us to accompany us, to feel close, to remain in communication, what gives us strength to go forward with so much hope.

In this way, we stayed together every day:

- \* During the virtual Holy Mass
- \* The prayer of the Holy Rosary
- \* Virtual retreats every day
- \* The liturgy of the hours - Lauds and Vespers

Profound reflections through videoconferences, on the sense of solidarity especially with the victims of Covid-19. We also had an awareness of the sad situation of poverty and misery that our brethren are suffering. It is much more than we can imagine the suffering due to the lack of economic means and livelihoods for their families.



There is no shortage of testimonies, written or by messages or by voice from our lay brothers and sisters, expressing and emphasizing the generous work of the FMSC sisters who risk and offer their lives every day, in the different missions of the world to bring the Good News of Jesus.

The celebration of our 159 year anniversary was also found in full quarantine. Now more than ever on this occasion our Founders made themselves present, in each family with whom we share our mission, and so they prepared an altar with religious images, with significant symbols, to be in union during the prayer triduum in preparation for the feast.

We also took the time to prepare meticulously, all the liturgical material to be used every day, the Lauds and Vespers, in PDF format.

The day of April 21, the feast of our Foundation, was very beautiful! We celebrated the Word by singing and reading biblical texts and messages from our Founders.

We shared all these initiatives with our lay associates from their homes.

The resonances were thanks to God our Provident Father, who always accompanies us, especially in this time of silence and distance.



He manifests himself through the FMSC, who shared their missionary charism; all this is a gift from heaven.

Sr Judith Mercado

Sr Isabel Oyarzún

Mónica Terán (postulant)

## COMMUNITY FATHER GREGORY FIORAVANTI GUAYAQUIL - ECUADOR.

The place, from where we write this experience, is one of the cities most affected by COVID-19 that is Ecuador, in Latin America. We are not indifferent or distant to know that 80% of those infected with the virus, from all over the country is concentrated in this city, nor are the 8000 dead recorded in the first fortnight of April indifferent.

We are much concerned also because among those affected, there are parents from our educational community, close relatives of our teachers, or our lay associates, members of our parish and even relatives of our sisters in the congregation.

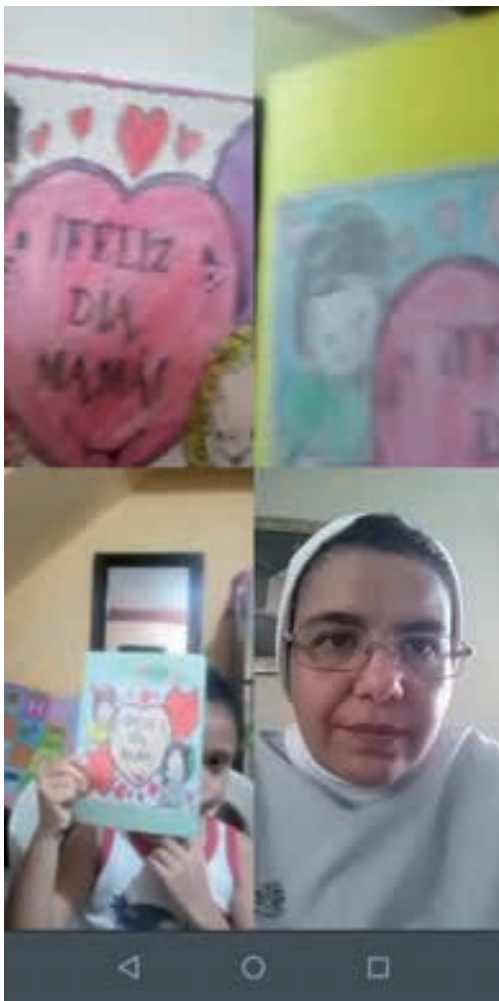
*How to be Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the midst of this reality?*

We raised this question to ourselves as a community, reflected and prayed. It is inevitable to hear and know that fear, vulnerability and impotence knocked on the door of our community.

Therefore, our first effort was to support each other with prayer for the protection of the community members, since the contagion seemed inevitable, seeing the neighbours and friends suffering from this catastrophe.

We know that we are not alone: the calls, the concern of our superiors, sisters, relatives and the company of our local church; they have been a fundamental pillar for living these difficult times with faith and accompanying our brothers and sisters even from a distance.

It was our neighbors who taught us to accompany them, the “prayer” and the speakers that served for the environment and for the place, became means of praying together, each one from home, with candles on the windows, as a sign to unite us in prayer.



Our educational community was supposed to start classes on the first week of April. We wrote this article in the first week of May and we still cannot see our students; local government says educational activities will begin online in June.

We have not been indifferent and passive to all this; so thanks to the support of our teachers, we created support lessons online, to be close to them.

We do not have all the technology for such a project but the enthusiasm and necessity make us use everything we have, to reach them and accompany them, offering personalized advice, in the situations that are required.

We thank our Archbishop, Mons. Luis Gerardo Cabrera OFM, who tried in every way to be close to all the faithful, in these fifty days of confinement, broadcasting the Eucharist live, blessing the whole city during Holy Week, with the Blessed Sacrament, through a helicopter or starting the month of Mary in the same way, with the blessing of Saint Mary “Mother of Guayaquil”.

Signs in which we participated and in which we invited all those who share this mission with us.



How not to mention our lay associates and to thank them for sharing with us, through video calls, moments of prayer and feasts that we live as a Church and Congregation.

Unfortunately, this is not over and in this context, together with the health crisis, there is the economic crisis; which is perhaps the most difficult. Therefore, we have great challenges and many opportunities for formation and evangelization; to continue sharing and opting for a simple life close to those who are in need.



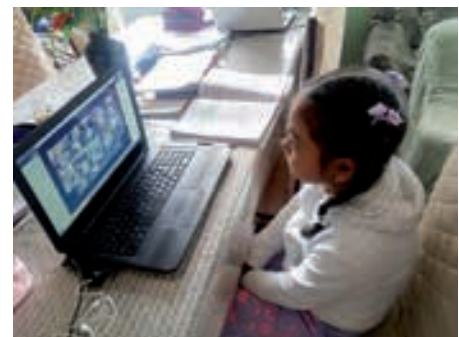
### **COMMUNITY “VIRGEN DEL QUINCHE” QUITO-ECUADOR**

Since March 17, Ecuador has declared a health emergency for covid-19 and from that day, all activities have been paralyzed at the national level and in the school.

We had to continue to keep in touch with students through virtual lessons, or through WhatsApp, email, YouTube where teachers record their lessons.

In mid-April, the teachers started taking lessons through the Zoom application; it was not easy, first of all because some parents do not have the necessary resources, as they all do not have computers and the Internet in their homes.

For this reason, we did alternative things, so that the entire student population could acquire the contents and continue learning. We can say that despite the inconveniences it was possible to maintain contact with all the students.



Another very encouraging and beautiful thing is that we have been able to pray as a family with our parents and students. Through the school’s Facebook, photographs and videos of their prayers were published, all in reference to the pandemic. Families prayed for all the people who suffered from this disease.

Holy Week celebrations of the Last Supper, the Passion and the Resurrection took place with the teachers; it was a participatory and meaningful prayer, always putting at the center Jesus Christ, who gives his life for humanity and that today in this situation of health emergency we feel Him more than ever because He is the author of life. All the staff raised prayers for their families and their students and all those who make up the San Francisco de Asís de la Arcadia educational unit.

With the lay associates “Sacred Heart”, the meetings continued through videoconferences with the zoom platform, thus helping us to understand that we are not isolated as society says, due to the economic, health and social crises we are currently experiencing. All of this, it is not separating us, on the contrary, bonds of goodwill and solidarity have been created knowing that we can count on one another. In these meetings, we have reflected and prayed the Way of the cross,

by putting everything that is happening in to the hands of God. On a global level, in families and in the country, a reflection was made on the homily of Pope Francis when he gave the blessing “Urbi et Orbi” highlighting what had attracted their attention the most.

A significant reflection emerged because each one reflected on what the world is experiencing, and above all, what happens with our fears and our faith in Jesus Christ. This is what echoed the most and what everyone wants to live in their Christian life from now on, because this reality has made us reflect on how far we can be from God and from our brothers and sisters.

Moreover, the invitation of Jesus is to lead a life that leads us to intimacy with Him, to know that He is with us and that our life is based on trusting in Him.

Another meeting was held for the feast of the Congregation on April 21, praying the Vespers as a thanksgiving for the 159 years of presence of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.



Each of the participants showed gratitude for the presence of the sisters in the world and the opportunity they have to be with us on this mission. For them, prayer helps them to feel true human creatures being protected by God. Contact with Franciscan sisters helps them in spiritual growth, in building as individuals and as families guided by the doctrine of the Church and by the example of St. Francis of Assisi, generating a spiritual support in families that gives joy and strength.

The virtual encounters allowed us to support the spiritual life of each of us, strengthening the faith, which is the essential engine for trusting in God who protects us, and his love is infinite. Furthermore, we are called to strengthen charity for brothers and sisters

who suffer in different ways in the world through prayer.

Thus being able to share the brotherhood that St. Francis of Assisi has underlined with his example of life and love for those who are the poorest.

## COMMUNITY LAURA LEROUX TIJUANA – MESSICO

### Separated yes, but not alone!

In this moment of global emergency due to the pandemic, we shared the pain of the world, the uncertainty and the fear of what we could not see, but which is silently generating death everywhere.



From March 18, 2020 everything stopped for us, we had to obey the regulations established by civil and religious authorities to stay home.

The hustle and bustle of going to work, meetings, lessons, pastoral activities were gone, but we were not left without doing anything. After the first reaction, we started adjusting to quarantine and realized that this “being held at home” would not bring us any good.

We had to continue and start organizing school and pastoral activities, children, young people and adults had to feel that although separated, they are not alone, that Christ the Good Shepherd and our Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary are always present and especially in these circumstances. New ideas and strategies emerged; we had to learn new terms, use new technological tools to continue the evangelization and Christian formation of the people we work with. Everything was new and we learned slowly, everything was for God, so we continue to accompany and form ourselves, consoling and praying. There was a pastoral renewal; new ideas were born that involved above all children, young people and adults.

Lent and Holy Week even though through the different digital media it was accompanied daily and the response of the catechists was surprising, artistic expressions and family initiatives came to light that encouraged us to continue working, the families were welcoming and grateful for the accompaniment. “Separated yes, but not alone” was the central theme; together to grow in love for God and neighbour, cultivating the virtues that favour coexistence in times of pandemic. As a community, obedient and confident in the promises of Jesus, we ask for his mercy and we began with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every day; with the prayer of the crown of Divine Mercy and the rosary of the community at midday.



To celebrate Holy Thursday we prepared the Jewish Passover dinner (Pésaj); it was a very profound and significant moment, in which we wanted to live in this family dinner, the experience of Jesus and his family in memory of the deliverance made by the Lord to his people Israel.

Thanks to modern means of communication, we remain connected to the great service that the Archdiocese of Tijuana offered us: follow the Holy Mass live from the Cathedral and Sundays from the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

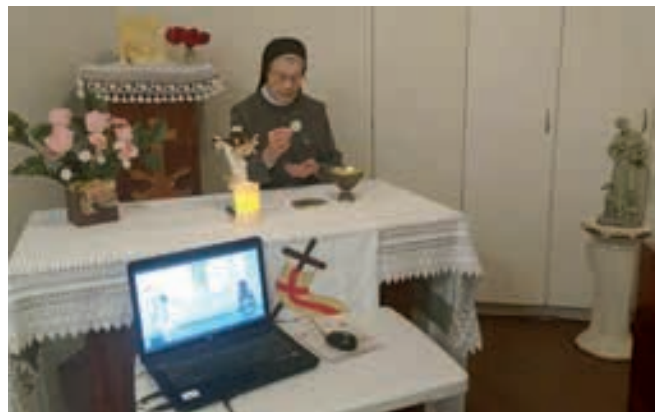
With the trust of daughters, we turn daily to our Morenite mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe, consecrating Mexico and the whole world to her motherly Heart and asking for an end to the pandemic.

The subsidies of the Archdiocese, the Congregation and our parish “Maria Stella del Mare” have provided us with excellent material for praying, for reflecting and sharing with our groups of parents of the catechism, Lay associates and working groups without neglecting our biological families that we also accompany with our communication, prayer and affection.

We experienced strong moments of prayer following the exhortations, writings and words of the Holy Father, Pope Francis and in particular the Way of the cross from St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome and the blessing thus felt and moving, Urbi et Orbi, given on the occasion of the difficult times we are experiencing because of the pandemic. We had the grace to follow the voice of our archbishop, Bishop Francisco Moreno Barrón, who accompanied us day after day with his words and aids. The beautiful initiative of blessing with the Blessed Sacrament was significant, from a small plane to the entire archdiocese.

The sense of belonging to our religious family was strongly felt in the pain of the illness of our two sisters, Sister Barbara and Sister Luciana, who were infected by Covid19. We suffered with them and we prayed for them, until we felt the joy of their improvement; in the same way, we accompany, suffer and pray for the relatives of our sisters or relatives of our students infected or deceased by this scourge. We put all these daily, with pain and trust, into the heart of Christ and his Blessed Mother.

We also lived with great fervor the preparation of triduum for the 159<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonical opening of Our Congregation and the birth of our beloved father Gregory, a moment that we shared with our lay associates sharing the preparation aid they sent us from the Province.



Today we remain silent in front of the words we often say: “There is no time” “If I had time, I would pray more, I would call this person, I don’t talk to, etc.”

Today there is time and it is up to us to know how to exploit this moment of grace to build, mature, create bridges, make a good examination of conscience, prepare a good confession and communion, we must be out of this pandemic not only healed but also Risen.

## VICE PROVINCE "HOLY MARTYRS OF UGANDA"

### Introduction

*"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity".*

It is a statement at the beginning of the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. The pointlessness of human activity is the major theme of the book. The author, however, like Job, insists that God's laws and promises must be kept, whether keeping them results in happiness or sorrow.

The coronavirus is not only a physical reality, but also a theological one. The world has seemingly come unhinged in the last few months. First, there were just rumors of some viral disease in China. Then, almost overnight, it was everywhere. Officials have urged us to practice

"social distancing," a delight for introverts but something that causes real difficulties for most people... According to World Health Organization the pandemic of Covid 19 started in November 2019 in China. But on our part here in Africa we started hearing about it only in February 2020 when it started spreading worldwide.

When we started receiving messages on social media with some health indications like wash our hands often, cover our mouths and nostrils with a tissue when we cough or sneeze, we didn't really take serious till when some cases of an infected persons in the continent were declared.

This news fell like a bomb as the population panicked even though some still didn't take it serious. But it never took us long for it to have spread like wild fire that in a single day more than 100 cases could be declared.

This led to the rapid close down of schools, travelling agencies and all places of gathering like churches and other meetings to live social distancing. And in some countries strict contentment was to be respected. This situation created a lot of fear and loss of hope for life as many saw their love ones die without their affection.



We were all forced to stay home to avoid contact even with our closest neighbor.

We all tried to follow the strict measures taken by religious and civil authorities and our Superiors to stay safe and limit the spread of the Virus.

Prayer in the community and family became our sole source of strength. Many had the opportunity once again to think of their creator and rethink over their lives.

In our Vice Province “Holy Martyrs of Uganda”, it was not different.

We lived with the world, our Congregation and our neighborhood. It has not been easy but we drew our strength from the communion we kept with our sisters of the Congregation through our superiors and our sisters in the community as we encouraged each other. All our activities outside were canceled and we only relied on prayer.

Below are the experiences of our 9 communities in the Vice Province.

*The world will never be the same.*

**COMMUNITY of SAINT MARY OF ANGEL'S  
NKOABANG**

Our community is so complex due to the fact that we have the provincial house, the community, and the novitiate and beside other activities like the school and the dispensary.

Due to the measures taken by the authorities to stop the Covid 19 pandemic we were obliged to live in contentment in our various communities.

We had to create multiple activities to help us live this situation in hope and solidarity without giving room to discouragement.



We organized Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament every day to pray against the pandemic, work in the garden, the Kitchen and studies online for the young sisters.

We were also lucky to have Holy Mass 3 times in the week in the community since we could not go to the parish.



While indoors we received in our dispensary the DAFRA PHARMA, an association that work with the ministry of health, that came to give us some materials to help fight the pandemic. They also thought us how to wash our hands properly. This only came to reinforce the sensitization the Sisters and the nurses had started in the dispensary as everyone who entered the dispensary was to undergo the temperature test and must wash the hands at the gate before being received.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2020, the government decided that the children in examination classes should return to school. We welcomed our children and their teachers with all the necessary measures to avoid contamination in case of any contaminated case.

We thank the Almighty God who has kept and protected us till date. We continue praying for Gods intervention to stop this pandemic.



## **COMMUNITY “ST. FRANCIS” IN NKILZOK**

**“A special third semester in the College” S. Maria Goretti”  
a Nkilzok (COMAGO)**

Following the Covid ‘19 pandemic, the President of the Republic had ordered the closure of all educational structures in the country to the dismay of the entire population. However, the measure of containment, isolation was necessary.

It is with joy that on May 31 we welcome the pupils of the terminal class, while those of the first and third class will join us on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.



According to government measures, to welcome them we have to disinfect all the premises of the college: the dormitories, the classrooms, the refectory, the offices, and the toilet.

Upon arrival, students will be subjected to temperature control, to wear a mask, to wash their hands.



On June 1, before the courses started, we gave them some awareness on how to behave and work in college and in the classroom. Consequently, they will have to concentrate, study, to succeed in the exams.

We thank the Lord who allowed us to meet again while we implore his protection, his Spirit of wisdom to end this school year beautifully.

## COMMUNITY OF MARY THE QUEEN IN ELAT MINKOM

When the news of Covid 19 became viral we were over flooded through social media with the havoc it was causing round the world and we immediately took it as our daily prayer intention for the countries and persons touched.

We were seeing it from afar and consoling ourselves that we were far in the village till the day we got the final decision of the government to close all schools

and places of social gathering that it dawn on us that it was right at our door.

We added more time to pray the Rosary and do Eucharistic adoration for Gods intervention to save the world from such a situation. It stopped us from going out as before to meet the people, but we felt closer to them through our prayers.

We followed the measures put in place by the government to avoid and stop the illness.

We were greatly encouraged by the gifts we received from some government officials in our district like the mayor who offered some dust bins, disinfectants, buckets and mask to our dispensary to help us welcome our patients properly.

The Mayor also offered himself to come for a visit and to disinfect the father's community, our community, the parish church and our dispensary, every week.



## **COMMUNITY “ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA ”IN KRIBI**

### **THE TIME OF COVID '19**

The whole world has been severely attacked since Covid '19 and our country, Cameroon, has not been exempt from it.

This pandemic has not left our community indifferent in the sense that we have been forced to change our rhythm of life, our habits and we have had to suspend school activities from March 11 by the order of the President of the Republic as well as pastoral activities that were under our responsibility.

The reality of the pandemic has cost us many sacrifices. To participate to the end of this pandemic, like every Cameroonian citizen, we are committed to respecting the measures required by the government.



Beyond the aforementioned measures, the first measure adopted by our community was that of isolation, limiting the outings not strictly necessary, wearing a mask and carrying a hand sanitizer with us in the purse.

We emphasize that we have also limited to welcoming visitors to the community.

The resumption of school activities on 1 June caused panic and fear in us, in the teachers and some parents. However, to deal with this last quarter without Covid, we purchased spare masks for pupils and teachers, bottles of hand sanitizer and more.

Thanks to Providence, we received gifts from the Bishop, the mayor and the authorities of Kribi: buckets for water, hygiene material and a thermal flash.

To enforce distances, the classes were divided into two with 16 staff members per class and each pupil wore his own protective mask.

With the application of all these spacing measures put in place, and counting on the collaboration of each Cameroonian citizen and with the help of the Lord, we hope to end Covid 19 in our country.



## COMMUNITY “HOLY TRINITY” IN BAMENDA

### “EVERYTHING is GRACE”

The Covid ‘19 pandemic is and remains as a great question mark for our era. Listening to believers and non-believers alike, it is a matter of questioning one’s daily way of life. After the disclosure of this disease by the competent authorities at all levels, we the sisters of the “Holy Trinity” community of Bamenda, as recommended by Pope Francis and our Superior General Sr. Paola, the local bishop and the civil authorities, have closed all school and parish activities that have to do with physical contact.

Through personal and community prayers, we have raised, and continue to do so also with adoration, prayers of supplication and intercession so that this pandemic stops, and the Lord supports and fills all those who intervene at all levels to help in this disease, may He heal those affected and welcome those who preceded us because of the pandemic.

Since the Eucharistic celebrations are impeded, we have organized ourselves to live the liturgy of the Word; we remained united to the whole Church by living in a recollected way all the moments of prayer, presided by the Holy Father through the media.

This virtual presence continues to connect us with youth groups.

To prevent the psychosis from invading us, we took the opportunity to get in touch with mother earth: renewing our green space and our vegetable garden.

On this day, our gratitude is great towards the Creator of everything because we have resumed the Eucharistic celebrations, always respecting the measures against the pandemic.

The hardest and most painful thing was to live the Easter period without Christians and even more without the Eucharistic celebration. It is for this reason that we express our gratitude to God.

With the return of school, this Tuesday 2 June, in Bamenda, we have been careful to take all precautions to avoid any contamination in our school and we have spoken of this disease to both pupils and teachers.

We continue to put everything in the hands of the Lord so that his will may be realized and not our will.



## **How the Community “St Joseph “ in Garigombo lived the covid-19 quarentine**

Coronavirus is a pandemic that started in December 2019 and that has touched and turned the whole world upside down on different levels: moral, psychological, economic.

This global health crisis has killed thousands of victims, especially in China, Italy, France, the United States etc.

In Africa, Cameroon is among the most affected countries. During this crisis, everything was suspended and closed, for example borders, factories, schools and even churches.

This situation has caused panic and fear all over the world, but also faith, trust and abandonment in God. Faced with this emergency, the community of Garigombo has not remained indifferent.

We dedicated ourselves more to prayer, adoration and we had Holy Masses celebrated for the sick, the deceased of this disease and for the nursing staff who dedicate themselves night and day to care the patients.

Furthermore, we took advantage of this period of isolation to make a great field for self-financing for our community.

In addition, we continue to implore God’s mercy for this pandemic to end.



## COMMUNITY “SACRED HEART” IN SEMBÉ

Coronavirus is a reality that has shocked and continues to shake the world and even our locality although we have not recorded any cases in our village of Sembé.

The increase in contamination cases and deaths has been a subject of our concern.

This concern prompted us to take the following steps.

*At community level, we have organized:*

A community worship in turn. The coronavirus prayer recited every day. Holy Masses offered for this intention; closing the parish is an opportunity for us to have daily Mass in our community. The community provided food to the sick, the doctors, the teaching staff and the natives.

*At school level:* the sudden closure of the school to respect the decree of the Congolese State. The reopening of the school for the class of CM2 required us to take some distancing measures such as cleaning and sanitizing the classrooms and toilets to accommodate the pupils. Masks for teachers and students are provided to protect themselves from the virus. Buckets of water with disinfectant for washing hands. The separation of the CM2 class in compliance with the spacing measures.

*At the level of the Shalom Medical Center:*

When the pandemic was announced, an automatic closure measure was taken, namely:

- The day watchman to check and limit the number of visitors and the keeping of water buckets and disinfectant at the door for hand washing.
- We received prevention materials from WHO and the district.
- Thanks to the aid of the CEI, we were able to obtain masks, gloves and disinfectants for the medical body, for the sick and for nurses.
- With great prudence and God’s help, we strive to continue our mission.



## **THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC- REACHED KHINSHASA/R.D.C EXPERIENCE of THE COMMUNITY OF THE POSTULANTS.**

Yes, the occurrence of the Coronavirus pandemic is an appeal for everyone: young and old. As far as we are concerned, in our formation house for postulants, we can say that this pandemic has almost fallen on our heads, because the news received by the media did not exactly present the real situation until the first cases were announced in the country (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

With the population of some of our cities, the government had no other choice to declare but that of tight isolation for all.

We had to run everywhere to find food to keep in the community to survive during this period.

The bishops, following the rules of the government, had to suspend the Eucharistic celebrations.

It was like a hurricane and we had no other choice, but to choose life for us and our neighbors. This made us understand that God is everywhere.

This reveals to us that God is the creator of everything and everyone; He has shown us his omnipotence by stopping the whole world with the aforementioned pandemic.

Preserved by this disease, the Lord asks us to convert and return to Him to rebuild a renewed world, a world united by brotherly love, justice and peace; a world that fears God and conforms to Him.

During this lock down the postulantate of Kinshasa also accepted this appeal and began to implore divine mercy with novenas, adorations and many prayers.

The formation of the young women continued in order not to traumatize them as if it were the end of the world. We thank the Lord for his love and mercy.



## COMMUNITY “ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY” IN LAM

Today, affected by the whip of the Coronavirus health crisis that many countries are facing, we too are asked to live this reality and to share the suffering of the humanity.

In our community, we have become aware of this reality. We try to follow the recommendations of the Church and the Government by respecting the containment measures and intensifying our prayers for humanity that suffers.



We have made a commitment to sensitize the people in different ways: the people during the celebrations of the Word in the villages, the members of the Pastoral Council and the various living ecclesial communities (CEV).

Thanks to the help of Mrs. Giuseppina Agresti and her group, we have obtained masks to help our brothers and sisters and our students who do not have anything to protect themselves.

Our community experiences this period as a time of recollection, intense prayer and purification so that the Lord may set his gaze of mercy on humanity and free us from the pandemic that is killing many people all over the world.

Despite ourselves, many people think that this disease is imaginary and so they continue to live as always, without any precaution.

We cannot help but trust in the Lord”



**PROVINCE HOLY FAMILY - INDIA**

*Locked in... but not down ... isolated... but not alone*

Yes, the entire country and the world at large is in the grip of Covid-19 and locked down, and we too are locked in, but not down...

These days of isolation help us to raise our hearts and minds to the Almighty Lord to get assured that we are not alone.

“Not only Lock down, but bend down on knees in Prayers....Not only wash hands, but join hands in Prayers”.

This seems the only remedy for the whole world to get rid of the corona virus.

To say the reality, all of us are deeply distressed and anxious about the future consequences.

As we continue to live these difficult times with the extensions of the lock downs and the surging numbers of the infections, we are surprised, but call on to explore all avenues to fill the lives of the people around us with hope and peace.

When we look around the world, where are those frantic rushes of life? No time for anyone or anything, no vacancy in any flight or train, competing race of the vehicles on the streets, no time for the family or family prayer, celebrations and celebrations.

We thought no one could restore the world from this ‘marathon race’, but no time needed for God to control this restlessness.

Today everything stands still, no competitions, no fight, no extra needs, no accusations; time to spend with the family members and know each other better. All these are needed to still our hasty life and turn to the author of creation.

No use of losing our hopes but make our quarantines, a ‘mission’ continuously pleading for God’s mercy on the whole world.

We indeed got a great opportunity to spend time in prayer without being distracted by the thoughts of the busy schedules of the mission and apostolate remain in line to be accomplished.

Since we are forced to suspend all activities in the apostolates, we try to recuperate the life of prayer that we have at times make compromises.

As this extraordinary time requires extraordinary moments of prayer that help us to grow in deeper intimacy with the Lord personally as well as community level, placing the humanity before the Lord that is losing its hope in front of the pandemic.

The lock down has forced us to stay at home in our communities and we got ample time at our disposal to spend more time for each other and tried to live a life of poverty with the minimum.



The lock down brought together all the sisters who are studying in different places and we organized our time in such a way to preserve our immunity, physical and spiritual, sought different ways to spend this time of immobility.

It is extreme summer and physically a very tiring time. We have six to seven hours of sleep, five to ten hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament according to the possibilities of the different communities imploring God's mercy on the whole world, seeking the intercession of the Blessed Mother by praying the rosary and reading the Word of God.

All the communities, sisters intensely prayed for our two sisters, Sr. Luciana and sr. Barbara, who were affected by the pandemic and for all the benefactors who supported our mission in different ways and now facing difficult times.

The sisters took great care in following the instructions and the various programs of the Holy father Pope Francis; participated the Adoration and the Urbi et Orbi blessing, Rosary and fasting and prayer advised by him. We recited the Psalm 91 daily, made the profession of our faith by praying the Creed nine times in a day, the prayers directed by the diocese and the Province for the eradication of coronavirus.

The Prime Minister of India Invited all the citizens to light the candle (Diya Jalao)for nationwide on 5<sup>th</sup> April at 9 pm for nine minutes in the night after switching off the lights. It is to respect the nurses and doctors for their selfless service and to assure them that they are not alone.

We all followed the instructions and lighted the candle pleading Christ the Light, the Divine healer to brighten the world. On the day of Pentecost, we had a united prayer for the seven fold healing of the nation.

The lock down gave us an excellent opportunity to make a pilgrimage to our sources, guided by our provincial superior, giving us the responsibility to make a study on the sources.

She motivated us by giving points for reflection, from the writings of St. Francis, St. Clare, of our founders, Laura Leroux and Fr. Gregory; also from other saints like St. Faustina.

All the communities took the initiative to profit this opportunity.

Every day some five to ten points they put in the community discussion and evaluation and then they make a common as well as personal resolution.

We have also made an effort to find out the positive qualities of every sister, openly appreciated each one, thanked, and praised the Lord for the distribution of His gifts, the talents and abilities of each sister. Above all we are called to turn to the Risen Lord and to welcome Him in to our life and let His word, His way, His truth, His life, His values and His attitudes transform our lives.

Besides the Program of the Province, every community has their own lock down activities.



## **ST. CLARE COMMUNITY VIJAYAWADA**

*'None of us is as smart as all of us.'*

These words of Ken Blanchard echoes during the daily journey of the fraternity of St. Clare convent. As soon as the lock down was announced, in St. Clare Convent, all the sisters joined with the sisters of the Provincialate had a 48 hours of continuous Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament imploring the Lord to show mercy on the whole world. Since all the student sisters studying in different places reached the provincial house, we have enough number of sisters who took turns to be present in the chapel, while others followed their online classes and other activities.



There was Holy Mass every day in the church, but respecting the instruction of the superior general, the Church and the government, we participated the Holy Mass in the T.V channels. We gave a spiritual appearance to the community hall where the T.V is placed and the provincial instructed all to come dressed in white as we usually go to the church for the celebration. Thank God, Holy Communion was brought to the hall and every day we were blessed with this Divine food. The Holy week was intensely lived by following as programmed in the T.V, Divyavani, a catholic channel in Telugu language premiered from Hyderabad. The Holy Mass on the Easter vigil was presided over by the Arch Bishop of Hyderabad. It was painful to follow on the screens these important moments of our liturgical life, but we accepted this poverty and tried to live this more intensely.

The community kept engaged in the works given by the provincial superior. As the junior sisters who engage in different studies remained home due to lock down, Sr. Molly George, the Provincial treasurer, gave them classes on different subjects. Our Provincial Sr. Mini Joseph also spend her time in teaching us computer.



We prepared a special medicinal drink with the spices; ginger, lemon, pepper, turmeric, garlic and sugar, boiled together and kept on drinking daily as precautions to avoid the contagion of the virus.

The weather is very hot so we spent the evenings for the cleaning of our courtyard and surroundings, storerooms etc. At Sunset we had rosary processions carrying Mother Mary in and around our house with incense, candle and sprinkling holy water so that the corona virus has no entrance in our compound. We cleaned the coconut trees and made use of all the coconut leaves for making brooms.

Many people around are suffering without sufficient means for the living. Therefore, we distributed provisions, (food materials) for a week to 50 families in our surroundings specially the widows of our parish.

We are happy and thank the Lord that we could share with others the little we have.

On these days of lock down, we had the sad news of the death of one of our parish member due to heart attack. He was very active animator in the parish choir and all other activities of the church. We tried to be closer to the family and few of us attended the funeral Mass celebrated with limited people.



**HOLY FAMILY COMMUNITY  
MACHILIPATNAM**

The Lockdown due to coronavirus pandemic, in one way, gave an opportunity to intensify our prayer and community activities. We had many hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament interceding to show His mercy on the whole world.

We participated the Holy Eucharist and the Holy week program in the TV channels.

Besides, the candidates had sufficient time to read the Bible and the life stories of the saints.

We joined with the Nation to light the candle for nine minutes in the darkness “to resolve in our minds that we are not alone, that no one is alone”.



We tried to keep in touch with the people in the parish-distributed provisions for some of them, who are struggling to live in this difficult situation.

## HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY MACHILIPATNAM

*"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else".*

We the sisters of Holy Cross convent had not much lock down activities as our works are always the same by taking care of the disabled people.

We had seven hours of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament daily. Our daily Eucharist and the Holy week's program we followed on the T. V channels, except the Way of the cross.

We the sisters organized our Way of the Cross-in the compound along with the people of the home for the aged.

We had the Bible study other than the common work given by the Province.



In the month of May, we had Rosary processions from the house to the Grotto carrying Blessed Mother. We also visited Government hospitals; we picked up some bed-ridden patients and brought them to our institute and looking after them.

We also made our little sacrifices, got the provisions, and distributed to the needy around us.

It is a special time, but we all experience the Divine protection and surrender our nothingness before the Almighty.



## LITTLE FLOWER COMMUNITY PAMARRU

*"We cannot help everyone but everyone can help someone".*

In the Little Flower community, we are all remaining indoors suspending our main activities of school and hostel.

We closed the school interrupting the final examination, with all uncertainty. The silence of the school and hostel compound and the surroundings outside give us a terrific experience. We also thought of the risk of the children going to the villages in unhygienic situations. However we placed all our preoccupations before the Lord spending our time in prayer and adoration. In our own, little way all co-operated to do whatever was possible for the suffering world.

We thank God for His providence because everything we receive comes from Him.

We offer special prayers for those who affected by coronavirus and spend more time for personal prayer and scripture reading.

We participated the Holy Mass from the media, and then received the Holy Communion.



We had daily adoration for the whole day for the intentions to end this terrible pandemic.

We prayed Rosary of Mercy for the whole world. We had a daily rosary procession carrying Mother Mary in our compound. During lenten days we had the Way of the cross in the campus.



We have meditated and shared the Word of God, as directed from the Province. Our heart beat with love for Jesus and for the suffering humanity.

On Good Friday, we distributed provisions to 60 poor families in our villages.

We were doing gardening and collecting fruits to distribute to the nearby communities and to our supporting staff whenever possible.



We also spend time to stitch tabernacle veils, altar laces, and masks and dresses for sisters. Even though we have the anxieties, when we look back we have done so many useful things for us and for others, we praise the Lord for the experiences He is leading us through.



### **ST. MARY OF ANGELS COMMUNITY PALASA**

*An un forgettable experience in the hospital..... in the fear of covid19*

We the community members underwent a traumatic experience, as we were all very much anxious about the spread of coronavirus around our place.

The members of our community took an intense time of prayer, before the Blessed Sacrament, rosary, rosary of Mercy, stations of cross, etc.

We had the daily Eucharistic celebration with the fathers community for some days, but when Sr. Rosalina got sick, we stopped going and had it on the TV channels.

We sent our boarding children home since the schools were closed.



Our superior Sr. Josephine had gone for holidays and held up there due to the lock down. One day, we were all very anxious about Sr. Rosalina, since she developed fever, cold and cough. In such an unavoidable circumstance she was taken to the hospital where they gave her treatment and unfortunately she said that she was recently returned from Kerala. In this State, we had coronavirus patients and she had her travel by train. However, they had a suspicion on her but gave her medicine and sent home. A few hours later, they informed us to get ready that they were coming by ambulance to take her to the district headquarters for covid test. Many doctors and nurses also had come to our house and the news spread among the villagers that one sister died due to coronavirus and others are affected. People living around our house left their village and never again passed through the road in front of our house until the sisters came back and explained the reality that it was not the pandemic. The ambulance reached in the convent by 9 pm to bring Sr. Rosalina to the government hospital at Srikakulam, meant for coronavirus patients. Though Sr. Valsa accompanied her, when reaching the hospital they took Sr. Rosalina inside, leaving Sr. Valsa alone out in the darkness. There was no sign of life around; all were locked in. Even the hospital staff also was afraid to talk to her about anything since she accompanied a doubting case. Sr. Valsa spent the whole night outside the hospital and out of fear she called her parish priest and he send someone towards morning from the bishop's house and gave accommodation there, even though they too were afraid .

Three days sr Rosalina was kept under quarantine and did all the tests needed and found that it was typhoid, and nothing wrong as suspected . It was a terrible experience; if she were tested positive to coronavirus, many of us would have been in quarantine. Sr. Rosalina shared that the isolation in the hospital was a terrible experience. They got her discharged soon since there were positive cases in the hospital.

We thank God for His immense goodness.



## SHALOM MATHA BHAVAN COMMUNITY MANJERI

*"Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck".*

These words are very apt for the sisters and indigent women of Shalom Matha Bhavan.

Lock down or block down we are always inside with our residents. This never heard ferocious coronavirus is sowing fear all over the world, kept everyone under discipline and cut short our needs. We are nearby the highly affected area in the north Kerala and always under red alert zone. Following the instructions of the government, church and our authorities, we remained before the Lord interceding for His mercy upon the whole world. We spend many hours of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary procession etc. Every day of the Lent, we had Way of the cross in our compound including the women who are willing. We followed the daily Holy Mass and the Holy week celebrations in the TV channels.

Since our resident women are very special people, as most of them are mentally disordered; those who can, they always took part in the spiritual practices... For sure, God cannot ignore their ardent prayers! Even under the lockdown, Divine Providence was knocking at our doors.

Before the lock down people used to bring cooked food for all us whenever they had any function in their house to share the joy of the day with these unfortunate people.



In the absence of celebrations during lockdown, we got sufficient provisions of food materials from the government and from many other generous people. From the part of the parish church, the providence reached us almost in a mysterious way. There was a big jack tree in the church compound and no one climb on it since many years. This year the tree got so many jackfruits and one day, one of the branches broke down in the heavy breeze and with the weight of the branches. The parish priest asked the sisters to collect the jackfruits; we prepared these fruits in different forms along with our indigent women. At our surprise after a week, another branch was broken.

All were very happy to enjoy the fruits for quite a long time. It provided not only food but also work for the indigent women.

We have no words to thank the Lord for the ways in which He cares for us.

**ST. ANTHONY COMMUNITY  
CHENNAI**

Chennai is another hot spot of coronavirus pandemic and the sisters were very strictly instructed to remain indoor. When hearing the sad realities of the contagion all around the world, we presented them before the Eucharistic Lord.

We found more time of adoration to the Blessed Sacrament pleading the Lord to take control of the situation.

We participated in the daily Eucharist and the Holy week celebrations depending on the TV channels.

We recited many rosaries seeking the protection of the Blessed Mother.

We kept in constant touch with the people over phone and kept on sharing their fears.



We knew some people were suffering without means of living. Some generous people in the parish brought provisions and left at our gate.

We collected them and informed the people whom we know are struggling. We also distributed to them at the gate.

We from our savings also gave the share to help the people.

The health workers of the zone were daily visiting our houses to enquire about our health condition.

They also brought some herbal medicine to protect us from the contagion. We are asked to drink it daily and we followed as instructed. However, Chennai continued as red zone.

Since June first week usually begins the academic year, we started to give online classes.

We praise and thank the Lord for these new experiences, which made us more sensible to the sufferings of the world around and grateful to His Providential care.



**ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY  
KALIPATNAM**

*"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much".*

All what we are hearing and saying was only about coronavirus which shook the whole world. We the community members joined to find out the possibilities to fight against the pandemic. Schools and hostels are closed and children went home but for the sisters working in the hospital have their routine work with much restrictions and also we instruct the people about the precautions they have to take to face the situation of the pandemic.



We spend more hours daily in Eucharistic adoration, night vigil, Praying Rosaries and Rosary of Mercy for the whole universe and for the victims of Covid19 pandemic and for the protection of the people working in the frontline to save the lives.

Following the instructions of Pope Francis, of the diocese, parish priest and our Provincial superior we had spent a lot of time in prayer, and fasting.

We regularly followed the study on the bible and the sources as given the responsibility from the provincial superior.

We were asked to limit the number of patients coming to the hospital since we do not have the facilities to accommodate the covid 19 patients. We cannot limit in such a way but by the grace of God, we did not get any one tested positive.

We contacted our parishioners and villagers over phone, enquired about their well-being, and tried to calm their fears. We provided kits with the most necessary elements for the people around those have no work and were struggling to maintain the family.



**SACRED HEART COMMUNITY  
MADHIRA**

*"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples".*

The whole world is undergoing the turmoil of coronavirus pandemic. Daily life has come to a virtual halt; the global economy is facing its worst down turn. The only one shelter and solace for our tension, fear and anxiety is Jesus Christ our Saviour who is the healer of all the sick and the remedy for all the maladies. Always in harmony with the original Charism, the sisters of the Sacred Heart community, Madhira have taken some initiative during this particular period of time.





When the pandemic attacked the other countries, we had the last periods of our academic year and we made the children aware of the difficult moments and the suffering and death of the people. We made them aware of the situation of the countries like Italy, which very much helped our missions.

They were invited to pray for all, especially for our benefactors and it was very moving to see them praying. Then all of a sudden, our country started to face the tragedy and the consequent lock down, we sent the children home, interrupting the final examinations.

It was very unfortunate to send them without assuring any security in their villages. However, we hear that so far all our children are keeping well. The State governments announced the cancellation of the examinations of the year and asked the schools to give promotion of all the students to the next section of studies.

The sudden lock down also affected so much economically, since many students left without the payment of the school fees. Most of our students belong to middle class category; their parents also remain without work during this time.

The teachers and the other staff of the school depend on the salary given from the school, so we cannot avoid their payment. From the part of the government, our schools do not get any financial help.

The community totally turned to the Lord for His unconditional support and solution of all the problems. We spent many hours of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Holy Mass a we participated from the TV channel then received the Holy Communion. For the celebration of the holy week, also we depended on the media. We placed the world, our country into His hands. He alone knows the answers for our many why questions.

With the permission of the police department, we bought provisions, the necessities of life and distributed to 28 families of one of the remotest villages in our parish. They have no work, no money no shops opened, really in very difficult situation.

We tried the maximum possible to help them from our side and they were very grateful to this small act of concern.

We spend the time profitably; finishing the pending works, stitching dress, learned computer, cleaned up the compound.



## COMMUNITY of ST. JOSEPH STUDENTATE CARMEL NAGAR.

*"Opportunities do not happen, you create them".*

The community took an intense time of prayer, work and study during this time of lock down. Many hours of Eucharistic adoration, rosary in common and personal, participation in the Holy Mass on the TV channels etc. kept us closer to the Lord and offer the suffering humanity at His feet.

We followed the programs of Pope Francis, as it relayed on our TV channels.

In the month of April, we gave special attention to the significant days of our Congregation, the death anniversary of our Foundress, the birth anniversary of Fr. Gregory, and the Canonical opening day of the Congregation were celebrated with due importance to inculcate in the novices the spirit of our religious Family.

We organized the program like, Quiz, Tableau, mime, jigsaw puzzle, etc. to give them opportunities to enrich with the spirit of our dear Founders.

We also followed the various responsibilities given by the provincial superior to reflect and make study on the points she sent us daily from the documents of the Congregation, Bible and Franciscan sources. During this period, we have animated our liturgical prayers in creative and meaningful way than as usual.

Every Friday we had fasting and special prayers.

We also had rosary procession around our campus, with the statue of our blessed Mother.



We stitched masks and distributed, standing at our gate to the people who passed on the street and Sr. Mercy sanitized their hands and explained them to the care to be taken.

People are not that serious about all these happenings around, but we felt it is our responsibility to make them aware of it.

We also shared the vegetables and fruits grown in our garden with the people around our house. We helped a poor family financially, saving from our small sacrifices during the lent season.



Things were very costly during the lock down, the novices and sisters gave an example for the people to grow vegetables needed in their own garden.

The novices organized many programs to live the month of May to express our devotion to the blessed Mother.

There was a Marian night program; like Marian quiz, Rosary, Marian art, Marian march, Marian dress, Marian hymns competition, Marian advertisement etc.

They organized everything with much creativity and enthusiasm.

In short, this lock down gave us an opportunity to grow more in our being with the Lord and surrender the sufferings of the humanity into His hands pleading for His mercy.



## **INFANT JESUS CPMMUNITY MUMBAI**

As the entire globe is witnessing the devouring effect of Covid-19 pandemic; our State of Maharashtra, being the epicenter in our country, is too engulfed with the adversity it has brought on the social economic condition of the people living in this State especially Mumbai, the business heart of the country.

The apartment or the society where we live is under complete lock down since there are many cases on our street. No one can leave the premises unless an emergency occurs.

There were people to help those living in the apartment to bring the necessary provisions : vegetables medicines etc. at our request so as to evade the people getting out.



We also follow all the instructions of the Province as well as of the diocese and spend more time in prayer and household work.

Since we live in an apartment in the city, we really felt the effect of lock-down, not even fresh air outside.

We are often engaged in the on line meetings and video conferences regarding school and church matters.

The coronavirus affected cases are increasing very rapidly that we all are still on our knees imploring the mercy of God.



## **HOLY TRINITY COMMUNITY TEKKALIPATNAM**

During lock down, we had intensified our prayer by increasing the hours of adoration, number of rosaries and rosary of mercy to intercede for the whole world.



Since there are no workers, no children in the school or hostel, we cleaned up the garden and the surroundings. Daily hearing the shocking news from the media made us aware of the situation of the world and reminded of our moral duty to pray for one another and at the same time to safe guard ourselves.

## **LAVERNA COMMUNITY TELLAKOM**

We the sisters of the Laverna Convent give thanks to the Almighty God for His loving protection of all the residents women from the virus since it is the house for the aged women, they are more vulnerable for the pandemic.

However, we prohibited all outside contacts, visits of the relatives and friends of the ladies much earlier to avoid any difficult situation. Though we had celebration of the Holy Mass in the capuchin seminary close by we did not go for the safety of our inmates’.

We participated the Holy Mass on media and received the Holy Communion, which the capuchin fathers reached us time to time.

We spent a lot of time with the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament along with them who are able to do it. Besides the common programme of study and reflection instructed by the Province, the sisters found time to read spiritual books, keep up date with the current affairs by reading the newspaper, watching the T.V etc.



We also worked in the garden and cultivated different vegetables, sufficient for us. We took special care for uncle and aunt, our benefactors, who live in the house close by and whom we take care of. We continued the usual routine service with the elderly women who are bed-ridden and remained close to them by giving encouraging words amidst all these fearful news around.

We also gave our share of generosity with the parish in helping the people who struggle without means of living.

It was planned to have the perpetual Profession of our five junior sisters on 21 of April. We organized everything to have the celebration in Jharkhand, Gumla in our mission, since 4 of our young sisters belong to that region.



Three of the junior sisters who went to Vijayawada in the provincial house to get their dress-stitched and for other preparations, they could not return to Kerala as trains were cancelled.

The Profession also is postponed for another date due to the lock down.

It was sad to hear the death of the father of Sr. Nilmani from Gumla, who desired so much to see her Profession.

In spite of all these inconveniences, we have all the reason to thank the Lord for keeping us alive in this time of pandemic.

## **ASSISI COMMUNITY CHANGLANG**

Assisi Convent in Changlang had very special experiences of lock down. We are the luckiest ones as we had Holy Mass celebrated every day in the chapel by our parish fathers. As the schools closed and the hostel children went home, we had sufficient time to organize ourselves. We spent many hours in the Eucharistic adoration taking turns, then the way of the cross, Rosary and Rosary of mercy every day. We faithfully spent at least 45 minutes together for study and discussion on our sources as directed by the provincial.

During the lock down, we visited with permission of the district collector, to one of the remote villages where people were starving.

They are migrant laborers from other states working in the tea gardens; once when the works are stopped they went to the point of starvation. The families are with many children living in very miserable condition. We together with the parish priest distributed the provisions, rice and other necessary things to them.



We hear in some villages, people suffer so much, surviving only with whatever grown in the garden. Sr. Alphonsa is working with the diocesan medical team to visit the villages and help them in the health care. Since the lock down blocked her from giving the necessary medical and hygienic precautions, she constantly contacted the coordinators in each village and instructed them of the pandemic and the needed precautions.

The sisters spent sufficient time to clean up the garden and cultivate vegetables. In fact, they could grow sufficient vegetables for their needs.

For the other necessary things they had to depend on the people from the parish, they managed to get it walking so many kilometers since the shops in the place were closed. The sisters found time to paint the building by themselves and keep the place neat and tidy.

The terrible experience of fear we lived is when the government chose our hostel, same building of our community, to keep the people in quarantine, since we have all the facilities needed. We know and we were ready to extend our help in an emergency, but when we realized the foul play in the government policy, it pained us very much.

They are not supposed to ask the rooms since we live there. We obliged the government decisions trusting in the Lord, left our building for the people in quarantine. However, we felt the parish leader's support in everything and above all the loving hands of our Jesus who simply protected even in these difficult times.

## **ST. ELIZABETH COMMUNITY NANDYAL**

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for peace and not for disaster, plans to give you hope and a future” Ger: 29:11).*

This pandemic is a heart breaking experience and unexpected incidents beyond imagination, through which the Almighty God wants to draw the entire humankind to Himself. Therefore, above all it is a God given opportunity, a golden chance to meditate upon how fortunate we are.

In spite of all the problems, He has called us to spend our time from workholism to contemplation through daily much time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Each sister got the chance to experience the closeness of the Lord and His accompaniment during the holy hour she spent in turn. Every Saturday evening we organized Rosary procession with the statue of Mother Mary, crucifix, picture of Divine Mercy and St. Michael with the sprinkling of holy water all around the campus to seek protection from the evils and the pandemic.



The whole community participated in the daily at 3 pm, the recitation of the Divine Mercy chaplet followed with the recitation of Psalm 91, 9 times creed and a special prayer for the eradication of coronavirus send by the Province, followed with the recitation of the rosary and Pope’s prayer to Mother Mary. We also conducted penitential services in the community asking pardon to the Merciful Lord and to one another. Our parish fathers celebrated Holy Mass in the parish church and invited us to participate, but we did not take the risk, as we have to walk through the main street, and also as an obedience to the advices of the superiors; Nandyal, the town nearby is declared as red zone. We followed the holy Eucharist and all the Holy week celebrations in the T.V. channels. We also followed the program of the Holy Father as they were relayed in the channels.

In the outskirts of Pasurupad village, 20 agricultural labour families lived miserable life without work and food. We shared with them whatever was possible within our limits. We took care of maintaining the diet to increase the immunity without the usual Lenten observances. We have taken precautions through some tips using the herbal drinks to increase the immunity to resist the virus. We also learnt some ‘MUDRAS and YOGAS ‘to increase the immunity power of the body and sound mind system. Some of us made use of the time for learning music.



We also spent more time with the destitute women of Krupanilayam by praying with them and entertaining them with our presence; teaching catechism and prayers to some orphan children who are with us. We tried to keep contact over phone, with the different villages and made them aware of the situation and the need to obey the government and health authorities. In their fear, they try to contact us since most of them are uneducated and they do not know what to do.

## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMMUNITY BHITBUNA

We, the community in the remote village, Jharkhand, re-scheduled our timetable as we enter into the lock down. Our school was closed, consequently the 100 boarding children who stay with us are also sent home.

They were sad to go away and we too since we do not know when they will be coming back. Though this area is not much affected, the villages are unsafe if one gets affected.

We organized our time for prayer, study and work; more hours we spent before the Blessed Sacrament pleading for divine Mercy to prevent this pandemic. We followed the work given by the provincial, coming together studying and discussing the points she sent on daily basis. Since we have the parish close by, we celebrated the Holy week and Easter with due solemnity limiting within ourselves.

We tried to get the transmission of the Pope's program, but many times it was impossible and spiritually we kept united. We prayed so much for sisters, sr. Luciana and sr. Barbara affected the pandemic. We are very sad to hear the news everywhere especially of Italy since our mission is so much helped by those generous benefactors; we pleaded the Lord to take care of the situation.

Together with the children, we cultivated many vegetables in the garden, but now to gather the fruits the children are not here.

We have worked hard collecting the vegetable and fruits and cultivating again. We tried to preserve the fruits in different forms for the children when they can return. The remaining harvest, we distributed to the villagers nearby. Many poor villages deep in the forest live much difficult life. We tried to reach out and help them with some necessary things within our possibilities.

We also made a contact with people over phone, advised them to follow the health workers instructions and take the precautions.



## **NITHYA SAHAYIKA MATHA COMMUNITY SIMDEGA**

During the lockdown, the community of Nithya Sahayika Matha Bhavan spent time in prayer, fieldwork and looking after the domestic animals.

We spent many hours in adoration, rosary and rosary of mercy, pleading for the mercy of Jesus upon the people of the whole world.

We were also available and committed for all the programme of the Province, Parish and diocese. Some days we had the celebration of the Holy Mass in the community.

Other times we tried to follow the transmissions, but often much disturbed due to the poor networking. However spiritually we kept united with the suffering of the whole world.



Luckily, our candidates went for holidays before the lock down.

Other than our prayer time all the sisters of the community fully kept engaged in cultivating our land, looking after the cattle, cooking etc.

We could grow many vegetables for our use.



## ASSISI COMMUNITY GUMLA

*"I cannot change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination".*



We sisters of Assisi Bhavan Gumla is living the period of lock down organizing ourselves, the time in praying and working. All our routine activities like school, hostel and village visits were stopped. only the people who were very much in need of medical care, have been approaching us. The dreadful news of the pandemic forced us to limit our movements within our compound.

We turned to the only consoler with prayer, praise and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

Thanks be to God, we had our daily Mass in the parish close by and the Holy week we celebrated with the Franciscan fathers in the parish.

We realized our helplessness and turned to the Lord ardently crying out for His mercy towards the world like St. Teresa of child Jesus, whose mission was to intercede for the world by remaining within the walls. Since the days ahead seems very difficult, we tried to cultivate all what we needed for our daily food. We also spend our time to clean up the court yard and surroundings, kept neat and tidy with stones.

Now the situation here is very critical as many who were working in other places have come back to the home State. We thank the Almighty for His protecting hands.



## **PORZIUNCOLA COMMUNITY BANGALORE**

In our Porziuncola community we two sisters Sr. Aniamma and Sr. Gigi Jacob, though aware of the outside world, went on with our school works.

We are still fully immersed in on line schooling, conducting exams, valuating the answer papers, preparing grammar lessons for the academic year, instructing the parents, collecting the fees etc.

The only difference is children are not physically present. All the teachers of our school though remaining at home dedicated whole time for the school work.

Being aware of the situation around we took our own time to pray for the suffering humanity.



We hope and pray that very soon we see the promise of God be fulfilled as said in the book of prophet Jeremiah.

*“There will be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness. The voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thanks offerings to the house of the Lord....*

*Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good for His steadfast love endures forever”(Jer.33:11).*



*Come, ye blessed of my Father,  
inherit the kingdom  
prepared for you!*

*Mt.25:34*



**Sister Helen Marie Cahill  
of the Mother of God**

*Born in New York  
on 5 December 1927  
Died in Peekskill  
on 14 January 2020*

Sr. Helen Marie of the Mother of God, FMSC (Phyllis Margaret Cahill) entered into eternal life on January 14, 2020.

She was born December 5, 1927 at West Point to Martin and Margaret Cahill and was predeceased by her brothers Joseph and Martin and her sister Catherine.

Phyllis attended school in Highland Falls, NY and, after

working for two years in Washington, DC, entered the Franciscan Missionary Sisters on September 8, 1947.

After profession she began her apostolate of teaching in: St. Anthony's, Butler, St. Matthew's in Hastings, Sacred Heart in Highlands Falls, Holy Name of Mary in Croton, Immaculate Conception in Irvington, St. Joseph's High School in New York City, Ladycliff Academy, Ladycliff College in Highland Falls, and Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. After 35 years of teaching she began her second career, being employed by the Archdiocese of New York in services to the Cardinal Cooke Guild and the CYO Office, followed by her secretarial work in the Chancery Office of the Brooklyn Diocese and the Nursing Department of St. Francis College.

Sister Helen Marie earned a BA in English from Ladycliff, her MA in English from St. Bonaventure University, and a Ph.D. in English from Walden University.

Sister had many talents. For many years she played the ukulele and

wrote 13 hymns, some of which have been published in music versions of missalettes.

She was an avid reader and enjoyed crossword puzzles and football. She had quiet strength and enjoyed spending time with the Sisters, especially Sr. Kevin and Sr. Raphael.

As Sister neared the time to go home to God, some of us were praying and singing the hymn which she composed. As we were singing "Come, Lord Jesus, Come" she took her last breath as He came to take her home, and she is at peace.





**Sister Raymonde Favre  
of the Holy Trinity**

*Born in Lausanne (Switzerland)  
on 7 August 1926  
Died in Le Mans  
on 5 May 2020*

Born in Lausanne (Switzerland) on 07.08.1929 from Edmond Favre and Laurence Allaz. Baptized after 4 days, in the Parish of S. Bartolomeo, diocese of Lausanne with the names of: Raymonde, Elisabeth and Yolande, She is the third child in the family. Raymonde grew up in a very believing family. All three sisters learned the virtues of sweetness, simplicity, amiability and charity. At the age of 8, with great emotion she received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Later, she felt a deep desire to consecrate herself to the Lord and decided to enter the Poor Clares in Paris to lead a contemplative life.

Very soon, however, she realizes that she is not suited to an austere life; therefore, she leaves the monastery of the Poor Clares and sets out in search of an apostolic congregation.

Time passes and, helped by a priest, she embarks on a new life. One day, in the Parisian suburbs, she meets Sr. Liliana Sargavakian, Provincial Superior of the FMSC Sisters and confides in her what she feels internally.

The Lord who is always at work

and does not cease to shape her heart, manifests himself and, finding himself in front of this “providential” sister, she expresses her desire to become a Franciscan Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

After a period of reflection and discernment, the Spirit of the Lord guides her to follow Saint Francis whose spirit the Congregation lives.

She quits her job, her parents and sisters and then she leaves for the provincial house “St Louis IX” in Le Mans. It was April 24, 1967.

After a year of formation, she is getting ready to wear the FMSC sister’s habit, and then continues her formation and she reaches the second stage: the First Profession, on April 30, 1969.

After her religious profession, she went on a mission to Cameroon in the school of Nkizok, as a teacher of home economics.

She returns to the provincial house where she continues her professional and spiritual formation, engaging in various community services.

On July 28, 1974, she made her Perpetual Profession and definitively committed herself to belong to our religious family.

Immediately afterwards she received the obedience to return to her country, Fontenais, as a teacher of the nursery school where she consecrated part of her life to the little ones with love, patience, sweetness and always with a smile.

In every change, she showed her willingness to be at the service of the communities: Paris-Le Mans-Tavannes and, in 2007, she was definitively re-integrated into the provincial house.

We cannot forget our dear Sr Raymonde who, at each feast, presented us her drawings naturally, “like a real professional”. She also was engaged in pastoral activities, in catechesis and in

particular, in preparing children for First Communion.

Her smile, her courage, her openness to the world, her dynamism in bringing the responsibilities entrusted to her to the end, made her a happy person. She was tried by a long physical and moral illness, always closed in her room; she greeted us every day with her slightly mischievous smile. Sr. Raymonde has always been surrounded by the fraternal affection of her sisters in the religious family and her sisters in the family.

She celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> religious profession in 2019.

Our Sister Raymonde left us for a better life in God on May 5<sup>th</sup>; she was 91 years old.

Since it was prohibited to move due to the lock down caused by the pandemic, the communities received the information of the funeral celebration to give the last farewell together with Sr. Raymonde. Our parish priest, Fr. Marie Hervé Cotten, was with us during this period of suffering from the separation due to the lock down. The celebration took place in our community chapel, respecting the safety distances. Her niece, Emmanuelle Pastore, a consecrated laywoman residing in Paris, obtained permission from the police to move; thus represented the family that is confined to Switzerland. She now lives in God savoring the joy of eternity next to the Lord who loved her and made her love.





**Sister M. Ann Patrick Boddie  
of Our Lady of the Assumption**

*Born in Peekskill  
on 12 October 1936  
Died in Peekskill  
on 28 May 2020*

Sr. M. Ann Patrick (Elizabeth Boddie) was born in Peekskill, the 9<sup>th</sup> child of Patrick and Anna Boddie and a sister to their 13 other children: Mary, John, William, Patricia, Patrick, Cornelius, James, Robert, Ellen, Katherine, Harry, Vincent, and Eileen.

After graduating from Assumption School and Ladycliff Academy, she entered the Peekskill Franciscan Sisters. She received her BA from Jersey City State College in 1976. After her profession, Sister's assignments were: 10th Street Nursery in Philadelphia, Joseph P. Kennedy Home in the Bronx, St. Joseph's Home baby girls, and then taught the primary grades in Holy Angels, Little Falls, NJ, St Joseph's in West New York, NJ, Assumption, Peekskill, St. Anthony Bronx Head Start, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Boonton, NJ, and St John Nepomucene, Guttenberg, NJ.

She also was involved in outreach ministry at St. John's, Fairview, NJ. She was also the director of Villa St. Francis in Peekskill as

well as the local superior of the Motherhouse in Peekskill.

During the last few years, Sister fought a courageous battle with cancer.

She kept on going and doing whatever she could to help out, especially taking switchboard duty and working on many craft projects for our shops and gifts to others.

Even in her uncomfortable days she always had a smile and a word of encouragement for others.

She enjoyed a good laugh and an occasional party and was always concerned about the Sisters and their needs.

She was happy to spend her last days here at Mt. St. Francis. God truly blessed her, allowing her to spend her last days free from pain and surrounded by her Community.

As the pandemic did not allow the Funeral celebration, sister Ann Patrick was buried in the Sisters' cemetery on June 1<sup>st</sup> and a memorial Mass and celebration of her life will be held at a later date when it will be allowed by the government.



**Sister Silvana Rosin  
of the Holy Face**

*Born in Ospedaletto d'Istrana TV  
on 25 March.1920  
Died in Rome  
on 29 May 2020*

Sr Silvana Rosin, Maria, was born in Ospedaletto d'Istrana TV on 25.03.1920 as daughter of Luigi and Graziosa Cavallin. She grows in faith and in Christian life, thanks also to the good example of the whole family. On October 4, 1939, at the age of nineteen, she entered the pre-novitiate in Gemona and the following year she was already a novice on May 20, 1940. She made her First Profession on June 26, 1941 in Gemona and was immediately sent as a student, in her first mission, in Idra - Go (Slovenia) where she remains for a year. The following year 1942, she was in the community of Cercivento-Salzano as a nursery school teacher and remained there for three years. In 1945 she left the Venetian province "Santa Maria degli Angeli" to land in a small town in the Marche: Ripe, belonging to the Roman province "Maria Immacolata", remained there for ten years, engaged in nursery school and parish ministry. It is here that Sr. Silvana reinforces her desire to donate to the Lord and the missionary ardor that characterizes every FMSC sister is taking hold more and more.

On August 29, 1946, she returned to Gemona del Friuli to make the Perpetual profession and to be forever a Franciscan Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

Her greatest devotion was the Heart of Jesus where she said she had moved for some time. Therefore, we hear her praying in one of her writings: "... *He came for me and only for me, so I have to look for him in everything and above all, overcoming my selfishness and everything that keeps me away. The real treasure to be recovered is always Him and only Him. Jesus, I appeal to Your love and abandon myself with true confidence to your infinite mercy, otherwise I am only able to go away from You and please do not abandon me at the mercy of myself, ensure that the will to seek you does not fail. Please help me to be faithful to you always*".

In 1955 she was moved to the community of Brugnetto (AN) and in addition to being a nursery school teacher, she was asked for the service of Local Superior, for two terms. Sr. Silvana welcomes with great availability and great charity towards her sisters.

Her goal: "To be persevering and rejoice even in the moment of struggle." as we learn from one of her writings: "*The trials are necessary as a testimony of our faith and coherence for the choice made. The Lord will not make us lack the help needed to pass the test, but he will also give us the grace to enjoy various tests that we will encounter on our way. ... Religious life is made up of different happy and sad events. We look at Jesus, who dies for love and to save us will certainly give us the strength of Holy Perseverance.*"

The years of intense apostolate, of zealous dedication to young women, an example that attracted them to the consecrated life, in fact

several young people imitated her in following Jesus. In 1961, she left the Marche to land in Colonnata (FI) in the nursery school A. Richard where our sisters support the families of the workers of the famous majolica factory.

Her stay here was limited to three years, and in 1965 we found her superior in the Generalate house "S: Elisabetta" in Piazza Pitagora. (Rome) In 1968, she moved to Monte Porzio (PU) where she resumed her teaching service at the "Agnese Latoni" Municipal Kindergarten. Here she remains thirteen years, entirely dedicating herself to the education of children and young people.

The period spent in this community strongly characterizes the experience of Sr. Silvana who leaves a beautiful memory in the public, in the children and young people whom the Lord has given her to serve. Among these, we would like to mention Don Paolo Montesi who was a "schoolboy" of Sr. Silvana, now a priest of the diocese of Senigallia. In 1981 obedience called Sr. Silvana to Borgo Faiti (LT), and this is how she once again left the Marche to go to a village in the province of Latina always engaged in the nursery school as a teacher and serving the community in the service of superior. In 1985, he left the Pontine land to reach in the community of Ostia Lido (RM); her stay here lasted only one year because in 1986 she was transferred to the community of Centocelle (Rome) with the job as sacristan.

In 1989, she was again a member of the Community of Brugnetto (AN) for the service of Teacher in the Parish Kindergarten and Local Superior. In 1995 she left the Marche definitively to arrive in Lido dei Pini (Lavinio) in the Community "Mater Amabilis"

with the job as warden; here finds a different reality: the Institute for children in difficulty,

Sister Silvana for all is a positive and supportive presence, always tenacious and decisive.

In 2000, she retired to the Viale Saffi community to rest and prepare for the meeting with the groom. Sr. Silvana, an always-joyful sister, with a ready-made joke, was for all a great example, a positive presence in community for all the sisters.

In these twenty years or so, spent in the infirmary, she continued to cultivate her skills as an embroiderer and continued to work until the end, even on the same day of her death.

She was very happy and grateful to the Lord for having reached the threshold of 100 years.

She would have liked to celebrate the occasion even with the presence of her relatives; everything was ready ... but the pandemic prevented us from fulfilling this desire.

She serene and submissive has been able to accept this last trial with faith and offer it to the Lord. With great docility, she prepared herself for the last stretch of road, totally abandoning herself in the arms of her Beloved.

On May 29, during the evening prayer, Sr. Silvana fell asleep in God, while with her sisters, connected by radio, she sang the Psalms, and in fact in her hands, she had the breviary.

We praise and thank the Lord for the wonders he has accomplished in this sister and we entrust our prayer to her that she may intercede for the benefit of us all, and implore Holy Vocations that the Lord wishes to grant us.





**Sister Eliodora Battiston  
of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

*Born in Portogruaro (VE)  
on 20 May 1932  
Died in Gemona  
on 30 May 2020*

Born in Portogruaro (VE) in the month dedicated to Maria, May 20, 1932, her parents Giuseppe and Egidia Noemi Milan, in Baptism called her Maria. Moreover, Mary always accompanied her in life until the moment of death, still in the Marian month May 30, 2020. During her youth, she matured in her religious vocation and, at the age of 18, entered the FMSC in Gemona; it was September 30, 1950. After the period of formation, she made her profession on September 20, 1951 and since then she was called Sr. Eliodora of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On September 20, 1957, then, she gave her life forever to the Lord with her Perpetual Profession. A year earlier (1956), the brother to whom she was particularly attached, Don Angelo, had celebrated his priestly ordination. They have always helped and supported each other in a life spent for the Lord and for people. A strong missionary spirit indicated her existence, in fact,

after her master's study in Rome; she was sent to Chile to Puerto Chico and Rancagua where she exercised the teaching service. With an open heart, she entrusted herself to Mary, "*Strengthen my 'yes' so that the world will believe and the Kingdom will extend to the ends of the world! Hail Mary, I trust in you!*" (from her writings) In 1968, she gave herself for one year in Spain to the newly founded community, but the following year, 1969, following the General Chapter, she was elected General Councilor and Secretary until the end of the six-year term. Tasks that were also assigned to her in subsequent general chapters, in 1981 she was elected General Councilor and in 1987 Vicar General. In 1999, she was in Peekskill (USA), but the following year in the Chapter of the Province St. Mary of the Angels, she was elected Vicar Provincial and Secretary, therefore returned to Italy. A service no less demanding was that of the formation mistress (postulancy and novitiate) at the motherhouse Gemona, in Udine Convitto (1975) and in Viole di Assisi (2005). The Franciscan spirit was a special feature manifested in her life: we remember that in the 80s when she was in Rome she was particularly involved in the newly started MOREFRA through her contribution. At that time Sr. Eliodora was part of the National Council of the movement, born for the Franciscan religious families. It still has as its objective "*to bring together the Charisms of the individual Institutes, in a single ideal. To welcome and live the Gospel*

*in the footsteps of Father St. Francis, in visible communion and collaboration both in formation and in mission and fraternal help*". In 2009 for three years she was Representative of the Provincial Superior in the School "S. Maria degli Angeli"(Gemona). By now, the age was advancing and in 2012, at the age of 80, she was called back to the motherhouse where she could still carry out some services at the level of historical research of the sources of our religious Family. Certainly there was no lacking of difficult moments as in this last period in which she suffered for the death of some of her dear family members in a short time, but she knew that the Lord is waiting for us all up there where He keeps a place reserved for each one. And what more beautiful prayer could be raised even today, on the eve of Pentecost, at the moment of Sr. Eliodora's earthly passage to heaven if not using her own words? "*Come Holy Spirit! With humble faith, in your power of love, please come! Hail Mary, bride of the Holy Spirit, turn your eyes to us and support us on our journey towards the goal, a journey that has been taught to us by our dear ones and our superiors!*" (From her writings)



**ACCOMPANIED BY THE CHURCH,**  
**FMSC in MISSION**  
**in the TIME of PANDEMIC**

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