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Live & Communion



Celebrate Family

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Lesotho-Our response to COVID 19

Angela MOLAPO, Lesotho

The Kingdom of Lesotho is by far the only country in Africa with no recorded cases of the monster virus, Covid-19. However, the country has been on lockdown since the 20th March to the 5th May, when the lockdown was lifted. With all the lockdown regulations, life has been difficult for most people in the villages. The regulations include that there be no vendors and non-essential services have been inactive. This has led to people running out of the basics for survival. The Holy Family intervened in any possible means where they could afford to. The most obvious response all members engaged in was through prayer. The Family through different communities has helped the needy with the basics for survival.

Our community in St. Monica's through the help of the local community councillor were able to spot the needy and gave out food parcels to help combat hunger in the neighbourhood. This act of kindness connected the sister's community with the vulnerable in their area and they had a special prayer service to pray for the cure of the virus and the wellbeing of those affected.

The Loretto community also through their involvement in the clinic and the local chief were able to identify the most needy and suffering in the neighbouring villages. The community managed to give food parcels to those identified They have also been constantly praying for the cure and those affected.

'Malithuso community too has been having Adoration each Thursday to pray for the end of the virus worldwide. The community indentified a family that they intend to offer food parcels to. The community has also bought food items with the intention to give them to the Red Cross Foundation which is in the fore-front to help the needy during these times. The school, Malithuso High School, through the help of the non-academic staff was able to give out food parcels to the most vulnerable and retired non-academic staff members who now struggle to make ends meet

Our community at St. David has a clear plan on how to be close to the poor during these lockdown periods. They are actively participating in prayer daily to pray for the end of this killer pandemic. They have outlined that they will pray the rosary every day with the intention to seek Our Lady's intervention. This community too has been able to identify the poor through their involvement in the parish and work in school and were able to give out food parcels to them.

The **Maqhaka community** has been able to identify a needy family in the area, they managed to deliver some food parcels for them. The community also has Sr. Angelina Lekhotla, a nursing sister who now through the Health Centre is deployed at the quarantine centres and is helping with the temperature testing for the people in quarantine. The community has also been praying for the

end of the pandemic and normality of living.

The community in Maseru has also identified a poor family, they have given out food parcels too. This community continues to pray daily for the end of the pandemic.

Roma Community, this community together with **Amand Noailles Community** had a prayer service to pray for the victims of the virus. This prayer service was centred on the well-being of the different religious in Africa who are affected terribly by the pandemic. The community also gave out food parcels through the village chief and councillor to the needy of the surrounding villages. Amand Noailles Community has opened its gates for the poor to have fresh vegetables every day. This has helped them to meet people and know of the

situation they are faced with. They take all into prayer every day.

Bienvenu community gave out food parcels to the non-academic staff of Bienvenu Centre for the Deaf, they included also the helpers in the community. The community aims at identifying more people so as to be able to reach out to them.

Movement was limited during the lockdown period; hence the communities could not come together and work as one group to help during these trying times. However, the communities represent a whole. As a Unit we still aim at reaching more to respond to the needs of the people in our context.



Photos were taken from different communities

COVID-19 and E-learning in Cameroon. Classes continue.

Cameroon-Chad

During the time of Coronavirus, African schools, at all levels, have to resort to technology. Cameroon is no exception. Distance learning is obligatory for all educational establishments.

Sr. Nadège is very focused. Her eyes move between the monitor of her computer and her smartphone. Her fingers go from one keyboard to the other and she doesn't even look up. Sometimes she stops and frowns and then her fingers start tapping again. Sr. Nadège is a fourth-year student of educational science at the Maroua Teacher Training College in Cameroon. Sitting on a chair in front of her computer, she is fully immersed in her course. She is taking part in a class on statistics from her room in the Nazareth community in Mokolo to which she had returned when classes were suspended.



Her lecture hall is virtual – a platform of the NEO Learning Management System of the Department of Educational Science and a WhatsApp group from the same department. Like Nadège, all the students and their teacher are in their

own homes scattered around the area. There are many confirmed cases of Coronavirus in Cameroon and it has caused several deaths. The authorities took various measures in an attempt to combat the disease. One was the closure of all

educational establishments on 17 March. From that date, teacher and students had to communicate through voice messaging, educational platforms, course downloads and video chats and conferences etc.

“When the first case of Coronavirus was announced on 6 March and schools were closed, I immediately returned to my community in Mokolo. I was very worried about the situation in my country. I must admit that, at first, when the schools and universities were closed I was happy to have a bit of a rest. The first semester had been very stressful and we had not been given time to draw breath after the exams. We had to continue with our classes so as not to fall behind in the second semester. I thought that the government would find a solution before long and classes would soon begin again. But I didn't realise how quickly the disease would spread in several regions of the country making an early resumption of school activities very dangerous.

Educational institutions moved quickly to set up distance learning so that the students would not lose the academic year that was already well under way.

At the college in Maroua, a platform was set up for each faculty to enable the students to follow their courses and to interact with the lecturers.

The first days were difficult but I soon got into the rhythm and even though I find I am working three times as hard as in the normal face-to-face situation, it is a lovely experience. It enables me, as a future

teacher, to look at the advantages and disadvantages of both face-to-face learning and on-line learning and see how I will be able to use them later on.”
Sr. Nadège

With the advance of the technology in computers and communications, we have noticed a change in the educational system. In our day, this transformation is

even more radical and profound. The present Coronavirus crisis has forced us to make an even greater effort. Despite the difficulties at every level we shouldn't give up but keep going.

To Combat the Coronavirus, stay at home and study online.



MANUFACTURING HOUSE PAINT: A WAY OF EMPOWERING UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE

Sr. Lydie MBINZA Kwanza, DR Congo-Burkina

In this third millennium when the world is undergoing many changes with consequences greatly affecting the whole of society, the issue of young people is a major concern for all the countries of the world in general and for the Democratic Republic of Congo in particular since the future depends on these young people.

The rising generation is subjected to many evils which prevent them from becoming

personally independent and also from building up the country. Disadvantaged young people become depressed and passive. Sometimes they don't know what to do and they fall into delinquency, spending their time smoking cannabis, drinking alcohol and stirring up violence.

As Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, we are called to listen to the real situation of the world around us and try to respond to the needs. So we could not ignore the situation of our young people.

With this in mind, after our formation in chemistry, we thought of working with some young people who had nothing to do.

Our aim is to share our expertise in manufacturing house paint with these young people and to help them to acquire this simple skill so that they could make the paint at home and then use it to paint buildings cheaply. The local people could also buy the paint from them at a good price.

This activity is good for the young people and gives them confidence because from time immemorial, human beings have delighted in the natural colours of the sky, the earth, rocks, animals, plants and, above all, flowers.



This appreciation of colour led them to paint parts of their body, their clothes, objects and houses.

From ancient times to the industrial era of the last century, chemists have used pigments from plants, grain and fruit to make paint. Then they began to use powdered limestone as an ingredient. Unfortunately, this caused a shortage in the local market.

In D.R.C. for example, powdered limestone for the whole country is prepared only in the Lukala cement plant in Central Congo. This means that there is often a break in the supply of paint

even though the demand is huge.

As a result of our experience, we began to use clay instead of powdered limestone. This is readily available in our area and is inexpensive. We use red, white or orange clay to make latex paint locally and follow the method used by all the paint manufacturers.

The result of the first analysis of the paint made by the young people showed that its viscosity and density are slightly higher than the required norms while the drying time and the theoretical return are in keeping with those norms.



The differences in the viscosity and density are due to the fact that the clay is not treated and contains a lot of impurities. We tried to improve this by adding 10gms of Metagon salt which can reduce the impurities and increase the liquidity of the paint.

This way of empowering depressed and unemployed young people seems to solve their above-mentioned problems. This first group is happy with what they are doing. As well as learning a new skill and being able to make a living, they gain self-worth and dignity from this activity. It also gives them employment. They feel useful and busy and can give up drugs and delinquency.

The disadvantage up to now is that clay does not give us pure white paint

because of its natural colour. This first attempt to use clay in the manufacturing of latex paint opens up new possibilities for research to improve the technique and produce more paint with a view to uplifting and rehabilitating young people without traditional employment who have given up hope.



OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Sr. ASSEK Rosette, Kingabwa DR Congo

With the development of technology, humans have turned the universe into a planetary village, seeking to break down, according to God's plan, all barriers of race, language and tribe. A village where differences are a richness that should unite and not divide, a village where life is good, but also a village where we are struggling against the forces of evil, natural disasters and calamities. In this struggle, where our strength and intelligence stop, we have our only and last recourse in God: "***You are my refuge and my shield***" (Ps. 119:114).

Today, our world is plunged into desolation because of a common enemy, a new and unwanted visitor who is causing terror everywhere: ***covid-19***. Its arrival in our world has upset and paralyzed the daily habits of all nations. Wherever it went, it settled, imposed itself and killed. The virus became 'master' of the situation because he is above our strength and intelligence and we must quickly become aware and remember that we have a refuge and a shield: GOD. This is the favourable moment to turn to God, so that He may give us wisdom, intelligence and strength to overcome this evil.

Preventive measures, far from stopping this scourge have, however, slowed down its harmful and deadly nature. People had to live in confinement, not only to protect themselves but also to protect others. The lockdown, although it prevented Christian communities from coming together to pray to God, did not reduce our intimacy with God and our communion with sisters and brothers. On the contrary, it has multiplied the thirst and the desire to meet God in prayer, as well as the attention to other people. It was a favourable moment



to pray to the Father: "***...when you pray, go into your inner room, shut your door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen...***" (Mt. 6:6).

Yes, we had to pray a lot, not only for God to spare us from this plague, but also and above all for the peaceful rest of the souls of all those innocent and fragile people who have fallen victim to covid-19; for their families; for the healing of the sick; for all the nursing staff who devote themselves day and night, to the risk of their own lives, to saving lives of others; for all the other people on the frontlines and, finally, for all of us so that this evil may be defeated.

A significant and striking gesture of great piety was that of the Holy Father, our Pope Francis who, on 27 March, granted a plenary indulgence to the whole world. It allowed me to fully understand our human character of vulnerability and fragility in the face of the immeasurable love of Christ who gave his life for us. We repeat with conviction that God Alone is enough. It is with humility, simplicity and hope that I personally received the indulgence.

All in all, covid-19 has brought something positive to our world today by the fact that it made no difference between rich and less rich; between young and old; between men and women. It taught us to understand that we are all equal, despite our differences.



It cultivated in us the desire for communion and communication with others, through the media, which helped us also to maintain the communion of prayer through Eucharistic celebrations broadcast by television channels.

It has cultivated in us the sense of solidarity,

generosity and charity. Above all, it has allowed people to understand that life does not belong to them and that there is above us an Almighty to whom we must always refer: GOD.

Everything has a beginning, everything has an end. Covid-19 started one day and it will also end one day, we hope and we believe so. Its passage should awaken our attention to the rules of hygiene and serve as a lesson for the respect of life and of every human person.



Ultimately, let us say it again; the world is a village where we are called to live in communion and solidarity with one another, under the benevolent eye of God. No one can believe themselves above all nor consider themselves worthless or unimportant. Every human being; however small, however poor, however weak, has value and importance.

Man's life, like God himself, remains a mystery; a mystery that must be protected; a mystery that must be respected, always keeping in mind the question of the psalmist: ***What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You care for him?*** (Ps. 8, 4)

OUR EXPERIENCE OF CONFINEMENT IN MANDING (RD Congo)

HFB Sisters, Community of Manding

As Apostolic Sisters of the Holy Family, we are used to be involved in many different ministries every day but now we find ourselves in a situation of confinement and general lockdown.

Art. 84 of our Constitutions states: *"...we are called to extend and strengthen the Faith by word, presence, and action. »* Touched by this word of our Founder, in this time of pandemic, we asked ourselves a question: how to live the lockdown and to close our doors in this special year of our Bicentenary? At first, we were upset and we panicked. It was very difficult for us to welcome this confinement but as a community, we organized ourselves to occupy our time in this way: personal prayer, private Eucharist with priests of the parish followed by breakfast and gardening.

During this time, we no longer buy vegetables at the market; we only eat our own fruit and vegetables, which we cultivate in our garden. These gardening activities bring us closer together and help us to feel compassion for the misery of our people. We share our provisions with the poor of the neighborhood.

The community space is for us a very important moment of listening and exchanging information learnt through television news.

In spite of the church bell ringing every morning at 6 o'clock, the Christians of Manding feel a great void. We have

never seen a situation like this: closed churches, Lent and Holy Week lived in silence. We miss our lively liturgy. Fortunately, the feast of Easter, with all the graces of Christ's resurrection, has given us a new dynamism, a new breath, a new impetus and the hope of announcing the Living Christ in confinement.

At the very beginning, the Christians of our parish were upset; they could not understand and accept the fact that they had been deprived of the Eucharist. They tried to negotiate if they could participate in the Mass from a distance. On Palm Sunday, holy water was placed at the entrance to the parish office, where the worshippers could dip their Palms and place their offerings.

We are praying for all the Christians during this moment of crisis so that their faith remains strong, and we are sharing the suffering of the world.

We realize that our community is becoming a contemplative community where everything happens in the enclosure, although one of us continues her apostolate because she works in the health service. We create spaces for life, we support each other, hoping that this pandemic will soon come to an end. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph accompany us.

WORKING FROM HOME

Winifreda Wasalathanthrige, Buhara- Uganda

Our Sister Anuarite Businge was to start her preparation for final vows. The Initial Formation Team had prepared a program for the six months. She was to participate in an inter-national inter-congregational program in Zambia from 17 May to 11 July 2020. Then the Holy family work shop in Martillac in the month of September. During the rest of the time, the members from the Unit were to work with her. I was the one to start on the 20 the April. But by that day the country was under lockdown. There was no other choice except to fall in line with the rest of the world who started working from home. Anaurite worked from Rwanda while I worked from Uganda. I had a little experience working this way with the Jubilee Celebration Team. Yet this is another type of work.

We started. Both Anuarite and I prepared our minds and hearts for it. We agreed on the rhythm of work. We said we will not divide time but follow the flow of it. We were to work on the Spirituality, Founder, Charism and Vowed for Mission. We started and it was daily hard work. Everything had to be written in its final form; I needed to find ways of making the work clear, easily understandable and interesting. Fortunately I had some videos and PowerPoint presentations that were prepared for various occasions. Some material from the Jubilee preparation also was added to the resources.

However the most important element on which depended the effectiveness of this

work was the daily feedbacks from Anuarite. Every evening she sent me an account of how she lived the day, how she was feeling and what she gained. That sharing helped us to go on, day by day during three weeks. One day when Anuarite was tired and could not send the feedback I felt lost. Somehow her capacity to share briefly and clearly was a great help.

Later in her evaluation Anuarite wrote

Doing this reflection from a distance was good for me because it helped me to concentrate and write something on what I had reflected. Sharing what I felt and what I experienced by writing was challenging for me, I could not write everything the way I could have said face to face. I feel that I made a good and big step in growth and this helped me to make an effort to record many things. Somehow it can be tiring in the sense that while talking to someone else, there is the energy that is given and received.

Yes, nothing can replace the personal presence and interaction. Yet what we were able to achieve by working from distance was much more than I could imagine.

Thank you Anuartie for your participation. Thanks to the community of Gikongoro for your collaboration.

May God accompany Anuarite in her preparation for Final Vows!

In this challenging world

Sr. Sumble Samuel (Gojra Community) Pakistan.

As Holy Family Sisters we discern and live communally, in mutual interdependence, our part in Jesus's mission. We are co-responsible through the quality of our loving, choosing and sustaining, for all that touches the life of our whole hurting planet. (Vowed for Mission 7.8)

Our Superior General Sr. Ana Maria stresses the quality of our community living; our part in the community as members and leaders is to take active participation. As we hear, see and experience the Coronavirus, we are all in lockdown inside our communities. Though this is painful, it is an opportunity for us to experience community living in a deeper way.



We should not regret that we are not **doing** anything, for our central mission is to live a joyful community life with the accent on being. In the past, we were busy in our apostolic ministries in schools, hospitals and visits from morning till evening. We hardly had time to see each other. Today we are given a chance to feel and to experience the needs of our Sisters in the community, to listen to their

sharing, to respect their needs, to love and have concern, to take care of the sick and aged sisters, to give ourselves fully and to make them happy by doing our best. We try to grow more and more and in a deeper way to live quality and authentic community relationships.

As article 115 of our Constitutions says: *Our communities also grow through the daily experience of life in common. We share the daily tasks necessary for the common good. We come together for meetings, which are times for friendly sharing and mutual challenge. We also review the quality of our community life, the adaptation of its rhythm to the needs of each one, fidelity to the mission entrusted to us and the witness, which we give as a group.*

Let us together as a community walk together in this suffering world around us and continue the good work of our Founder "My dear daughters, go forward! Increase in numbers and virtues, and may your hands scatter on all sides the divine seed of good example".



Solidarity with the suffering humanity, earth and the universe during the period of solitary.

Sr. Densilla James, Pakistan

COVID-19 has negative and positive effects on the global world and during the lockdown; we are experiencing the three words interconnected, interrelated and interdependent being PART of the WHOLE.

Now is a time to deepen our relationship with God and others in prayer, personally, and as communities.

Eucharistic Celebration: the communities who have the opportunity to attend daily Mass are very much united with the global world, preparing special prayers for the people who are sick, dying, dead and for the doctors, nurses, that is, for all who are affected by the Coronavirus and are in need of our prayers.

Sisters prepared a litany for the pandemic situation that is sung every day during the hour of prayer.

We are in constant communion by emails, WhatsApp and phone calls.

Thank you to the GLT who always stand by us in all circumstances. When we

made a request for our schools which were having difficulty in paying salary of teaching and non-teaching staff, the help was promptly granted.

We helped the poor, our helpers and the Sister's families in the difficult situation.

Distribution of masks and gloves for the sanitary workers as they are unprotected without masks and gloves.

With the other NGOs and the Church, took part in awareness programs and distribution of rations to help the needy

At this critical time, our brave Holy Family Sisters are not left behind and they are following the Holy Family, living the Spirit of God Alone.

We have taken advantage of the extra time afforded us by translating Meeting Point 6 into Urdu.

English classes for the T.P sisters are going on.

The COVID 19 crisis has led us to embrace new technology. We had online meetings with the GLT and ULT when



necessary; it was the first time we attended meetings with ZOOM. Thank you for making us aware about it.

We are giving more time to our gardens, making them beautiful and enjoying the produce. History revives our Agrícola Sisters!

Most of the community changes were done before the pandemic; the Lockdown gives the opportunity to the sisters to be relaxed and calm; they give time to each other in the community through different

activities; they have time to understand each other and to re arrange the houses, now is the opportunity to write the inventory and to give quality time to their community life.

Communities are taking the opportunity to have their annual retreat where it is possible.

“Nothing can check your course, GO FORWARD”. PBN



Covid-19: A Realistic Look

Unit India , Chennai Community

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear...**Psalm 46:1-2**

When human beings thought that everything was going on successfully in the world with the power of science and technology, totally depending on human resources, leaving the Creator aside, believing in money, power, position etc... God intervened to tell us through the

infectious Corona virus **“apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn.15:5)**. The pandemic situations of the Coronavirus and news reports around the world are creating anxiety and worry for the whole human race and our well-being. In this helpless and hopeless condition the whole of humanity is crying towards God for His merciful kindness towards the suffering society to make this painful mourning into the joy of Risen Jesus.

We are reminded to think of the story of creation. In the beginning God created everything and found it good. Then He created the human in His own image and likeness and as the crown of all creation to safeguard it. With this story we have our story of our PBN family. We are aware of the time, the circumstances where our Founder listened and discerned the will of God to strengthen the faith in all milieus. From then our Founder and early mothers lived the life of Nazareth according to the signs of the time, responding to it creatively. Our Good Father formed the Sisters to support and help the people for their livelihood. We are at the fulfilment of 2020 our bicentenary year, the present condition is very well suited to challenge ourselves and inspire us to look for ways and means to answer the question *“Can we still live our purpose as we begin our 3rd century?”*

Today everyone echoes a word **“COVID 19”** which threatens the lives of the people. This was the new experience and surprise to know that for the first time in history the lockdown happened for the whole world to ***Stay Home and Stay Safe*** in order to save the lives of people around us from this tiny virus. This pandemic disease COVID-19 taught the world that all the human beings are one and there is no discrimination. During these situations we have abided by the government rules and locked ourselves at home where we had the ample time to live for each other in community to safeguard ourselves and the universe.

We are grateful to His providential care that came on our way and for all we relished. We were deeply moved to respond to the needs of our neighbours

with what we have. We have had a special concern for the widows, the old, the sick, the lonely ones who are looking for someone’s help for their daily food. In our different communities we happily recognized those people and provided food, provisions, medicines, masks and sanitizer for them with equal respect and care. Our nursing sisters were available to give needful medications in remote areas and hospitals.

We feel that through this crisis God calls us to spend sufficient time with him praying for his mercy, compassion, love and forgiveness towards our suffering humanity. We had adequate time to live for one another in the community, reading and reflecting, recreation, silence, taking care of our common home our house, cooking, gardening, involving ourselves in other community activities, updating our knowledge of learning a new language, computing skills, stitching, listening, sharing and supporting one another to be a blessing.



As we are living together, at times we become aware of our shortcomings and limitations specially we were able to renew our relationship with God, ourselves and others. We asked God’s

forgiveness for the times that we have taken for granted the moments freely given and felt life as mere routine. We seek the opportunities to take part in the Eucharistic celebration and we long to receive Holy Communion.

We are thankful to our Unit leadership Team for sensing the need to arrange the annual retreat online. It made us feel that we are precious in the hand of the God who called us. Totally we quarantined ourselves from everything and united with God alone. This different experience of remaining in our communities renewed our purpose, call, mission and community living.

We continue to unite ourselves with our suffering humanity and we plead for God's healing power to eliminate this uncertainty of life. We believe and have



thirst for God and Go Forward for the brighter future which is ahead of us.

COVID 19 – LOCKDOWN: A WHIRLWIND THAT CHALLENGED OUR OUTLOOK IN LIFE

The Unit of the Philippines

The pandemic almost devoured the whole world –millions affected, dead, suffering and in pain. All of a sudden a wave of feelings overwhelmed us: powerlessness, anxiety, fear, uncertainty, desperation, anger, frustration..... All at a standstill. With the lockdown utter helplessness, unable even to be engaged in any relief work, to be in solidarity, to visit the sick, to assist them in some way. Yet, a Kairos moment, calling to a Kenosis ... mingled with our Story – related in a very different way. The reality of our own Context as PBN Family in the Philippines

is something that we want to share with you as we go through the experiences of Lockdown caused by Covid 19.

Manila is the centre of Covid19 as it is the gateway to the Island. Quezon City – which is our area of residence is the first to be tracked for this Virus with the enforcement of rigorous lockdown measures. Densely populated Manila with a majority below the poverty line, deprived of earning their daily living – struggling a hand-to-mouth survival – was the worst hit.

Our community in Manila grew large with

two extra members from the other two communities, getting stuck with the lockdown. We ourselves did not know how to cope with the situation, with nothing to do, with no clue to what is happening in the other communities

The People in the Province of Sorsogon are spared up to now from Covid 19 with strict enforcement and implementation of the lockdown restrictions. Our Sisters in Rizal and Bulan together with the people are safe. However, the present scenario we witness, is of a people going hungry, becoming silent, weak and feeble. The relief received by each household from the Government, in the form of cash and rice bags was an unexpected blessing that the moment needed! The Fishermen were seen distributing their catch for free, to the people in need... indeed an expression of the generosity of people. A Mini Bakery was started in the Diocese of Sorsogon with the help of Caritas, having the Bishop of the Diocese as the main Baker, to provide bread for the hungry. Other Relief Goods too were distributed.

communication. Frs. George Fajardo, Benny and Noel with the help of Caritas Sorsogon, other friends and benefactors, organized ways of helping the people in need.

Msg. Choy Esperida is our Prayer Warrior keeping in touch with all of us and reminding us that, though in lockdown and having to keep distance, we are never separated because we are One Family.

The Lay Associates, most of them being prayer warriors, join together as family, bringing the whole world into their prayer. They invite all the PBN Members to join in their family prayer through social media, at a given time. Some of them participate in Relief work as well. They share with us how Holy Family Spirituality sustains them in a different way during this time.

We, the **Apostolic Sisters** came together in each Community, for reflection, discussion and sharing to sustain our energy and enthusiasm while preparing for a new and different way of discover-



In this situation of Lockdown, the **PBN Family** is challenged to live and witness to our Commitment to Communion. The **Four Priest Associates** organized Online Mass for their Parishes including the Holy Week Liturgy. They kept in touch with the people through well-arranged ways of

ing what is being asked of us now. The Lockdown allowed us ample time for **Community Building** – to be who we are, to express freely where we are, to look at each other with the eyes of compassion, to look for those things that unite us to live Communion in this

unpredicted situation, to bear with one another as we are off-line in terms of “doing” but on-line to become aware of our “being.” Through deep listening, we recognized the importance of respecting the uniqueness, the beauty, the richness and the energy that is generated by our diversity. We realize that when we are of one mind and heart, nothing can beat us. “Kumustahan” (a very meaningful expression for ‘how are you today’) at our every Community Gathering served its purpose to connect ourselves from where each one is.



We felt a great need to **keep in touch** and communicate with all – our communities, our people and the PBN Family around the World to express our solidarity with all during this Pandemic Crisis - in prayer, in spirit and with sisterly affection through Messages and Calls. We were saddened by the news of our Sisters in France, Spain and Belgium and some relatives of members of PBN family who succumbed to Covid19. In our powerlessness, God is our source of strength and **Nature** played a big role in making our Prayer alive, meaningful, creative and fruitful.

It broke our hearts when some of our Parishioners and known people became victims of Covid19 and we were unable to visit them or to offer any of the spiritual help needed or even to attend

their funerals. Even our thirst to be in solidarity with the suffering people was somewhat curtailed.

However, we engaged in simple ways, living in solidarity with the people especially with the Poor and the Front-liners:

Helping in the distribution of relief goods with the assistance of CARITAS-Spain COVID-19, helping the Sick, Elderly (not Covid19) and Children to have access to the Doctors and hospitals.

Through Holy Family Feeding and Health Project, already active in Rizal Community.

Collaborating with the Mobile Program sponsored by Caritas-Spain for a COVID 19 FEEDING AND HEALTH PROGRAM in Rizal, Gubat, Sorsogon to cater for 50 Families with 85 Students, covering 5 Barrios with Cooked Food and Relief Goods.



The Lockdown is still on. There is a talk about a “New Normal Way” which still needs explanation and proper execution. We are called to take one day at a time, for tomorrow cannot be foreseen as before. The “I AM” is walking with us with His silent steps. We recognize Him and His voice in the situation we are in. The hidden life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph is becoming more experiential and tangible. We are rest assured that we are not alone in this crisis. We are walking with each other as PBN Family.

I have met God unexpectedly

Sr. Nilani Hewawasam- Colombo unit

I have attempted today to gather together the memories of the past four years. Rajagiriya (Community dedicated to sick and elderly Sisters) has become my home over this period, owing to the sudden, unforeseen illness and total incapacity that accompanied me at such an early period of my life. I am sharing this with the help of someone who has agreed to write down this outpouring of my heart.

I had known that things can change in our lives and even life around can change; but I never ever imagined such an event as this; it has shaken my life causing a severe set-back in my life journey. Many times I have felt that death would have been better.

To depend on another for everything; the inability to get things done in ways that I like and to fulfil my needs according to my wishes has sometimes been depressing. Even now I experience this feeling strongly.

However, this period has offered me the chance of meeting so many of our Sisters in the Province. Their love and prayerful connectedness is something that powerfully helps me.

Above all my experience and feelings of gratitude to the community of Rajagiriya is enormous. I have no words to express my thanks for all that they have done. Taking me to the doctors and native Veda Mahattayas practitioners, spending time during the long hours of treatment, preparing the medicines and looking for the medicinal plants, grinding the

medicines with their own hands, massaging and oil treatments etc. How can I forget...?

I know I have got some recovery after a long time but I believe that gradually I'll get back to normality. I know you will be with me until my recovery. This is my firm belief. All that you have done for me Sisters, is very precious and valuable; it was not only your medical attention but in all my needs, your care was a great source of strength.

The leadership community also has journeyed with me all along these past four years, without leaving me lonely in my struggle. This experience was a powerful message that I belong to a big Family. Even at the event of my dear mother's passing away, all our Sisters in the Province surrounded me and helped me in various ways, consoling and comforting me. My family members too were greatly touched by their presence in numbers which was a sign of deep Sisterhood, and Family spirit.

The Sisters in Paraguay where I was once a missionary and the Unit Leaders including the Superior General Sr. Ana Maria has visited me and spent time with me. This too was a great source of strength to me.

Last but not least I must express the since love and affection of my brothers and sisters. Even though I was born and brought up in a loving family I felt their deep attachment in my helpless, sick years. They tried their best too, to bring me back to my two feet and normal life-pattern.

Dear Sisters, you all have contributed some share to bring back to health, by your loving affection, caring and assistance in many and various ways. All these experiences have been written with gratitude in my heart. I have so much to

say in my heart but it is not possible to recall everything now.

In my whole life, I will remember how God has done marvels, and that will carry me on to the future...!

"I brought everything to a halt for you all to listen" COVID 19.

Sr. Liliette Fernando - Colombo

With the lockdown across the world: Heart is heavy, filled with fear and anxiety.

The virus is spreading faster than we ever imagined. Some are seriously ill and some have already left us.

Yet, since the beginning of this disaster, even though we undergo many hardships, Corona has become a blessing in disguise to all of us in the Colombo unit, to purify our thoughts, desires and attitudes. At this crucial moment, Love Energy, God of the universe made us alive by His kindness for all on humankind.

By the loving guidance of the Unit Leadership team with their foresight, we all became aware that living in oneness with all that exists would help the wellbeing of the whole. At the same time, thanks to the technology, the weekly voice message from Sr. Jesmin led all the sisters to use the videos and reflect and share based on the given exercises, taking an hour everyday, on Principles for Generative Listening and Speaking and The Four Fields of Dialogue. Our reflections helped us to acquire the basics Generative listening skills, the capacity to listen and to speak to one another with the aim of building

up good relationships and thus, avoiding any conflictual impasse.

We were very much used to receive printed material from the ULT. With the postal service came to a standstill, the only way of communication was WhatsApp. It was another experience. Those who didn't know to operate had to learn or seek the help of other members. Thus, the situation made some of us to learn new technology too.

All of a sudden, with police curfew and lockdown for a prolonged period of nearly two months, which is still continuing at the time I am penning this article, movement outside the convent was restricted.



Fortunately, our Media Unit with the vibrant guidance of Sr. Dineshika is playing a pivotal role to uplift our spirits to overcome the feeling of being left

alone, by sending a video clip daily with the collaboration of our PBN family.

At the same time, Sisters were encouraged to send photos, video clips, or a write up to share how each community spend this time. The main interest was on home gardening. Lush vegetable plots encouraged others to follow. Sisters were sharing new findings, knowledge in this aspect. It was a joy to be with mother earth. All these attempts kept us bound together as a Unit even though we have been scattered in fifty-one convents.

With this insane escalation of the virus, we are now awakened to a new reality. We have started to reflect upon the difficulties in life when we are home-bound. This is a decisive moment. Yet, if we live consciously, this could be a vital moment in the history of humanity.

Because, at a time we cannot go out, we could go inside to observe the noble silence deep within

We share a meal or whatever we have with the needy in our vicinity, while most of our neighbours and parishioners have been extending their generous hand towards us by sharing vegetables or dry rations

Sisters in many of our communities have started cultivating in convent gardens to take care of mother earth and share her blessings in return...

Some of the communities sewed facemasks and distributed among the security personnel and the poor people in their areas....

During this period, we have been reflecting, discussing and sharing in community level the present crisis, its effects in all aspects locally and globally. Sisters have already sent their reflection to U.L.T. over the following questions:

What could be the challenges we have to face politically economically and socially as Sri Lankans and as a world and our response as Holy Family Sisters ?

How can we give an immediate response to this present crisis?

According to my knowledge, some Sisters, especially the leadership team had online discussions with a few resource persons to explore the present context which will help all of us to be enlightened as to how we could respond wisely to the needs during the post Corona period. At the same time, based on the suggestions made by Sisters, we as a Unit are ready to come to common decisions as a way of living our purpose effectively during this pandemic situation and after.

May we all enjoy an ocean of happiness good health and inner peace!

Jaffna UNIT adapting with COVID-19.

On Thursday 11th March 2020 there was an announcement that due to Coronavirus from the following day onward there would be no school until further announcement. Our Unit Leader Sr. Theophane Croos requested any Sisters who were out of their communities to go back to their Convents immediately. After this incident we all were alert, curfew was declared, all were '**Locked down**'. Every day we hear the news that this COVID 19 is spreading and increasing the death rate. It was so sad to hear about it, first in Italy then one after the other in each country. Our hearts were heavy. All Communities were informed to pray the Holy Rosary and do Eucharistic Adoration to be united and in solidarity with the people of each Country every day.

To escape this epidemic the universal advice given is, "Stay home", "Stay safe", 'Use your masks "in order not to pass it on to others. Holy and wholesome instruction to be followed strictly for the welfare of the Cosmic Family. We have to observe 3 As; Be - **Alone, Aware, Away**

At this juncture the Holy Father's message was consoling. The full text of the special 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing was a wonderful reflection. We also were very happy to hear that Pope Francis would bless the whole world on 27th March at 6 pm.(Vatican time) Sri Lankan time 10.30 p.m. We all gathered to the TV participated in his prayers and received the blessing to be united with all.

A total lockdown was enforced from 10th -15th. April. During this period authorities

enforced the law strictly. No supply of food, no delivery channels, no, online orders, even to open Boutiques was not allowed etc. because of avoiding the interaction of people during the Easter and Tamil and Sinhala New Year season.

There was a suggestion as we approached Easter Sunday: why can't we tell all our Catholics to light a candle in front of our homes on Holy Saturday 11th midnight at to proclaim to the world that Our Lord Jesus Christ is RISEN and HE is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD and He is with us. Most of us gathered in front of our Convents and lit the lights, sang songs and prayed for all.

In fact, people of interior villages were not aware and did not understand the seriousness of the Coronavirus. But the Health Authority was very alert and instructed the people to be careful and protect themselves. The Police and Military Forces too were involved very much to make the people observe the rules and regulations; their commitment is to be appreciated.

Of course during the curfew people especially the poor, farmers, fishermen, vendors, daily wage people, beggars suffered a lot. They could not go to work, even if they went they could not sell their products or have to sell at a very low price, if not all got decayed. So many poor families who are in the very interior places, those who are in the Hill country were neglected. The media people did a good job to bring their deprivation and problems to the attention of the public. The Government started to give an

allocation of Rs.5,000 per family not monthly but once in a way. When the curfew lifted we could see the poor at the door. We planned and prepared the dry ration packages for the families affected by leprosy where we already working and distributed them in their village. Some of our Sisters in their society did the same.



The Unit Leader and the Bursar took the risk to get the Vehicle Pass to take our sick Sisters to the hospital especially for Chemo therapy, Orthopedic clinic etc. They also consulted with the Health Department to send the Doctor to see Elderly Sisters at Passaiyoor. They were very kind to send a Doctor and his group with full protection, and they attended every Sister, gave advice and medicine. We adapted ourselves to the present situation with the strength and courage that God gives every day. The Unit Leader and the Bursar also visited our nearby Communities to express our oneness, shared and exchanged some goods. Our Sisters

are at their Convents and engaged in home management.

The whole world is locked down, but at the same time we could feel and see the environment is very clean, no air pollution, not many people rush to the hospitals, no restaurants or alcohol shops are opened. People are all at home, birds beasts and animals are free even they come to the villages. The families are happy to be together, some children get their lessons online the parents help for their studies, the adults are occupied with some good works in their houses, doing home gardening , cooking good and nutritious food, doing sewing and knitting etc., praying together, watching the Mass and other ritual services on the TV. No roaming about of the youth except the few who are usually involved in unwanted activities; they are caught up by the Police and punished. This is also a good lesson for the others. Whenever we get the opportunities, we meet the people and united with all by our prayers and good deeds.





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