



DELHI DISHA

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PROVINCE NEWS LETTER

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From the Provincial's Desk...

The 40-day lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic has severely restricted the movements and activities of all of us. All our communities conduct Eucharistic adoration, praying for the world suffering from the pandemic, adhere to social distancing etc. While some of our communities have regular Holy Mass, some communities attend live online Mass daily and receive Holy Communion which may go on till the lockdown ends. For how long, we don't know.

Some of the communities have difficulty in getting vegetables and other daily use items, but we manage with the minimum available. Some of us have sent our helpers away and do the chores ourselves which help us to come closer to one another and experience the joy of working together. Some communities were able to reach out to the suffering people around them. Thank you, dear sisters, for whatever efforts you have made within the restrictions. Let us continue to pray for the suffering world, as it battles Covid-19

Congratulations to Sr. Deepti, the newly appointed JPIC Coordinator of the Province!! All the best and God's blessings! **Thank you, dear Sr. Lucy**, for holding this responsibility for the past 5 years and for your dedicated service. Srs. Elaine, Mariella, Tessy, Geetika, Sheeba, Anjali, Amita, Sushmita, Poonam, Sanjana, Maria and Divya are the JPIC in-charges of their respective communities. My prayerful support will be with you all.

In need of our prayers:

➤ **Those who are sick:**

- ✓ Sr. Annette's nephew who had a liver surgery
- ✓ Sr. Cheryl's (Patna) sister suffering from cancer
- ✓ Sr. Shanti, recuperating after her hysterectomy

➤ **Those gone before us:**

- ✓ Sr. Anne's brother Mr. Joseph on 3rd April
- ✓ Sr. Julita's aunt, Sr. Bellarmine PSA, on 13th April
- ✓ Sr. Georgina's brother-in-law Mr. Anthony on 19th April
- ✓ Sr. Mary John's second cousin on 23rd April

St. Mary's Convent, Nainital

We marched into the month of March with full of zeal and enthusiasm. We had a surprise visit by Bishop Ignatius D'Souza of Bareilly along with 28 Missionaries of Charity Sisters, who were making retreat under his guidance at Kathgodam. On 10th Sr. Tarsicia conducted recollection. The topic was Eucharist. As usual the Lenten Cross of Bareilly Diocese which goes to every parish was brought to our parish, St. Francis Home Church, Nainital on 11th March. It was kept for a day for



the people to pray. We the sisters too joined in prayer and veneration. The next day the cross was carried through our campus to Lake Church. All our boarders lined up to pay their reverence and respect as the cross was being carried by Srs. Digna & Manjusha through our campus on their way to Lake Church.

As Covid-19 is spreading far and wide, we closed the school on 13th March as per the order of Education Department. The parents were informed to take their wards away as early as possible and they responded well. We were glad to welcome 4 Presentation Sisters (PBVM) from Delhi for Nainital Darshan. The snow fall & hail stones too arrived adding to their joy. They stayed with us for two days. On the same day Srs. Anne & Divya left for Delhi and the former proceeded to Kerala to visit her ailing brother, Joseph and the latter came to help us in the absence of Sr. Sherly who was under treatment. We thank Sr. Divya for her generous and selfless service. Sr. Amita, being enriched and energized returned to the community after her jubilee preparation in Kerala and renewal programme in Pune.

As the pandemic is increasing day by day, we asked our co-workers to stay at home from 23rd March. Due to the lockdown, having no Holy Mass on the feast day of Annunciation we spent the day in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord and it continued till Easter specially praying for the corona victims and the caretakers.

The community began the annual retreat on 30th March. Soon after completing our **retreat** we entered into the Holy week. We joined the Easter Vigil Mass; the celebrant clearly mentioned that our homes and communities have become the church where people spend their time in attending the Mass online and praying together for the whole World. COVID – 19 has united us all in spirit.

Since the lockdown is continued, we started with regular online classes for our students. Though students are at home, as per the school time table they will have to wake up and attend the class from 8.40 - to 10.20 a.m., after which they are left free for their half an hour yoga class conducted by the Board. After the break they are again back to class till 3.40 p.m. On Saturdays and Sundays Council conducts online classes for the students of classes IX – XII. Our teachers have become more efficient and smarter in conducting the online classes. We got a good response from the students as well as the parents.

COVID – 19 taught us to be generous and loving. People’s problem became our concern and as a result we were able to reach out to our co-workers and leper colony through online grocery supply. This lockdown also gave us an opportunity to grow closer to God and to one another.

During this time, we also thought of relieving Sr. Caroline as we take turns to cook. Each one in their turn trying their level best to bring out new dishes and we all enjoy it. The evening recreation is a boost for all of us. We watch news as well as play cards. Let us pray for each other that the experiences of the present situation may help us to be deeply rooted in God. May the Risen Lord save humanity from the Corona virus!

Nainital Community

St. Anthony’s Convent, Jeolikote

Novel corona virus Pandemic Leads to way of Life

“Man proposes and God disposes”. We had a well-planned schedule for students’ exams, result, new sessions, entrance exam etc. On 13th we got the message that schools will remain closed till 31st March. Hence children -boarders- started to leave for their homes. Both 10th and 12th had one paper each to be completed. Our community was dwindled to eight in number with the absence of Srs. Laura and Rinalda, but Sr. Deepa reached them on 16th and it was a timely intervention from her part. So the whole community is together during this lock down period. On 17th March, Srs. Augustine, Lorna and Maria went to Lalpur to celebrate the feast day of Sr. Patricia. Srs. Rekha, Pratibha and Deepika went to Sitarganj Ashram for two days while the remaining had their monthly recollection and confession.

We thought of giving a new look to the old cupboards but it remained half way, since the company workers were from Haldwani. We had a group of 16 people from Bareilly at the construction site. When they got the message on 23rd night about the lock down they started to walk to Bareilly in the night itself. We prayed for their safety and they reached Bareilly safely. We started our new way of

living without our co-workers. Few started cleanings and tidying their

department and common place as well. It was interesting to watch how each one moved out after breakfast to possess the Newspaper. Everyone had and has the curiosity to know the happening in the country and the world at large. Lot of sharing was/is done about corona virus in the refectory and it has become the topic of conversation during the meals.



The lockdown opened the way to a renewed spiritual life. Bible is taking a central stage in our life. We started to watch videos on Jesus of Nazareth, Life history of saints, participated in the prayer of Pope Francis '*Urbi et Orbi*', listen to various talks of retreat preachers, Bible studies of various experts, attended the Way of the Cross online and read books from the library. Some use their cooking skills in the kitchen and we all enjoy the outcome of it. All of us enjoy our lovely rose garden. We also collected the petals and kept it for rose water and wine.

We have daily Holy Mass in the church and special prayers before the Blessed Sacrament from 3.00 -7.30 p.m. praying and interceding for the entire broken world.

Now we have time to sit together and chat after dinner, which had disappeared from our routine. We also got a retreat preacher in the person of Fr. Jose SDB and we began our annual retreat on 20th April, Monday.

Believing in the power of God that all will return to HIS FORGIVING LOVE we remain.

Jesu Bhawan, Delhi

The month of March came with the national lockdown and social distancing in order to fight the pandemic of Covid -19. Sr. Elsy had to cancel her trip from Pune to Mangalore and reached back to Delhi, so also Srs. Kiran and Nibedita after their studies in Goa. Sr. Divya arrived a day before the lock down and Sr. Maria who was supposed to travel to Falna is with us now.

During these lockdown days we spend time in adoration from 3.00 – 7.00 p. m. interceding for the broken world. It was also a time of spiritual renewal as we entered into the Lifeline online Retreat conducted by JCSA (Jesuit Conference of South Asia) from 5th - 12th April. It was a very different experience, with a lot of deep sharing at the end of the day. The meditations and contemplations in the context of the pandemic made us reflect on our responses and challenged us to be women of courage and hope. The Holy Week and Easter celebrations were modest with online services. Thanks to the neighbouring Jesuit community who provided us the consecrated Hosts so we have daily Holy Communion as we participate in the online Eucharist daily from 22nd March.



Though we cannot move out to help the needy, our hearts remain open for the suffering humanity.

We maintain physical distance but our community is growing in togetherness, unity and love as we enjoy each other's company,



find more time to listen to each other's life, prayer hours becoming more meaningful and enriching through much sharing, and spending the rest of the time for cleaning, taking care of our dogs, cooking and working in the garden. We have found that each member matters and that our call is to bring healing to the world around us.

Divya CJ

Maria Ward Bhawan, Falna

The most awaited day for the community was 23rd February as we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of Sr. Rayna. She was happy to have her dear mother, brother-in-law and sister-in-law on this special day. We are grateful to Sr. Poonam who came to help us with the singing. The homely celebration was appreciated by one and all. On the same day we also kept up the parish feast.



Srs. Joseline and Rayna who are missioned anew were almost ready to move out. The lockdown gave them a feeling of a standstill situation – waiting for their train to arrive which is indefinitely late!!!

The Lockdown invited us to get into a spiritual journey. Sr. Joseline made a private retreat from 28th March to 5th April. Sr. Rayna joined the online retreat and came out renewed on Easter Sunday. It was a time of grace, a time to get in touch with the Lifeline, a time to pray for the suffering humanity and express our solidarity through prayers. We continue to spend quality time in front of the Blessed Sacrament interceding for the whole world.

We are blessed to have Holy Eucharist daily which many of our people are deprived of due to the lockdown and we are really grateful for it. During the Holy week three of us were involved fully in all the church activities in the absence of the parishioners. It was indeed a unique experience.

In the beginning of March our maid was bitten by her dog and she was not coming for the work and it continued till Easter due to the lockdown. We took full control of the situation and got involved in cooking, cleaning, exploring things in the house, settling the place, doing gardening, reading books, etc. It was tiring but enjoyable. Extra exertion aggravated the backache of Sr. Doreen but she continues to contribute her share. Since the financial year was coming to an end, we had purchased sufficient provision for the kitchen. But we feel the pinch of not being able to get fresh vegetables, fruits etc. It gives us an opportunity to feel with the poor. During these days we experience genuine concern of the people enquiring whether we are in need of anything.

This time of lockdown also make us feel hopeless, frustrated and sad. Listening to the news is really scary and disheartening. We feel helpless and powerless. We also feel that we are not able to do anything for the suffering people. Only consolation we have is our strong prayerful vibrations we send out to them. We believe that our Risen Lord will take control of the situation and bring normalcy back.

Nirmala Convent, Jhansi

On 4th March, the Christian community in Jhansi gathered in Sipri under the Fly Over Bridge and prayed for the completion of the bridge; the construction of the bridge had started seven years ago, but because of the political scenario, the work is at a standstill; and the township and the markets face insurmountable difficulties and inconveniences. Likewise, the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities organized prayer services at different dates.

On the 6th, the Nirmala Community and Krist Jyoti led the 'Way of the Cross' in the Cathedral. Though we could not continue this devotion in the Cathedral after 21st March, we had well organized and devotional 'Way of the Cross' in our campus.

On 7th, our home exams were over. The teachers were busy with the corrections and report cards. We could not call the parents to give the results as planned; as our Prime Minister declared the 'Lock Down', the results were sent to all the students online.

On 7th and 8th, the Diocese organized a training programme for the Small Christian Communities (SCC) in the Pastoral Centre, Jhansi. The resources persons were Fr. Vijay and Fr. George from Nagpur. Srs. Mary, Tessy, Alice and some of the postulants attended the seminar. The Fathers gave us some practical classes on how to conduct family prayers and sharing the 'Word of God' in families.

Sensing the threat of Corona Virus and the possibility of extending the holidays, some of us decided to make our annual retreat from 11-18 March. Fr. Rinoy SDB accompanied us for eight days with his powerful preaching 'the Word of God' – focusing on different aspects of religious Life. This Retreat gave us a chance to look deep within us and renew our relationship with God and neighbour.

On 13th Srs. Anima and Sanjana started their M.A. Exam; but they had to return back to their communities without completing it. On 14th, the fear of COVID-19 gripped the city, shops were open only for a few hours, people were seen with masks and vehicles were hardly seen on the streets. Amidst the silence, the rustling of the leaves and the chirping of the birds on the nearby trees became louder and clearer. On 17th, Sr. Elsy paid us a short visit on her way back to Delhi from Pune.

During the lockdown, we did the cooking, most of the cleaning and washing. Our co-workers were very brave and generous. They offered to harvest the wheat which had already turned into golden colour. By the mercy of God, before Easter, the harvesting and threshing was over. Thanks to Sr. Camilla who supervised all the work. All went well!

The Holy Week was a time for silence and reflection. We had Holy Mass every day, thanks to the Don Bosco Fathers. All the services in the Cathedral were made available online. Though the schools are closed, the children are getting online classes from the teachers. They are doing very well in preparing the lessons and imparting the knowledge to all students. Sr. Jyotika has done an excellent job in creating the link with teachers and students.

Initially, the 'lockdown' period caused us a lot of inconveniences, but gradually we realized the blessings that come to us daily. We learned to appreciate the unique privilege of having the Daily Holy Mass and Communion.

Our campus is a place of silence for free walks and reflection. We realized how much we depend on God for our life and survival. We felt, God is calling us to renew our life, repent for our sins, and focus on His Kingdom. As individuals, we spent more time in union with God. We felt joy in working together. We felt God's assurance and protection as some of us prayed Psalm 91 every day. God is laboring in His people; therefore, we too feel compassion and solidarity with all those suffering with disease and the doctors and nurses and health professionals. Srs. Crispina and Tessy did a good job of settling the Religious library.



St Joseph's Convent, Duranpur

St. Joseph is the Patron Saint of our mission in Puranpur. In preparation for the feast we had one day retreat and confession. All the preparations for the Feast was done but we could not celebrate it as we had planned. From 16th as school got closed, we started daily Holy Hour and Mercy Rosary from 3. 00 p.m. praying for the end of the Pandemic. We are blessed to have the Holy Eucharist daily. Holy Week rituals were done in a very simple way. We really feel, that people of this area are co-operating with the authorities. The online retreat helped us to grow spiritually and to look into oneself with the Lord. It was an enriching experience for each one of us to connect ourselves with our Lifeline.

We spend our evening daily with our mother earth as we take care of the garden, planting, watering and cleaning the surroundings. Our water tank got spoiled since our neighbor used the air gun to chase the monkeys. Due to the lockdown only after a week we could replace the leaking tank. Also, our R.O water purifier stopped working. Nowadays we carry drinking water from the priest's residence.

We too practice social distancing whenever we go out to get provisions for the kitchen, we stand in front of the shop in queue like others. We also worked hard in preparing the report card of our students which is posted on the school website. Online retest was conducted for those students who did not perform well in the exam. These days we are preparing the online classes for the students as the academic session will be late. At present we are settling our religious library.

St. Francis Convent, Jhansi

We began the month of March with special devotion to St. Joseph. Once the home exams were over, our students and their parents anxiously waited for the results of the final exams. On 7th students arrived with their parents to collect the report cards and returned home full of excitement. After a short break they came back to school on 13th to begin their studies once again. Sr. Isabel conducted an orientation programme for teachers prior to the commencing the new academic session.

However, to the disappointment of all, the school had to be closed indefinitely due to Covid-19. Those who were appearing for the board examinations continued their exams until 23rd when the whole nation went under lockdown from 25th March.

On 4th March Sr. Vijaya underwent a surgery, 'Parathyroidectomy', in Apollo Hospital, Delhi. She made a quick recovery and was discharged from the hospital after two days. She returned to Jhansi on 18th. But on her arrival, we had to rush her to St. Jude's hospital as she had developed swelling on her right foot. The investigation showed that she had Cellulites and was confined to bed once again. At present she is doing fine.

On 5th and 6th Sr. Isabel had a meeting with senior teachers to discuss with them what more we need to do for the development of the school and what contribution they are willing to make. It was a very good experience both for the staff and the management.

On 7th March, Srs. Isabel and Deepti attended a training programme, organized by the diocese on how to make use of the Word of God in daily life. The resource persons, Frs. Vijay and George, the National Team Members of Small Christian Community from Nagpur were excellent in their presentation. All the participants appreciated the programme.

On 17th we were happy to have with us Sr. Amita who was on her way back to Nainital from Pune. The next day Sr. Elsy, our provincial gave us a flying visit and returned to Delhi along with Sr. Amita.

21st was a day of prayer and reflection on CC# 2. It was a beautiful experience for all. Again, the next day, 22nd March, the day of 'Janta Curfew', found all of us on our knees in the chapel, imploring the Lord to end the Pandemic, Covid -19, as the whole world is going through a time of great crisis. From the following day until Easter we exposed the Blessed Sacrament from 9.00 a.m. – 12 noon and from 6.30 to 7.30 p.m.

We made use of the lockdown period to undergo the Lifeline Online spiritual exercises conducted by JCSA (Jesuit Conference of South Asia) from 5 to 12 April. As directed, each of us chose a companion to share the inner movements and other insights of the day and each day ended with silent adoration. The Lifeline online retreat was a unique experience. This is for the first time in the

history of the community that all the sisters were able to undergo the spiritual exercises together without any disturbance. This retreat was contextualized - we were in touch with what is happening in the world – death, suffering, pain, loneliness, fear on one hand and on the other, absolute dedication and commitment as well as great generosity, in spite of the risks involved, by medical personnel and other generous volunteers. It was a time to deepen our faith and see God suffering and being very close to us in the here and now. We are deeply grateful to all the Jesuit fathers who contributed their share to make this retreat a wonderful and grace-filled one for all. This dreadful virus is bringing a change in attitudes and behaviour though there is much pain, sorrow and suffering. We pray and trust that God will act in His time and in His way!

We are privileged to have Mass at least thrice a week at this time of lockdown. For the first time in the history of SFC we had the Holy Week Services in our Chapel. Our Chaplain, Fr. Vianney even brought for us an Easter candle. The day we do not have Mass in our chapel, we attend online Mass and receive communion. It is a unique experience and we appreciate the Holy Eucharist much more than ever before.

The Lockdown has given us the opportunity to value our co-workers and their contribution in our mission. In their absence we keep ourselves busy with cleaning the campus, common places in the house, baking host, helping out in the kitchen, washing house linen, replenishing the community library etc.



Sr. Maria Rose too is busy attending online classes. The college is preparing the students to address this dreadful pandemic. The students will be called at any time to extend their service as and when and wherever required. She is ready, in Ignatian language ‘with one foot raised’ to go where the need is the greatest.

We cannot predict when the lockdown would be relaxed or lifted completely. This has given us another opportunity to make use of the Information Technology to conduct online classes for the students. Some of us are busy preparing the daily time table to conduct these online classes while others are busy supervising how the classes are going on. Both the teachers and students are happy and enjoying themselves as this keeps them busy and occupied.



Hearty congratulations to Sr. Deepti who is appointed as JPIC coordinator of the province. She is well versed in online conference. We wish her all the best in her new mission.

We have some sad news to share – the demise of Mrs. Jyotika Williams' husband on 13th, Mrs. Aditi's mother-in-law on 20th and our Sr. Georgina's brother-in-law, Anthony on 19th April. It was heartbreaking to know that his sons and their families could not be present to bid him final farewell as one is in Africa with family and the other with family is in Dubai. Only her sister could be present along with a few close relatives.

A Big Thank You to All: Sr. Vijaya thanks all our dear Sisters for praying for the success of her operation. A special thank you to Srs. Elsy, Pratima, Deepa and Community as well as Poonam and Community for the love and concern with which they cared for her. She is now well and is doing routine work.

Xavier Community, Shahbad

The year 2020 is a memorable and historical year for all of us and the whole humanity. We helplessly witnessed people dying; their dear ones were not with them to say final goodbye. This pathetic situation of the people brought pain to each one's life. We pray may the good Lord take their souls to Heaven.

During the lockdown we were engaged in different activities, spiritual as well as physical. Srs. Tomsy and Sanjana made their annual retreat under the guidance of Fr. Joy John SJ and later Sr. Anita made the online retreat. We were spiritually renewed and experienced God's unconditional love and mercy in our life. We spend sufficient time in front of the Blessed Sacrament praying for the whole world. We are privileged to have the Holy Mass every day. We had a prayerful and meaningful Holy Week service in the Jesuit chapel.

We began to upload the worksheet in the website for the students. Parents are happy and appreciated the management. Since, the lockdown began our kitchen maid is on leave. So, we are busy with cooking and cleaning the house. Evening we spend little time in the garden. There are lots of cabbages, onions, shallots, garlic, beans, brinjal, French beans, kaachil, tomatoes, kappa and chilli in our small garden. We are hopeful to enjoy chiku and grapefruits as there are blossoms on these trees.

When the disciples locked themselves in the upper room for fear of Jews, Jesus appeared to them and said "Peace be with you". We too have locked ourselves in not with fear of Jews but fear of deadly virus. Let us experience the peace of our Risen Lord and may this peace flow out through us to the whole world.



St. Mary's Convent, Mauranipur

When we heard about the lockdown due to spreading of Covid -19, we were little anxious and worried. Then we purchased some provisions for the coming days and thanks be to God that we had enough vegetables in our field and we also shared these items with our co-workers and some of our neighbours too. We were happy that we had completed our home exams before the lockdown began. Our cook Mrs. Daya fell ill just before the lockdown and was absent for 15 days. Sr. Anima returned to the community since her exams are postponed. We gave holidays to our gardener too and he was coming only for a few hours, thrice in a week. In the absence of our employees, we sisters together managed the cooking, cleaning, sweeping etc.

During the lockdown Sr. Suchita enjoyed a fortnight holiday. Sr. Suchita and Geetika made the online retreat, spending time with the Lord in prayer and contemplation. In spite of doing all the household work we as a community found time to pray specially from 3 - 7 p.m.

In the 1st week of lockdown, we had no Holy Mass. It helped us to experience the importance of Holy Eucharist in our life. We experienced an emptiness in our life and longed for the Holy Mass. We spend more time imploring and praying for the whole world and especially for our society and the suffering people with Covid-19. This helped us to feel with the people especially for the poor stranded on the highways. Though we could not do anything materially, we prayed daily for their safety.

We had the privilege of having Holy Week services and Easter morning Mass in our chapel and Sr. Julita joined us from hospital community. We missed our parishioners and our sisters from the hospital community but we prayed for all.

Our teachers work hard to prepare online lessons. It is indeed successful even though about 50 - 60 percentage of our children are from the villages. This lockdown brought us closer to the Lord and to one another and we have the opportunity to spend more time with the Lord. In the absence of our employees especially the cook we realized the importance of their service. When we had to do all the work, we realized how time taking it is and the need to appreciate their service.

These days we have daily Holy Mass. We thank God for His great mercy that Jhansi District and Mauranipur area is declared as Green Zone. We experience the special protection of the Lord over us. We pray every day for the people who are affected by covid-19 and for their cure.

St. Mary's Convent, Rudrapur

The month of March marched in as usual with an echo of the examinations around. The final exams which began on 5th had to be halted on 13th with the orders from the Education department. The

Holi holidays in between interrupted the flow of exams. The main subjects still remained. The uncertainty of the remaining exams bothered the students and parents alike. Answering the phone calls became the norm of the day from 13th to 25th March. The parents were at rest only when the Education Minister declared '*all promotion up to class 8*'. This relieved our tensions as well for some time.

The daily news around the globe was quite paralyzing for each one of us. Therefore, at our community meeting we decided to increase the hours of prayer. Sr. Josephine had her birthday celebrated on 5th. On 17th we celebrated Sr. Patricia's feast day. The presence of Sr. Augustine and other sisters from Jeolikote made the day delightful. Sr. Coletta who was looking out to go back to Nainital had her birthday celebrated here on 23rd. She was quite saddened to hear about the 'lock down'.

Since the Prime Minister declared a 'Janata curfew' on Sunday, 22nd March, the Sunday Mass was anticipated on Saturday evening. Little did we know then that would be our last Parish Mass for many weeks that follow.

From 22nd our lifestyle took a different turn and so the routine. The next day on, Stations of the Cross, the complete mysteries of the Rosary, Mercy Rosary and interceding for the whole corona afflicted world became part of our daily routine. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed from 11a.m - 12 noon and again from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. daily. We realized that our conversations at and outside table were centered around the Pandemic.

The community shared the pain of Sr. Assunta at the news that her sister and family in USA were infected with the corona virus. We pleaded with the Lord for their cure. It was consoling to hear that they were all well once again. Our co-workers who come from outside were under lockdown. The ones at the next door including our helper in the kitchen were happy to come daily which gave us relief.

From 22nd we satisfied ourselves with Communion Service. Fortunately, we could attend Live streaming of Mass online from 28th. As our consecrated Hosts got over, we gave an SOS call to our chaplain who offered Mass for us on 6th morning. We used this opportunity to make our confessions. On 27th the community gathered in the chapel for the '*Urbi et Orbi*' and received the blessings of the Holy Father. We felt great with the thought that the whole Catholic World was in unison at that moment.

At this juncture we were pleased to read about the online retreat by the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. We decided that the entire community would join this retreat. Hence from 5th to the Easter morning we spent ourselves in prayer. Since we were spending already few hours in prayer, we found it easy to connect ourselves with our 'Lifeline'. This was entirely a new experience for all of us – attending Mass and talks online. As we looked at the 'virus of death' raging outside, we took courage to look at ourselves to see our own viruses of death – pride, selfishness, fear etc. – leading us away from the Lord and from one another. The sharing of experiences at the end of the day was

very moving. The Triduum Services online, combined with the retreat was another new and enriching experience.

To fight against the pandemic mood we adorned the chapel with lilies from the first day of lockdown. We continue it still. On Easter Sunday we were fortunate to have Mass celebrated in our chapel. Sanjeevan, our driver who could not go home and our helper, Jyoti and her family too participated in the Mass. We served them breakfast and an Easter lunch. When we do not have Mass in the chapel we switch on to 'live online Mass'.

The agents of 'Extra Marks' smart class had forwarded enough material online for our students. The link for the above was forwarded to the parents. But sad to say that 80% of the parents were unable to help the children. Therefore, from 16th April we started online classes for our students. With limited resources class wise WhatsApp groups were made. The students are excited about the online classes. Srs. Elaine and Mary John spend much of their time helping the students as well as learning new and creative ways of helping them online. They seem to have become good at it.

In these days of scarcity of necessary commodities, we experience blessings in abundance in the form of home-grown bananas and vegetables. Our co-workers too get their share daily from the fruit of their labour.



Sr. Patricia is up to date with the corona virus developments. She shares with us any new discoveries about medicine, how to improve our immunity etc. Sr. Josephine is often seen in the kitchen trying out new dishes. Sr. Coletta who came in for a week came under lockdown, is happy to be here with us. She has forgotten about her walking stick altogether. The words sanitization, self-distancing and avoid touch became common words of our vocabulary.



The campus was adorned with flowers in full bloom in March. It was a feast to the eyes for all those who entered the school. A walk in the morning and evening around the garden would lift our spirits when the mind was weighed down with the sufferings and death due to the corona virus. The campus turned out to be a source of healing for all of us. We are relaxed and we share and relate to each other more specially at the table.

During these days of lockdown our prayers are intense. Our hearts go out to the people suffering specially the poor and the migrant workers. We are comforted to hear that the poor around us are given the ration by the Administration. The deaths around the globe bring us on our knees and we feel deeply our helplessness. We console ourselves with the thought that the Lord is in charge and is powerful. We wish, hope and pray that our Risen Lord will free and heal our world from the corona virus and all the viruses of death very soon.

Wish you all a happy Easter Season and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Maria Bhawan, Mauranipur

'Life is a miracle and every breath we take is a gift from God.'

Sr. Teresa had gone to Asansol for recruiting in the 1st week of March under the guidance of Sr. Gladys. Since Sr. Teresa knows Santhali it was easy for her to talk to the people and the girls. She received a warm welcome wherever she went. The parish priest was very supportive and arranged everything for them. She met many girls and has taken their contact numbers. One of them came with her for 'come and see' programme and she reached her to Krist Jyoti.



Women's Day Programme - We celebrated Women's Day on 8th March in a fitting manner. Sr. Julita took so much trouble to bring together women from 35 villages with the help of animators and arranged a cultural programme. The programme was conducted by trainees of DB Tech project. Sr. Geetika and some of the teachers also took active part making it successful. Fr. David James our parish priest was very supportive for this programme and it was arranged in the school auditorium. He invited the media, prepared flex and arranged the meals for all. They were almost 300 – 400 women and young girls.

Sr. Shanti had some unexplained abdominal pain since few weeks. The investigations showed that she had ovarian cyst but pain was persisting in spite of treatment. An abdominal hysterectomy was done on 16th April. Since it was lockdown period, the hospital had less patients and she could get better rest. Thank you for your valuable prayers.

During the lockdown the hospital is open for the emergency patients and emergency operations are done. USG and Pathology are closed. "If the invisible virus scares us, the Invisible God has the power to save us." With that trust and confidence in the absence of doctors, sisters are rendering their service round the clock, keeping social distance and taking all the possible precautions. Workers also come most of the days.

These days from 3.00 to 7.30 p.m. we have the Blessed Sacrament exposed and praying for the whole world followed by online Mass and Communion Service. The Holy week and Easter were memorable and we found more time to be with Jesus in His Passion, Death and Resurrection. The COVID-19 has brought us closer to Jesus and solidarity with the world. Wherever we turn, only silence, empty roads and streets are seen; it speaks to us of our dependence on God. This time is a grace filled time for us. Take care and keep well.

MAYUR VIHAR COMMUNITY

The great pandemic and lockdown leave all of us with just one choice i.e. to lift our eyes to God our Creator and implore His mercy for the entire world and to introspect, evaluate and re-set our priorities.

**“One thing have I desired of the Lord...
He will hide me in His shelter in the days of trouble,
He will conceal me under the cover of His tent;
He will set me high on a rock.” Psalm 27: 4 -6**



We had Mass daily in the morning by our parish priest Fr. Jose T.J. who came under the pretext of going to buy milk, hanging a milk can on his bike. He told us that he would come till the police stop him. God bless him for his generosity and courage. The initial days of lockdown were one of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, worry and non-acceptance of the situation. For three of us in Mayur Vihar it was a complete lockdown inside our flat having no place to take a little walk or refresh oneself. Without meeting the students, teachers, parents and parishioners, life was dominated by boredom and emptiness. Automatically we turned to the Lord in silent prayers realizing “He alone can fill our emptiness.” Our community prayers became powerful and lively. We realized that we receive ‘the hundred-fold promised by the Lord’ as we had the daily Eucharist and also enjoyed the Eucharistic Presence from 3.00 - 7.00 p.m.

We are fortunate to have Sunita, our helper in the kitchen with us. The essential food items we had already bought and stored. We get fruits and vegetables just outside our society gate and milk and eggs from the Mother Dairy. For our evening recreation we watched the news regularly and occasionally watched the lives of Saints and some other motivational films.

Holy week was well spent with Jesus our Lifeline as we made our annual retreat online. This was a unique experience of self-discipline - being faithful to our meditations and prayer hours without any guide. We accompanied the suffering humanity affected by corona virus through our prayers. On Divine Mercy Sunday we did an act of mercy by distributing ration to the poor 25 families of our area.

We started online classes through Microsoft Teams App. It was an entirely new experience of becoming Techno- friendly and innovative. Parents have welcomed this new venture of the school which is the need of the hour. During the day Sr. Rose is busy preparing the online classes for the students, Sr. Merlin taking online admissions, monitoring the classes etc. And Sr. Poonam with her responsibility as the animator of the community and Head Mistress.

These days we breathe in fresh air and enjoy the silence as hardly any vehicles move on the road.

ST. MARY'S JHAJJAR

Jhajjar district is sealed too! That makes the isolation and inconveniences for everyone around more intense. So far, our close-by villages have been safe. The Pradhans (village heads) in each village takes utmost care so that no outsider enters and none from the village gets out – a real lockdown situation but with all good intention.

We had managed to complete the final exams but could not declare the results. People had just begun to approach us for new admissions... managed to take some 20 fresh admissions only... many doors seem locked.... We could not reach out to the riot victims and migrants in Delhi though our fellow CRI Unit members were very actively involved. We could express our solidarity only with our prayers and by sending the organizers our good wishes. The Sisters of Destitute (SD) run a home in Farukhnagar for the abandoned and mentally challenged. We offered to bear the expense for their food for a day.

How do we then keep ourselves still energized and engaged during these days? Lockdown 1.0 provided us the time to make our annual retreat - the first time sisters getting a chance to make a retreat in this house. The director of XLRI could not travel back to Jamshedpur since lockdown was already announced. So, we got Fr. George SJ to guide us. The uniqueness of the retreat was integration of some of the management principles and psychological tests in the Spiritual Exercises, which helped deepen our self-awareness.



The quiet campus has attracted several types of migratory birds. They hop around fearlessly. The kitchen garden is growing greener and we have enough green grocery for ourselves and some to spare for our co-workers in the campus.



We accompany the students still. All have been given their text books and stationery thanks to the village Pradhaans who organized the distribution. We are also running online class for major subjects using Zoom App. So Srs. Remya and Mariella have a few lessons per week. Sr. Kanula has done a lot of tidying up in the office and is completing her pending works.

Perhaps we are one of the lucky communities to have daily Mass. Not a day we have missed the Mass. During the offertory all our communities without Mass, are specially remembered. We follow up our personal projects of reading and sharing. We had looked forward to a good scholastic year ahead with many admissions and more developments in school. But we have accepted the reality that things do not happen as we plan.

We are learning many lessons that Covid-19 is teaching us and the world. We live gratefully for all that we still enjoy while millions struggle through these challenging times. We earnestly pray for healing of every type.

My Inward Journey

“Those who carry God in their hearts bear heaven with them wherever they go”.

[Ignatius of Loyola]

I feel very privileged to attend the course on '*Ignatian Sources*' from 5th January to 15th March, which was well organized by the Jesuits of De Nobili College, Pune. We were 16 participants from various parts of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The well experienced and expert Jesuit priests dealt with various topics such as, Ignatian Spirituality, Spiritual Exercises, Discernment, Ignatian Constitution, Spiritual Diary, Middle Age Crisis, Community Life, Leadership in Community and School, fostering vocations etc. They have broadened my interior knowledge, thinking, understanding, self-awareness, prayer life and helped me to grow in Ignatian Spirituality. It taught me that 'turn your face towards the sun and the shadows fall behind you'.



Regular group discussions gave us the opportunity to share our views and ideas and clarify our doubts. The weekly presentations and summarizing the whole week were a platform to enhance my confidence and communication skills. We were swamped with work, but I always put my best foot forward, it lifted up my spirit and helped me to realize that 'a ship in the harbour is safe, but that is not what a ship is for', gave me the desire to wear out than to rust out.

The best part of the course was the silent adoration and the retreat, where I could experience interior silence, meditate, contemplate and to listen and talk to God. At the end of the course I feel so enriched. I am grateful to Sr. Elsy, the Provincial and the consultants for giving me this golden opportunity. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Sr. Digna and the Community for freeing me for two and a half months and taking care of my work.

Amita CJ

Loreto House in the midst of Lockdown

As long as life moves on smoothly everything seems to be very exciting and delightful but a little disturbance can destroy the peace of our mind and heart. Something like this happened to us when we got to know that whole of India is going to be under lockdown due to corona virus. The information about the holidays in the college made the students very happy thinking we got holidays from Loreto College which doesn't happen so easily. It is all about fun and relaxation but the seriousness of it made us very anxious.

We the members of the Loreto House community decided to spend more time in prayer; some of us made our annual retreat. It gave us time to reflect and pray over our life. As a community we decided to take up the cleaning of the house and cooking in turns since there are no co-workers.

We also spend our evening time teaching our rainbow children. We prepared them for cultural programme with different items which was much appreciated by all. Since the lockdown, we felt that everything has come to a standstill. Many activities of the college had to be rescheduled.

College started with online classes. Having Zoom video conferencing was an amazing experience



for us. We were given plenty of assignments with set deadlines. We have online tests too. We were so privileged to have Easter week service in our chapel, celebrated by our parish priest and the assistant. It was a homely celebration. We realized the importance of Holy Mass as we were aware that many of our communities could not have the Easter Service. These days we have daily TV Mass.



With this busy schedule we are also happy to have some time to relax and recreate with our community, also to be with ourselves. Everyday sisters come out with new recipes and prepare new dishes in their cooking turns. We know that Covid-19 is a very serious issue all over the world. We are so uncertain about our future. We pray that everything may come to normalcy soon. Mother Earth is closed for repairs. Let her take time as she needs. She will heal herself and we must have faith in God for it.

Vandana & Alka CJ

Experience in Mater Dei, Goa

It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful- David Stienl-Rast

We thank the Almighty God for keeping us in His loving arms during our theological studies in Mater Dei, Goa. He had been leading and guiding us throughout the year.

Theme for the academic year was, “Called to be Witnesses of Prophetic Hope.” It was an enriching experience for us to live and study with sisters from 65 congregations, sharing our charism. Institute of Mater Dei is surrounded by beautiful, calm, safe and healthy atmosphere. The devotion of the pilgrims throughout and the participation in the Communion Service at Basilica BOM JESU often inspired us and deepened our faith.

Through this one year of Theology we have received much. We have gained not only knowledge from books but also about life and people and about oneself, our vocation, mission, our role in the Congregation and in the Church. Through various classes, activities, presentations, inter-religious meetings, seminars and protest rallies against injustice, we have learned to think and reflect on contemporary problems and issues that are immensely important for the mind, heart and the world we live in. We have also benefitted much for our spiritual growth from recollections, seminars, community prayers, retreat, Holy Mass, Novena in the Basilica etc. We feel happy and privileged to be part of Mater Dei.



As we write this, our hearts are filled with much gratitude and love. We sincerely thank you dear Sr. Elsy, our Provincial and team, Sr. Pratima, our former Provincial and her team for giving us this wonderful opportunity and for your prayerful support and blessings. We take this opportunity to thank our dear sisters in the province for your prayerful support during our study.

A special word of gratitude to Sr. Shweta, our junior mistress for her timely guidance and short visit to the Institute when we were there. The boarding, food, community activity, spiritual activity, health care, syllabus, outings were all designed to safeguard and foster religious life. We have certainly gained much spiritually and mentally for our religious life.

We request you to continue to pray for us that the experience of Mater Dei bring blessings to our mission in the Congregation.

Srs. Kiran & Nibedita C J

My Lockdown experience ...

I am spending the lockdown days in my rented one room flat outside Christ University, Bangalore campus. Before the nationwide lockdown was announced, I was wishing for it to come, in order to stay safe from the virus as the number of cases around here was rising. But when it actually came it did cause me anxiety. The most congested city in the world, as Bangalore is known, suddenly became vacant and an eerie calmness replaced the loud noises of human activity. The quarter where I live also went silent and everyone withdrew into the safety of their homes. The people who came out to buy essentials-maintained distance from each other and stared at one another with mistrust, some even to the extent of making you feel guilty. I also procured for myself essential groceries to survive the lockdown days and set my mind on completing the tasks I have been working on.

Soon, unlike my expectations, the lockdown began to weigh on me. Confined to my tiny room my thoughts became heavy at times. I found it difficult to focus on anything as I continuously looked for the news updates on how the virus infected world was getting on. I felt worried not only about the alarming numbers of death taking place on a global level but also about the shameless display of hatred and ignorance in people's, especially some of the world leaders', reaction to this crisis. On a personal level too, some thoughts created tension in me. I had reached an important phase of my research, as this killer virus was making its entry. My work is focused on two concepts - human agency and freedom. The two notions that now stand suspended by the emergence of this global pandemic. Sitting before my work, with this thought occupying my mind, I feel distressed because the understanding I have gathered before the virus struck looks so outdated.

The lockdown has not ended. Looking forward what I can see is only the uncertainty that lies ahead. Like everyone else I realize that in a matter of a few days the world has changed. COVID -19 has changed us on all level's life. I wish a speedy recovery for the world.

Anu George CJ



**May the month of May bring more blessings
on us and on the whole world
as we seek the intercession of our dear Mother!!!**

REACHING OUT TO THE NEEDY

DELHI PROVINCE

Our **community in Jeolikote**, reached out to the villagers in BANA and MONA. The nationwide lock down terribly affected these villages. The parish priest Fr. Uday was held up there. When he visited the families, he saw the pitiable conditions of the people. They had rice and wheat flour and nothing else. Father stayed on as they needed him. Meanwhile he asked us whether we



could provide masala and few other necessary items. There are 32 families in all. So, after a community discussion, Srs. Pratibha and Deepika went to the market early in the morning and purchased items like turmeric, mixed gram, arhar dal, chana, chilly and coriander powder, jaggeri, oil, salt, tealeaves and also some medicines for common sickness.

The community came together and packed them in separate bags and we felt it would hold them

together for a while. So Srs Lucy, Damian and Sheeba along with Fr. Uday left for the village at 5.30 a.m. and reached the foot hills around 6.30 a.m. A few villagers and a mule were waiting for them to cart it up the hill. After 40 minutes of climbing the steep hills they reached Mona village. The representatives from each family were eagerly waiting for them. The parish priest and the



sisters along with the people thanked the good Lord and then the ration was distributed to them. The joy on the faces of people was the satisfaction experienced by the sisters. We always looked forward to be in the forefront to help the people. We raised our hearts in gratitude for giving us such an opportunity. We dream that nobody should go hungry to bed. So, we are reaching out to the people in Jeolikote also who are really in need. We spotted about 35 families in our surrounding villages and gave them ration. At the request of police, we bought some amount of ration for 20 families, and handed it over to them to distribute, since we could not get permission and move about and distribute.

Nirmala community, the candidates and postulants in Krist Jyoti prepared food for



400 migrant workers who have no means of getting any provision. This was done in collaboration with the Diocesan Social Work Centre. We were happy that we could do some service for our suffering brothers and



sisters. Later, we also distributed some 'ration' (Atta, Dal, oil, sugar, tea leaves, sooji and soap) to 30 families.



Mayur Vihar community

through their workers and others came to know about some genuinely poor families around who really needed help. We purchased food grains and distributed to 25 families. Thus, became channels of blessings to the needy and hungry during this time of lockdown.

The community at Nainital

has quarters for our own co-workers. Due to lockdown they were not able to go to the market to buy provisions. Sensing the reality and getting into the shoes of the poor and needy we distributed the ration to around 70 families including our co-workers and inmates of leper colony at Haldwani.



Shahbad Community - Under the able guidance of Fr. George Peter S.J the Jesuit community



distributed the provision for the poor people in our locality. We too rendered our helping hand in packing the provisions. On 5th April our Prime minister announced to the whole India to put off all the lights at 9 pm for 9 minutes as gesture of solidarity of the citizens towards the fight against Coronavirus. In order to show our solidarity, we too put off our lights and went to the terrace and flashed the mobile lights for 9 minutes. It was wonderful to see our neighbouring buildings lighted with candles and oil lamps. We raised our



hearts to Jesus the light of the world in unison with the nation to bring healing to the world.

St. Francis community in Jhansi

contributed to Diocesan Social Work Centre Rs. 55,000/- to give food to the migrant labourers thus reached out to the needy during the lockdown. Their contribution of Rs. 2,00,000/- towards Covid-19 relief work to the District Magistrate, Jhansi was greatly appreciated.



They also purchased food items like, wheat flour, rice, oil, dal, salt, coriander powder, turmeric, chilli and some soap and detergent powder for 100 families and packed them separately for each family to be distributed in collaboration with the Diocesan Social Work Centre.

“Be Compassionate and Merciful Towards the Poor and Generous also, if you have the means.”

