

# News and Views

Newsletter of the Divine Providence Province



## The Corona Test

May 2020

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Dear Confreres,

Easter joy and peace be with you all in the midst of lockdowns and restricted life styles, in a moment when we need it more than ever. Along with the global community, we the Servants join ourselves in combating the pandemic and its effects on society. In the name of the Province I express my heartfelt condolences and prayers to the communities and the family members of those who have died in our facilities due to this Covid 19. There are still those who are suffering from this infection who need to be supported and carried in our prayers.

I congratulate you above all for your participation and involvement in addressing this situation and for having collaborated with the government through your simple acts of charity, risking your safety and well-being. Let us continue to have the courage to go out and visit the sick and to accompany the medical staff and volunteers as directed by our Pope.

It is God's punishment for human disobedience; it is nature's reaction for meddling with the basics of the globe; it is something else a new conspiracy to create a new economy and world order; it is bio war. So many views and explanations are widespread today. Many solutions and antidotes are proposed but people at large are afraid of whom to believe, which one to follow.

Whatever may be the points of view, for us Christians and above all for us religious it is a moment of testing our faith in the Lord. Without formal exam schedules, formal questions; to be routed in my faith when things happen as if God does not exist, as if he does not respond to our prayers; to be routed

in my priesthood when I do not have any common liturgical celebrations, when I do not officiate them, when I do not preach; to be faithful to my prayer life when the common and organized prayers are missing; to be more reflective and contemplative when annual retreats and recollections are missing; to be more united with my community confreres when our common moments are reduced; to be content and satisfied when I have to live on the bare minimum; to share with others when I am lacking many things.

The apostles felt tested after the death of Jesus, it was very evident on the faces of the two disciples going to Emmaus. They were very sad and disappointed even though Jesus was traveling with them, because their thoughts were centered on what was happening in Jerusalem and not on Jesus and His powerful words. But while returning to Jerusalem after meeting the Lord in the breaking of bread, they were joyful and courageous even though Jesus was not physically present with them because Jesus was the center of their lives. Let us keep our faith alive.

Let us continue to pray for our communities worldwide who are battling with this corona situation

Let us continue to pray for the beloved mother of Fr. Peter Sebastian who is bedridden.

Thank you for your prayers for the niece of Fr. Francis.

The Annual Retreat in India is cancelled for the time being

*Fr. Ronald J. SdC*  
Provincial Superior



“Lord, stop it with Your hand, that's what I prayed for.”

Pope Francis

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## COVID-19 Relief Work

By Fr. Francis, SdC - DGBH, Cuddalore

COVID-19 is menacing the whole of humanity – and so humanity must fight back. Pope Francis, addressing “a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family,” Francis spoke of “the contagion of hope.” The pope acknowledged that for many, “this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.”

COVID-19 is attacking societies at their core, claiming lives and people’s livelihoods. The potential longer-term effects on the global economy and those of individual countries are dire. The United Nations Secretary-General calls everyone to act together to alleviate human suffering.

The provincial superior, in a non-formal way, convoked an emergency council meeting on April 6th with members residing in India. He urged the communities to respond to the situation spiritually and economically. The communities in India have been providing relief in the following ways:

### 1. Spiritual Assistance

God does not abandon us; God goes with us, even now in this time of trial. In this moment, it is important for us to anchor our hearts in the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Now is the time to intensify our prayers and sacrifices for the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Jesus experienced the full measure of human suffering. The Lord suffered and died for us and for our salvation, and, no matter what befalls us, be it sickness or tribulations, our hope in Jesus’ love will not disappoint us. We will find the grace to join our sufferings to Jesus’, and as we do so, we will come to realize the depth and beauty of God’s love for us. All the communities of DPP in India have been offering Masses, Adoration and Rosaries for the people who are affected by the corona virus.

### 2. Groceries to the Poor Families

Since the Government enacted a curfew for 40 days in India, the daily coolies, auto-drivers, masons, carpenters and other workers suffer without food. Therefore, DPP has distributed groceries to 1200 families so far. Still there are poor who are in need of our charity. Special



attention has been given to the families of good children.

### 3. Food for Homeless People

There are many people living on the streets and road sides in India. Such people do not have homes with kitchen facilities to cook food. Therefore we cook the food in our communities and take it to the street to serve them.

### 4. Residence and Food for Migrant Workers

The DPP also pays attention to the migrant workers

from different states. We provide shelter and food for them.

### 5. Sanitization

DPP gives attention to the health care of the people. The province provides them with soap, masks and sanitizer. It also helps the people get medical assistance.

### 6. Awareness Program

The outbreak of COVID-19 has raised alarm worldwide as the number of people infected and death toll continue



to rise. The outbreak has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization on January 30th. Confirmed cases have been reported in the state of Kerala, India also. To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat COVID-19 and no vaccine has been developed to combat the disease. The DPP felt the urgency in creating awareness among the people regarding the disease outbreak. The program was given in our boys homes and parishes.

“Let us be hope for the people who are sick, homeless, migrants and persons with disabilities in this pandemic crisis.”

Pope Francis





## The Situation of COVID-19 in India

India has recorded 34,897 confirmed cases, 1,145 deaths, 9,199 cured cases, according to the latest update released by the Union Ministry for Health and Family Welfare on Wednesday evening. The whole



### Rations and Gas cylinders

The finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced free gas cylinders for three months to beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. Almost all states in India announced free rations. It is a great help for the millions of people who are dependent on such programs. Religious houses and NGO's are doing a beautiful service in distributing rice and groceries to the poor. It is a remarkable situation in India.

world is at a moment of peril and sorrow due to the Corona Virus. The World Health Organization announced the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on March 12th, as the positive cases shot up and many deaths have been recorded up to now. Everyone is aware of this current issue that needs to be faced. At different levels like the government, police, scavengers, doctors and all the well wishers trying their best to alleviate the suffering of the people, yet the cry of the poor echoes for the basic essentials like food, sanitizers and health care.



### Masks and Supplies

Private companies and organizations started distributing masks and sanitizers to the State officials and also to the people directly. Vivo said that they would donate 100,000 surgical and 5,000 N95 masks to the government. Hyundai India announced that they placed an order for 25,000 COVID-19 Advanced Diagnostic Testing Kits from South Korea.

Since Tuesday evening March 24th, Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered 1.3 billion Indians to stay inside their homes for 21 days to stop the spread of the corona virus in India. The lockdown continues and it is unclear when it will end. Soon after the first case of COVID-19 arrived in India in late January, India responded with restrictions on flights and screenings at its airports. Across the country, millions of people live in proximity, in densely populated slums where access to health care is poor. The government's decision to impose the lockdown was necessary to lessen the inevitable spread of the disease.

### Potentially Infected People Escape



Several cases were reported where people who are suspected to have come in contact with the virus escaped from quarantines and hospitals. In Chhattisgarh, a 35 yr.-old man from

Tagapani, Dhamtari, who was put under isolation by the health department after his return from Tamil Nadu,

There is a prediction that even with conservative estimates, there would be 10 million patients with severe COVID-19 disease in India, many of whom would need to be hospitalized. India has fewer than 100,000 intensive-care unit beds and 20,000 ventilators, most of which are only in the large cities. India does not have the strong health system and economic resources to control the situation. A lockdown was the only option to control the disease.



committed suicide. In Gujarat, 93 people have broken self-isolation rules in 10 days. FIRs have been filed against 10. Two expats in Kasaragod district, Kerala, who violated quarantine measures were subjected to punitive measures, including cancellation of their Indian passports. On March 20th, a 26-year-old woman suspected of being infected with the virus

was reported to have fled the hospital in Punjab. The

woman, who hails from Mohali, recently returned from the US and was brought to a government hospital in Chandigarh. On March 13th in Telangana, a woman who returned from Singapore has gone missing, while a man who came from Doha went somewhere without telling hospital staff.

**Misinformation and Discrimination**

Despite evidence to the contrary, a viral rumour spread online alleging that only people who eat meat were affected by coronavirus, causing “#NoMeat\_NoCoronaVirus” to trend on Twitter. Some politicians like Swami Chakrapani and Suman Haripriya claimed that drinking cow urine and applying cow dung on the body can cure COVID-19. WHO's chief scientist, Soumya Swaminathan, debunked such claims and criticized these politicians for spreading misinformation. Residents of a village named Korauna in Sitapur District in Uttar Pradesh faced discrimination due to similarity in name of the village with the virus. Some doctors and



medical workers were evicted from their homes over fears they may be carrying corona virus. In cases reported across the country, healthcare professionals described the growing stigma

they are facing from their neighbors and landlords, resulting in many being refused taxis, barricaded from their own homes, or made homeless. Some patients, in different quarantine facilities of Uttar Pradesh, refused to eat food because the cooks in these facilities were Dalits.

**Supporting the Poor and Needy**

The whole world is at peril and sorrow due to this pandemic. Everyone is aware of current issues that need to be faced. As the whole world responds to this burning issue, on our part Divine Providence Province is helping out the poor by giving them the essential provisions. Let's all continue to pray that the pandemic may come to an end by the intervention and grace of God.

**Easter Triduum**

**CHENNAI** - The whole world is in the horror of the Pandemic COVID-19 and the people are away from their religious practices. Most Catholics were unable to participate in the Easter Celebrations amidst the curfews.

Don Guanella Major Seminary celebrated the Easter Triduum in a simple and meaningful manner, especially offering prayers and holy Masses for the prevention of the virus. The Easter Triduum was organized so that all the priests were able to preach the word of God and to explain the importance of the Passion of the Lord and the need of social awareness while the world faces challenges and difficult moments. On Holy Thursday Fr. Periyamayagam celebrated the holy Eucharist and Fr. Benson, the superior, washed the feet of the Twelve Apostles. On Good Friday, Fr. Michael led the Way of the Cross animated by Fr. Anandhan. The Easter Vigil



was celebrated by Fr. Benson and Fr. James preached the homily. The whole Triduum was offered for an end to the corona infections and to obtain good health and normalcy in the world.

**Quarantine Easter Mass**

**CUDDALORE** - Easter this year was on April 12th, and it is going to be remembered for the rest of our lives and in the history of the world.



Despite the quarantine and lockdown, Easter was not canceled for 2020. People found creative ways to continue the celebration and connect with

their families and loved ones during this time. Though many celebrations have been canceled due to the corona virus pandemic, Easter was not one of them in St. Joseph's Seminary. Since all the Fathers, Orissa brothers and workers were on campus, the vigil Mass was possible in the chapel celebrated by Fr. Mathias in a meaningful way. He preached a short homily explaining the importance of the day and also thanked God for the

opportunity to celebrate Mass while many others didn't have the opportunity. Fr. Vincent, Fr. David, Fr. Arul, Fr. Arockia Raj and Fr. Loyola concelebrated. The Orissa brothers and staff participated. May the Risen Lord bring peace and serenity in the world and especially bring healing to the people with COVID-19 and that the pandemic may end soon.

## Corso Intensivo

**CHENNAI** - Summer is the only time where we have some free time to relax and be with our family members, all the more no doubt it is also most conducive period to equip oneself intellectually. Don Guanella Major Seminary is no way away from this expectation and it was actualized with the help of its Superior, Fr. Benson. On April 16th Fr. Ronald started the Italian Course

for the brothers of DGMS. He initially started by teaching the brothers to read basic prayers and other basic grammar in Italian. The intention is to ensure that the students will be able to enjoy the richness of the Founder's writings and assimilate his spirit.



## May Calendar of Events

- 1 **St. Joseph the Worker**
- 12 **Grass Lake: Mother of Divine Providence Day- PUSJ**
- 19 **Grass Lake: St. Joseph Day- PUSJ**
- 21 **Mary, Mother of the Church**
- 24 **The Ascension of the Lord**
- 26 **Anniversary of the Ordination of St. Louis Guanella (1866)**
- 27 **Anniversary of the Birth of Blessed Clare Bosatta (1858)**
- 28 **Anniversary of the Baptism of Blessed Clare Bosatta (1858)**
- 31 **Pentecost Sunday**  
**Anniversary of the First Mass of St. Louis Guanella (1866)**



- 13 **Fr. Stalin, Bro. John Baptist Hoang Luong, Bro. Philip Victor A, Bro. Anthony Samy A: birthday**
- 15 **Fr. David Stawasz, Fr. Pino: ordination day**
- 16 **Fr. David Anburaj, Fr. Arockia Vanathaiyan: birthday**
- 19 **Fr. Ligori, Fr. Visuvasam: ordination day**
- 21 **Fr. Felicks, Bro. Melvin Raj S: birthday**
- 22 **Fr. Edal Vinoth Joe: birthday**
- 24 **Fr. Umberto Brugnoli, Fr. Charlton Viray, Fr. Johndass, Fr. Piero Lippoli: birthday; Fr. Sagayaraj: feast day**
- 26 **Fr. Dennis Weber: birthday; Fr. Eduardo Cerbito: ordination day**
- 28 **Fr. Maria Antony Rajan: birthday**
- 30 **Fr. John Kennedy A.: birthday**

## Best Wishes and Prayers to:

- 1 **Fr. Maria Paul, Bro. John Peter M.: birthday**
- 4 **Fr. Vinnarasan: birthday; Fr. Arul Raj, Fr. Felicks, Fr. Gnanaraj: ordination day**
- 5 **Fr. Jayasoosai: birthday**
- 8 **Bro. Rajesh Kumar: birthday; Fr. Enzo**

Have questions or comments about this newsletter?  
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## St. Louis Center Responds to COVID-19

**CHELSEA** - Another month has gone by, and since our last report, COVID-19 continues to be devastating to the State of Michigan, as we remain third in the U.S. for the number of deaths which have now reached 3,789 on May 1st. In Washtenaw County where St. Louis Center is located, there are now 1,077 cases of COVID-19 and 61 people have died. That's triple the number of reported infections since the end of March, and six times the number of deaths.

The State Legislature is now squaring off with the Governor concerning her authority to maintain a State of Emergency in Michigan, and the Governor has extended her "Stay Home" executive order to May 28th. However, the legislature said yesterday (4/30) that there will be no more extensions given. The Legislature will be taking the Governor to court to determine the outcome.

In the meantime, St. Louis Center has been fortunate that no employees or residents have been infected with the virus, and the status quo barring non-essential visitors from entering our facility remains in place. The Direct Care and support staff continue to report to work to care for the residents, and non-essential staff continue to work from their homes using video conferencing when necessary.

Staff continues to have their temperatures checked upon entry, and anyone not feeling well with potential symptoms from this virus is asked to stay home and self-quarantine. Housekeeping keeps high traffic areas disinfected, and hand sanitizer and hand washing remain a requirement throughout the day for personal safety.

We continue to pray for the Lord's protection for our residents, staff and religious, and for a safe resolution to this pandemic and forced isolation soon.

### Daily Life in 'Corona-tine'

**CHELSEA** - St. Louis Center staff has been working hard to make daily life seem normal with the new routines of a life of quarantine. The residents were used to going to work or school; enjoying music, movement or pet therapy; participating in

Special Olympics events, going to movies or Friendship Bible. So many things have been cancelled or postponed. Some of the residents were having increased anxiety, in response staff introduced the use of weighted blankets that are proven to reduce their anxiety. Recreation therapy has increased



on campus, giving the opportunity to many residents to improve their mobility, and engaging others in fitness activities. Direct Care staff has been extremely creative in keeping the residents busy doing online schoolwork, craft projects and science experiments. The residents even made their own COVID-19 time capsule so that they can remember what they were doing during this pandemic.

### 'Corona' Concert

**CHELSEA** - Saman Dawisha, SLC Quality Director, is a member of the Langsford Men's Chorus. He is also in the choir at his church and a special schola during the summer months. On April 17th, Saman performed a short concert for the residents of Fr. Guanella Hall. Jerome on the keyboard and Sarah on recorder provided musical accompaniment. The staff and residents enjoyed the break in the daily routine.



### Earth Day Activity

**CHELSEA** - Staff at St. Louis Center led the residents in an activity to help them understand our duty to protect and care for the environment. On April 22nd each group created a fairy garden to beautify their patios



### Mass Continues

**GRASS LAKE** - Most Rev. Earl Boyea, Bishop of the Lansing Diocese, is envisioning how a return to small public celebrations of Mass could be possible beginning May 18th. Until the time when public Masses are allowed, Fr. Leo Joseph, director of the Pious Union, continues to livestream Masses daily on Facebook to provide spiritual food to the faithful.

