



May 3, 2020

Dear Friends,

As some of you may know, on April 20 the Durham Region Health Department declared a COVID-19 outbreak at René Goupil House, the Jesuit infirmary community in Pickering. Despite the center's thorough prevention and management efforts, as in many other long-term care facilities across the country, the virus has taken a toll.

As of today, 16 residents and some staff have tested positive, and four Jesuits have died due to complications related to the virus.

George O'Neill, S.J., died very peacefully in the Ajax-Pickering Hospital at 7:20 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2020. His breathing just got slower and slower until he passed over into the hands of the Lord. George was 77 years old and in his 57th year in the Society of Jesus.

Fr. Michael Hawkins, S.J., passed away at 11:02 a.m. on April 30, 2020, at René Goupil House. Fr. Gilles Mongeau, S.J., was at his bedside and was singing to him "Songs of the Angels" when he took his last breath. He was 83 years old and in his 63rd year in the Society.

Fr. Peter Larisey, S.J., died at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto also on April 30, 2020, at 10:45 p.m. He was a specialist in the art of Lawren Harris and in the spirituality of modern art, a gifted teacher, and spiritual director to many artists. He was also a stalwart presence as a presider and concelebrant for the HIV Mass and for All Inclusive Ministries at Our Lady of Lourdes. He was 91 years old and in his 68th year in the Society.

Father Norman Dodge, S.J., 92, passed away at 7:08 pm on Saturday May 2nd. He was trained as a social worker and was missioned first to Montreal and then Ottawa. He established pastoral outreach programs for seniors & the homebound in both cities, and assisted in local parishes; he was superior of the Jesuit community in Ottawa from 1997 to 2003.

Two other Jesuits continue to be in critical condition. The rest of the residents are doing well, are being monitored and appropriately cared for. As soon as the outbreak was announced, Jesuits from our various communities volunteered to come to Pickering to support the infirmary. Six of them are there now as assistant personal support workers alongside the staff, and a volunteer nurse has joined the team.

Care

Since the onset of the pandemic, thorough protective measures for both team and community members were implemented. And as soon as symptoms linked to COVID-19 emerged, the centre requested to the authorities for all Jesuits and staff to be tested. The Rene Goupil staff and volunteers continue to follow [the guidelines](#) for COVID-19 outbreak prevention, control and management in long-term care homes provided by public health

officials. Indeed, given how widespread the occurrence of the virus is in the region, it has been noted that the March 9 lock-down was a very positive action for keeping COVID at bay until the positive tests of April 20.

No COVID-19 cases have been reported in other Jesuit communities in Canada, including the Jesuit infirmary community of Saint Jean de Brébeuf in Richelieu, Quebec. All Jesuits have implemented recommended protocols such as handwashing, social distancing, group cohorting and isolation.

Prayers

I made a 'virtual visit' to René Goupil via various web platforms from April 20-22 of this year. Although I was unable to meet with all of the men, I reiterated to those with whom I spoke my gratitude for the 'mission of praying for the Society' that the members of the René Goupil community carry out with such dedication. In light of the Covid-19 reality, it is now our turn to pray for these men during a time when they have become society's most vulnerable, given age and pre-existing health issues.

Friends, partners in mission and benefactors, we are so grateful for your ongoing support. Now, the most important support you can give is by way of prayer; prayer for these men, prayer for those who care for them and prayer that these next weeks and months will see fewer and fewer illnesses and loss of life due to the virus. Pope Francis has written a beautiful meditation entitled 'a plan for rising again' (un plan para resucitar)*, an Easter response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He writes that "In this time of trial and sorrow, it is my wish that, wherever you are, you can experience Jesus, who comes forth to encounter you, who greets you and tells you: "Rejoice" (Mt 28:9). And may it be that greeting that mobilizes us to summon and enhance the good news of the Kingdom of God."

Truer Easter words could not be spoken and the positive stance of rejoicing that Pope Francis advocates represents the faith-filled hope that we all need as we continue to live our 'new normal' during this time when solidarity is paramount.

Let us continue to pray for and with each other,



Erik Oland, S.J.

Provincial of the Jesuits of Canada

*"En este tiempo de tribulación y luto, es mi deseo que, allí donde estés, puedas hacer la experiencia de Jesús, que sale a tu encuentro, te saluda y te dice: "Alégrate" (Mt 28, 9). Y que sea ese saludo el que nos movilice a convocar y amplificar la buena nueva del Reino de Dios." see full text in Spanish - <https://www.vidanuevadigital.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UN-PLAN-PARA-RESUCITAR-PAPA-FRANCISCO-VIDA-NUEVA.pdf>