

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

May Christ Jesus, true King and Lord of history, keep us joyful as we hope for the grace that will be ours when He reveals Himself to us.

In a spirit of fraternity we share with you some of our experiences regarding the consequences of COVID 19 at Jacona.

We have lived this time generally in a climate of peace and order in community. The health guidelines of our Bishop in the diocese of Zamora, in fact, required some modifications in the way we receive visitors to our monastery. Thus, starting Sunday, March 29, the Sunday Mass schedule was moved from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., the time of our weekday celebration.

This avoids the crowding that commonly occurs at Sunday mass. So we had fewer people both for confession and purchasing our products from the gift shop. These measures have accentuated the solitary environment of the monastery and given us more personal time on Sunday mornings.

Holy Week celebrations were more intimate, as we were also instructed to avoid any massive attendance by the faithful. We therefore closed the hostelry and limited the attendance to the celebrations to those faithful who came spontaneously--generally to no more than 50 people. We subsequently have received guests in the hostelry, though also in limited groups.

Our economy has been stable, yet the sale of our cheese, bakery and religious products at the gift shop fell by half. Still, product distribution to stores in the city of Zamora remained practically the same. To this can be added the help of the people of Jacona and Zamora who have generously brought us fresh and preserved food in an effort to stay in touch with our community at this time of crisis. We have truly felt the Provident hand of Our kind Lord in countless gestures of generosity received.

For our part, we have tried to raise our prayers more insistently for all the adverse circumstances that are caused by the spread of COVID-19. In this respect, we have celebrated the new Mass in Time of Pandemic and we pray Pope Francis' plea to Our Lady for this intention every day after Mass and Vespers.

In general, the community has remained calm, but for some of the experiences mentioned, as have our neighbors in Jacona and Zamora, where people live for the most part without undue alarm, doubtless through God's grace.

During this time but unrelated to the pandemic, we had to face the departure to the Father's House of our brother Lorenzo after several health crises. We thank God for the gift of this brother--one of our brothers from Spain--who was so dear to our community.

We greet each of you around the Order and assure you of our communion, especially with those who suffer this time most personally, trusting in God's loving Providence. Indeed, everything works for the good of those who love him.

May our Lord shine his paschal light through our fidelity to our vocation, as a light of hope for so many souls who live in the depths of pain and fear. We also intercede for those who die or are in the throes of death unprepared for this significant moment, that they may find bold instruments of grace to show them the face of Christ, and may they always find the doors of Mercy thrown wide open to them.

In communion of Faith and Love:

Your brothers of Our Lady of Curutarán in Jacona, México.