

Containment Val d'Igny:

Concretely, on March 15, we closed the guesthouse, the church, the store, and laid off the saleswoman, the chocolate worker, and the maintenance man. We set up the various barrier gestures and distance (an empty stall between us in church, and in the refectory, we spaced ourselves out. The 23 sisters in the senior wing were confined to their rooms as requested by the health services.

From an economic point of view we lost the proceeds from the Easter season (we have a chocolate factory) but we tried to sell some of the rest of the stock in other ways (mail order, delivery to a nearby supermarket, donations and ... consumption!) and were able to count on the support of the local press to remind the readers of our existence. We were engaged in canvassing new potential customers. We also took the opportunity to create a Facebook profile for the store.

From a liturgical point of view, we were deprived of nothing and were able to celebrate as usual with the few adaptations indicated by the CEF (no mandateum...). We closed the doors of the church at the time of Mass but, given our remoteness and confinement, few people came to pray there during the day. On the other hand, we answered calls of distress, requests for prayer... We were aware that it was important to live the liturgy deeply, on behalf of all members of the Church who were deprived of it.

After the first stage of deconfinement we had a community exchange on what we wanted to keep from it. Here's the summary:

All of us are pleased to have escaped the Covid so far and recognize the excellent conditions we have enjoyed during the confinement: sun, space, less worries, presence of the chaplain, cooks, health care staff. The Sisters of the Unit of Life (senior wing), deprived of space like all people of their generation, have however also benefited from the sun, the liturgy, the restoration and above all the care of their health workers. They regretted having been separated from the rest of the community, as we likewise missed seeing them, and for many, having to stay in rooms for so long was an ordeal, even if it allowed them to have extra rest at first. Too much is too much. Should we have been less restrictive? It's easy to say that, after the fact; in the unknown evolution of this pandemic, we only followed the prescribed health guidelines and it was prudent given the average age of our community.

It is obvious that containment as such is not desirable; it has deprived us all, more or less, of our freedom of movement, but it has also had positive effects. We note three positive points that have come out from our sharing:

- the arrangement in choir was appreciated by almost all,
- a certain quality of life together (quieter, less outings, absences, less business, time to pray, read, work in the garden, doing chores and other households tasks waiting to be done.),
- the rediscovery of common work.

And we wonder how to keep the best of these values, outside of this period which was dramatic for many, without being bound by external conditions.

At this point, we have experienced a certain rest, the happiness of a quieter life, and how this calm can nourish us spiritually, humanly.