

Monastère de Latroun
B. P. 753 ص.ب. 753
72 10701 Ramleh 721701



دير اللطرون - رهبانية الترابيست
الرملة

Epidemic / Pandemic of Covid-19

Here at Latroun, in the Holy Land, we have not been strangers to the global crisis of the Corona virus since, while being monks and alien to the world by vocation, we remain in solidarity with our human brothers for better or for worse.

We have followed the information on this universal event all through its evolution. At first, we had not really taken it seriously, thinking that the mass media were usually interested in looking for or even creating the spectacular.

That lasted until the end of February when the civil Authorities little by little took more and more restrictive measures, even to the point of isolation. Like it or not, we had to stop everything: closing our store (our main livelihood), the guesthouse, no visits, no going out except for what is strictly necessary. Then it was decided to keep all our workers with us. They have continued to do their usual jobs. The situation has lasted more than two months, and movement has resumed only very timidly up till today. Our economy has suffered terribly, with no possibility of facing our multiple expenses.

However, thanks to God, the epidemic has spared us; the isolation measures have been effective, despite a certain fear that continues to enter here and there, especially because the number of older brothers (over 70 years) is very high...

After timidly beginning to resume our life since June, it seems that a new wave [of the virus] is rising (July), more threatening, we are told.

Based on the information that reaches us from the outside, we see our fate as much more enviable, infinitely more enviable than the slaughter mowing down a stunning number of crowds of the poor who have died in lamentable conditions: in the greatest solitude without the presence and affection of any of their own kin — and that is true in many lands of our minuscule earthly globe. We think of the frightening number of victims whose terrible economic situation often brings with it, famine, a lack of basic care, and the psychological damage caused by confinement. Few people have had (or have) our privilege of enjoying a large space around buildings, allowing us to move about.

Presently we are on the watch, not knowing what to expect but ready to mobilize our wisdom and know-how to try to manage well any other events.

Looking carefully at what we have lived through with Covid-19, and continue to live, there is much soul-searching deep within us. We have never lived such an experience in the past. Personally, I see myself thinking thus: whether one is a believer or not, and whatever be one's philosophy and one's meaning of human existence, here is a question that arises: our world, our human brothers, all lands and all cultures alike are

always looking to make progress, to creating a technology more and more driven, to producing inventions unsuspected a short time ago. All this in view of what? Is it to prove the unlimited creative power of man? Is it to prove that man is master of the world? To make men, humanity, happier? Are men today truly happier, more [truly] men, than in the more or less distant past? How does it happen that in all the nations of the world, all the economies of the richest nations have been simultaneously brought to their knees before an invisible minuscule virus? And that the greatest pundits of science, though combining all their means of defense, have found that they are incapable of neutralizing this giant and minuscule enemy? What, then?

I have sensed (lived) something positive through this experience of the pandemic. I have felt a family closeness to all peoples of the earth. I have relatives in Halifax, in Houston, in Los Angeles, and close friends and acquaintances in other lands. With them, with our other fellow humans, something strong has united us. We have found ourselves in the same trench, waging the same battle, beyond our religious, political, and racial differences: all facing the same common enemy, confronting the same challenge. I do not know of another situation in history where all the inhabitants of the planet have lived to this extent the experience of forming a single family. There is something truly beautiful here: united in misfortune, united in love.

br. Louis o.c.s.o.

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