

COVID-19 Experience at Star of Hope - Macau

The history of the world is changing, the whole world is becoming more compassionate and supportive in building a new civilization. May it continue to be so with the new awareness of God's presence in our lives.

On January 29 our Diocese closed all the churches in Macau, all gathering were cancelled and lockdown started. Mother Martha arrived on January 27 for her annual visit and left Macau on February 3 with the last Ferry for the Hong Kong International Airport.

Since that day, any means of transportation for HK was stopped until June 15. But because of the third wave of COVID 19 in Hong Kong the ferry service had to be stopped again.

February 6 all public offices and public places were closed. In this way we could use the church and the square in front of it entirely for us. Without tourists and visitors, we enjoy the gift of living our monastic life in complete solitude. We prayed more, communally and personally, for the needs of all humanity in this moment of COVID19 crisis.

Thanks be to God; because of the generosity of our friend priests we can have daily mass.

We had to stop our cookie production. Some sisters had more work in the garden.

The community focus was to improve our liturgy: to complete the parts still incomplete, and give more time for singing and reading practice and other preparations for the Divine Office particularly, during Lent, for the preparation of the Easter Vigil. Our Lenten Reading was on EXPERIENTIA and we keep working with this program till now.

God's Providence also provided us priests who generously came for the celebration of the whole Holy Week and Easter Vigil. The church was empty but we felt it full! We were bringing in our hearts, all the faithful who could not celebrate it.

We were also very grateful that during the lockdown we had 2 sisters who received the monastic habit: Sr. Bernadette (from Indonesia) on March 19, received the habit as an oblate and Sr. Angelina (from Taiwan) on March 25 received the habit and started her Novitiate.

Starting on March 6 the lockdown was less strict and some local visitors started to come again and visited the outside area of our church, but we had to wait till June 7 to open again the Church for the public.

On May 13, the usual procession for O.L. of Fatima, that normally involved and was followed by a lot of people, was cancelled; but the Diocese creatively prepared a procession by cars from the city centre of Macau to our church, the last station of this procession. So this year the statue of O. L. of Fatima arrived in our church by car, with very few people, but we still had a moment of solemn prayer and adoration with the final blessing for the whole Macau and China with the Holy Sacrament by our Bishop Stephen. This celebration was broadcasted live-streaming on the web-page of the Diocese of Macau. The Diocese did the same for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi (June 14). All of these experiences help us to be more deeply rooted in the heart of Macau diocese. We experienced the fatherhood of the Diocese; the constant care, attention and generosity of the local faithful and friends gave us everything we need abundantly and therefore, we were also able to share with others in need in Macau as well as abroad.

Till now, August 30, we are all healthy and in Macau the life is almost back to the normal for local residents. The local government distributed subsidies to local residents, small and medium company/industry/business. Unfortunately, many migrant workers have lost their jobs and some of them had to return to their original countries: The Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, etc.

We are aware that this COVID19 crisis has not finished yet and will last for long time, many people are still fighting with the virus and many are victims of it.

We join our constant prayer and daily offering with all the members of the ORDER in the intensive prayer to God for the end of this pandemic.