

## **COVID19: A SHARING OF EXPERIENCE - OUR LADY OF VICTORIA MONASTERY**

The first case of Corona virus in Uganda was diagnosed on 13th March, 2020. Most of East African countries had had their own cases of Corona virus and taken measures to avoid its spread.

On 18th March, 2020 the country was locked down: schools, places of worship and other public services closed.

Our community like many other communities in the country responded to this death threat by adopting preventive measures:

- Sanitisers were placed in several places in and outside the building
- Each brother received two face masks to put on in case he goes outside the monastery.
- Our seating arrangement in the church was modified so as to create space of at least one meter between the brothers.
- The sign of peace (shaking of hands) during the Eucharist was dropped.
- Visitors were and are still denied participation in the Sunday Eucharist
- Access to the gate of the monastery was strictly limited.

It took time to most of us in the community to get used to these new regulations and, at times, they source of tensions among the brothers.

This pandemic has had its effects on our community:

Two of our brothers were outside the country when borders were closed and up to now they are unable to come back. Some of our candidates from different parts of the country and from outside Uganda are still unable to join us because either borders are still closed or public transportation is still paralysed.

We were supposed to have our Regular Visitation but that wasn't possible.

Since July 2018, we have undertaken the expansion of our buildings. The expansion involves building a new church, guest and novitiate.

At certain point all these activities had to stop for more than two weeks. This not only prolonged the planned time for completion but also disrupted our community plans.

Even though no one in the community or in our immediate neighbourhood has been diagnosed with COVID 19, new infections are surging in the country especially in Kampala, the capital city. People seem to be tired of following and implementing the guidelines of safety from the ministry of Health. It has taken long! People desire to go back to living fully their 'normal lives'.

As a community we share the same anxiety with our neighbours, with our local church but we share the same hope that maybe a solution for this pandemic (vaccine or a cure) will found soon.