

We have lived the time of lockdown with serenity and even gratitude. It allowed us to experience the enclosure with ample space both indoors and out; we have even felt privileged, as if we were living an intense, prolonged retreat.

Health

Spain's official State of Alarm started on March 16. Ten days before, we had canceled all guesthouse reservations and closed our pilgrims' inn. Although the community is doing well in relation to COVID-19, the pandemic has highlighted the precarious health of high-risk brothers, and made us aware that we need at least two infirmary rooms.

Sources of work and income

Most of our economy has suffered. Only the pensions of the retired brothers have remained unaffected. We live mainly from the proceeds of our guesthouse, from the area's tourism at the gatehouse shop (a small part of which includes guided tours), and from our pilgrims' inn. We manufacture dulce de leche confection, which we sell mostly in our Monastery shop. We lease out the farm as an agricultural holding with beef cattle and charge an annual rent that is wholly insufficient.

Given the current situation, this year we will not open the pilgrims' inn. As for the guesthouse, we are interested in having the largest possible capacity, given that its income is mostly from weekend groups and the Easter and summer seasons. Similarly in regard to our store's profits, we are hoping for a full high season. At the beginning of June we reopened our doors to worship; on July 20 we opened the guesthouse, with twenty people as a limit.

During the lockdown we have received helpful donations, mainly from the Lay Fraternity and the Sobrado Friends Association. We have started to use the garden more intensely, with the aim of a more sustainable food economy. We are now more open to seek alternative sources of income and jobs better fit for the new reality.

In solidarity with society

According to our means, we have made a number of donations. During the State of Alarm, we rang the bells every single day, joining in solidarity with the Spanish people, who cheered on the mobile health unit and various social services at eight each evening. On our website, we have been posting daily texts and videos, helping people cope with the lockdown. Finally, we have made our conventual Church available to the local parish priest for worship.