

## **Covid-19 - The Experience of Klaarland**

In March 2020, we were the last house in our area that Dom Eamon was visiting, and by the time he left, we still thought that the situation regarding the new virus was being dramatized. But we had to revise our point of view very quickly. In mid-March, we closed our guesthouse and could no longer have our Eucharistic celebrations. We do not have a chaplain on site. Usually, it is old priests from the surrounding area who come to celebrate with us. But these, along with some of us, belong to the high-risk group, and we did not want to take those risks.

As we no longer had a Eucharist celebration, we decided to share, the fruits of our lectio in place of the Eucharistic bread: each of us, in turn, shared our meditation on the Gospel of the day. It was a very enriching experience, which allowed us to come to know each other more deeply and to marvel at the work of Christ in each of us.

On Sunday afternoons, we took a longer time to worship the Blessed Sacrament. We lived intensely the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter adapting to the circumstances. We experienced a strong communion within the community at this time. Current means of communication have been welcome, especially to follow some of the liturgical celebrations.

During the confinement, we felt privileged because of the space we have in and out of the house, and the fact that we live in community. Since the guesthouse was closed and there were no orders for jams or biscuits, there was less work. Many of us had more time for lectio and prayer. The representation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which was given us by the brothers of Guadalupe and which is in our cloister, invites us constantly to pray for the poor who are suffering from the many negative effects of the pandemic. We were moved by the expressions of solidarity we saw in society. Because personal contact was severely limited, people creatively sought other creative ways to express their esteem or affection.

At Pentecost, for the first time, we were able to celebrate the Eucharist again. May 31 was also the 50th anniversary of our community. It was no longer a question of inviting people, but because we no longer had organizational concerns, we experienced this event even more intensely, among ourselves and with our Father Immediate.

The guesthouse is now open again for some guests, with many protective measures. Orders for our products are picking up. And in June, we set up a web shop.

In some respects, the current period is more painful than full containment. Government measures against the spread of the virus are constantly changing and require a great deal of flexibility. Flexibility is a strong point in our community, but the current circumstances show us that we still have a long way to go in this area.

Deconfinement requires a lot of consultation. It is a school of patience and charity, of listening to each other to try to understand each other in our different reactions to rules and changes.

In Belgium, the wearing of masks is compulsory in churches. Our church is small and the distance between the community and the hosts is not great. So, we wear masks during the services (unless there are no hosts). This makes it harder to sing and they are extremely hot, but at least we can sing.

We are starting to miss meetings or studies with the region. Much can be done over the internet - and these reports are an example - but this does not replace personal contacts.