

During the pandemic of Covid-19, we are keeping ourselves informed with the development of the global situation and following the guidelines of our local Bishop for preventing the spread of Covid-19, in accordance with those issued by our Government. We are really grateful because of our Bishop's permission to celebrate the Eucharist in the community and the willingness of the priests who live around us to celebrate it daily. However, we feel deeply the absence of our guests. Normally there were so many guests coming on Sunday Mass! Therefore, in the Liturgy and Eucharist, we offer the desires, sufferings, hopes and struggles of those who experience the impacts of the pandemic and of those who are in the front line facing this pandemic directly, and unite them with the offering of Christ.

Our rhythm of life, starting from the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, our work and also relationships with the local Church and our neighbours has changed. We experience strict enclosure: no guests, the shop is closed, and there is big reduction in our production. Our work schedule keeps changing in order to adapt to the needs of the community. The community accepts the changes of work with openness and faith, as the sign of our solidarity with those who lose their jobs and those who are struggling hard to earn money for their lives. This has made us grow in the spirit of obedience of faith, in the sense of belonging and in our flexibility and availability. We learn to go out of ourselves by being open to the service that is asked from us day by day, by supporting each other in the spirit of self-giving that builds fraternal communion.

We also help our surrounding neighbours and whoever is in need by contributing anything that we can share, such as vegetables from our garden and a package of sugar, oil, rice, etc. to 400 Moslem families who live nearby the monastery at the time of their Idul Fitri feast. There is good cooperation between the sisters, our workers and the surrounding neighbours in many ways, especially in this time of pandemic.

The fact that our work has not come back to normal enables us to give more time to deepen our monastic life intensively. There was a course on the teaching of mystical theology of St. Bernard. After the course was finished, we discussed it together in the dialogues, both in generation groups as well as with the whole community. We tried to connect it with our experience of this pandemic and our daily life. This has brought us to recognize our identity and mission deeply, to be thankful for the gift of life and Cistercian charism, to love more our place and community and to experience that God keeps working in all things.

The time of this pandemic, that is causing global suffering, invites us to enter into the roots of our faith, the salvation history and Cistercian charism and to make firm the pillars of our monastic life: prayer, lectio, work, ascesis, solitude, obedience and generous service in the spirit of sonship and cenobitical life. This is the time when God asks us to 'stop', to be still and stand in His presence, trusting in His mercy. We are called to trust that He is always present accompanying the journey and struggle of His suffering people. We realize that at this moment we are called especially to be the voice of humankind begging for His mercy. The life of prayer becomes our main task that needs to be lived more consciously in our liturgical prayer- the prayer entrusted by the Church to us. We are called to pray continuously to beg for the salvation of all humankind experiencing crises in many aspects of life at this time of pandemic.