

Covid-19: A Sharing of Experience from Imari

The community of Imari had a dialogue on 30 August 2020 to answer the proposal from the Generalate regarding the experience of Covid-19. This is the account of the opinions shared in the dialogue.

1. The status quo of the community

Daily life

No member of our community has been affected by Covid-19 so far, and our daily life seems to be as usual. No mask is worn, no social distancing is kept within the closure.

Especially during the state of emergency from April to May, we followed the governmental guidelines to refrain from going out (hospital, shopping etc.) as much as possible. This caused some inconvenience to the community, but we were all cooperative and in unity under our Superior. This experience has made us conscious of our own health care.

We regret that we were hardly allowed to accompany the paschal journey of our member in hospital because of the restrictions on visit.

Work

Our work on the confectionery has much decreased, and we have been obliged to shift to domestic matters; the novitiate has been engaged mainly in outdoor work (mowing, farming); the younger professed members have had enough time to care for the aged frail sisters, which has made the community active in an unexpected way.

Economy

The sales of our confectionery (our main source of income) have sharply dropped since April. We foresee that they will keep dropping more. The second wave of Covid-19 that we are experiencing has made our future economy totally obscure. We have started to shift to pottery expecting that it will compensate the decline of the confectionery.

We have made every effort to cut expenditure; some construction works have been postponed.

Hospitality

During the state of emergency we closed our reception house. Almost all the bookings of retreat groups have been cancelled. We have received few guests and no lecturer, which has been changing our way of communication with the world. For example; our Vietnamese sisters have started to take 'on-line Japanese lessons' from a lecturer on the internet.

Spirituality

Covid-19 has made us feel; God has given us an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with God and the others, what is our vocation and how we could foster solidarity with the world in our monastic way. God has posed the question to us what is our true nature.

While millions of people have been kept away from the Mass, we have been given the privilege to attend the Mass every day. We have felt the bond with them and prayed for the people in pain. We must pray more and more for the world.

Other opinions

Covid-19 made the General Chapter postponed, and this has made our problem of filiation unsolved. We have lost the connection with the center of the Order and feel we have got lost.

2. Prospects for the future

If this situation goes on, our economy may be faced with a fatal crisis in a few years. The community needs to get alert and active to discuss positively what we should do to reconstruct our economy. This is the time for consideration and conversasio.