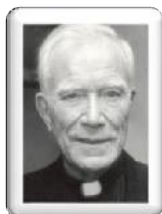


“The Family That Prays Together Stays Together”



“If families give Our Lady fifteen minutes a day by reciting the Rosary, I assure them that their homes will become, by God’s grace, peaceful places”

- Ven. Patrick Peyton

EDITORIAL

One of the many common expressions among the reflective-stories I read and the people I met *was and is* that the time of lockdown has unlocked a plethora of new possibilities. Well! One has every right to differ with that. I get to hear my dad’s lamentation that he’s not been able to attend the Eucharist for many weeks. It’s been difficult for many a people to recalibrate to the demands of the times. The fact is that the routine has been interrupted and life has been thrown into a new orbit where certainly a thought goes on what’s most important and what’s not to life. Both, the science and religion have been pushed into mute spectators by a tiny virus corona – a crown as it signifies, sending the crown of creation on to their knees with lifted eyes towards their Creator in humble prayer.

Call it a co-incidence, it was amusing to see this particular flower (see pic) blooming in my room’s adjacent garden that resembled the virus and reminded one of nature’s ploy of recalibration. Well, talking of unlocking something out of the routine I

got engaged into some gardening work during lockdown. A friend of mine had given me some *tulsi* seeds. Preparing a flower-pot the seeds were sown in it. Within days there were tiny buds springing out of the soil. With great care some of the buds were replaced into other pots so as to pave healthy growth for each individual plants.



A new ritual was developed to water the plants, place them in the sunshine and observe their daily growth. This however was halted when on a given day, I learned that the plants I nurtured with care and affection weren’t *tulsi* plants but some sort of a weed. A new set of emotions ran through me. There was an urge to immediately stop my nurturance of them and cast them out of existence. Yet there was something within me preventing to take such an action for a good part of me had already invested for a period of time into its growth. The affection was withdrawn and yet something in me kept attending to the sustenance of the plants. Indeed, they were spared and allowed to grow as I watched their growth from a distance unlike before. Here comes a twist – cometh a day and they prove to be *tulsi* again but of a variant kind. The nature has beautiful lessons to teach us and beckons us to be its observant students. Among the many new possibilities, one that I wish to take for me is a reconnect with the nature. In this line, the Holy Father Pope Francis through his encyclical “*Laudato Si*” invites everyone to a three-dimensional vision of a reconnect with God-humans -nature.

“Where’s God in this crisis situation?” – is definitely a question ruminating in the recesses of many a mind. St. Ignatius has reflected beautifully in the Spiritual Exercises that God “Labours and works” in our world. Therefore, we are the God-presence of our times. Yes, you and me alike!

In this issue of “Family Light” we get glimpses of how families have laboured and worked in hope to enrich lives, how they’ve found meaning, developed coping strategies to unlock the gloom of the pandemic. Let us be instruments of God’s labour and works. Together we spread the message of hope that everything is not locked down – the sunrise is not locked down, love is not locked down or even family time is not locked down.

Let us help each other see beyond the horizon,

to look up to a God who journeys with us. Let the light shine and brighten up our world!



Fr. Royal Nazareth C.S.C
Director, HCFM, Bengaluru

Amidst Pandemic - Where is God?

Lockdown! Lockdown! Lockdown!
Where are you O Lord?
Misery surrounds us.
The places of worship are closed,
Age old traditions are suspended,
Fervent prayers seem unanswered and
Uncertainty has become the norm of our lives.
Are you so hard to find when we are really in need
of you?

During the days of lockdown, the feeling of being lost and abandoned pervaded the minds of many. Sentiments of hopelessness found expression in fundamental questions. Does the creator really care about his creation? For us Christians the sequence of events coincided with the Holy Week that left us to ponder about the reality of our human life and the mystery of God. Fate and Faith seemed to share the same platform. As a priest I too had to discover and make-meaning of this unprecedented situation. But in it I found the answer to my quest. I am glad to pen down my thoughts and share my experience of God with you.

On Maundy Thursday I joined the priests for the solemn Eucharistic celebration to commemorate the Last Supper of our Lord in the upper room. The solemnity that usually witnessed a huge gathering of faithful now lay empty. My heart was heavy as I gazed at the empty church. I asked the same questions. Is God hard to find? Is he really there and if so why is he silent at the sufferings of his people? On Good Friday, I called a family who had a hand to mouth existence. The sole breadwinner of the family was their father, a daily wage labourer. I was anxious to know of their wellbeing during these days of lockdown and unemployment. To my surprise the father told me that the Lord had been so gracious to them that every member of his family was fed better than normal days. He witnessed God's providential care through the church, his friends and neighbours. Though he was uncertain about the future, he believed that the Lord who fed Prophet Elijah through a crow at the cave, would also keep him and his family safe during this pandemic. Such a profound expression of faith humbled my own understanding of God. I prayed that night and sincerely asked the Lord to help my little faith. To

me this was a man of God who reminded me to stand ever firm in faith and trust in the Lord. This was my first and the best learning during the beginning days of the pandemic.



On the following day, after the Good Friday liturgical service, I gazed at the image of Christ hanging on the Cross helplessly. As I pondered on the passion of our Lord, I drew a parallel between the helplessness of Christ and that of his creation during the pandemic. Was Christ really helpless or was there something greater in it? If God so desired, He who created the world with a word, could also redeem it with a word. But we know that he chose to become one like us and gain victory. This made me realize that god is a God who is very much with his people. He is not a god who watches his people suffer from afar, but actively involved with his own. At first thought, Jesus' suffering on the cross apparently looked futile as God the father seemed absent in his life. He seemed to have died for nothing. Yet, the last words of Jesus put his entire life's mission into perspective. "It is accomplished!" It was not a sigh of agony but a cry of victory. For through his sufferings he was soon to conquer sin and eventually death itself. I'm reminded of the words of Francis Thompson, a poet, who says that God is in all things intimately. He wrote,

**"O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee."
And I might add
A world weighed down by an unseen
virus,
We grasp thee**

There is nothing that God is unaware of. He allows such experiences in our life that we may seek him with much eagerness and faith. In the Scripture, often when God did something significant, it happened suddenly. For instance, the angel appeared in Peter's prison cell. There wasn't any sign of things changing on that dark night, yet suddenly everything did change. God can turn things around without any warning. He uplifts you when you don't see any sign of it happening. It may seem unexpected and out of the ordinary but a single touch of God's favour will thrust you to a new level. All we need to do is carry our cross without complaining of the difficulty.



From 'altar to street' flowed the grace of God. Humans themselves learnt the hidden lesson of being God's instruments of compassion

Being part of a parish at Mumbai that catered to the needs of over thousand families during the days of the lockdown, I feel that the Gospel which had been preached from the pulpit is now being lived by the church all over the world.

From 'altar to street' flowed the grace of God. Humans themselves learnt the hidden lesson of being God's instruments of compassion and a ray of hope to those who lost hope – migrants stranded on highways with slim chances of survival. Indeed this lockdown experience taught me that Christ-centred life needs to be lived in reality with people in need. Pope Francis says the COVID-19 pandemic represents a chance for creativity and positive change, urging people to reconnect with the real world and reject "throwaway culture." The pandemic in a way has dawned in a realization of how humans have centred their life on money rather than people.

This is a time of great learning- sharing, caring, accommodating and understanding. It's not easy to be confined to your houses for long as it entails a great amount of endurance and serenity. I found this writing very encouraging; if you are told to stay at home: Think about Noah and his family. About a year in the ark without being able to leave, in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of a vast ocean, in an unprecedented construction that had

never been done, they only heard the rain falling and constantly felt the ark moving, there were no windows, no balconies, no terraces, no internet, no phones, no video calls. And yet they were safe. Our Lord took care of them. So let us not doubt that our Father will also take care of us, because he is always, ever with us.

Genesis chapter 7 is very encouraging for all of us who are quarantined. Out there is an ocean of viruses, but Our Lord will be watching over us! Take Courage.

"Fear not, I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand". (Isaiah 41:10)

Fr. Arun D. CSC
St. Louis Church, Dahisar, Mumbai

Dear Reader,

We are interested in connecting with you more effectively apart from this forum of Family Light. We request you to message us your Contact numbers with name to:

WhatsApp number: 9448436583

Upon receiving the contact numbers we shall create a WhatsApp group to communicate matters that can enrich our lives in families. The forum will help our team here at the Ministry Centre to share links for Webinars we are planning to organize for families, share relevant information and build connectivity among families who share the light of Christ.

If you are reading this kindly pick up your phone and message us. We are waiting to hear from you. God bless.

Fr. Royal Nazareth CSC
Director, HCFM
Bengaluru.

"Lockdown"- A gift from God to realize our priorities in life and to value God's creation

Our Life is a gift from God but we fail to recognise and acknowledge this gift. Instead of giving Glory to God in all that we do, we live meaningless life ignoring our priorities and focusing more on our never ending expectations. We fail to understand and acknowledge the purpose for which God created us. We spend our entire life chasing the wind, competing with others in order to achieve our dreams.

Lockdown has really changed life and helped me and my family realise our priorities and the gift of life God has given us

This present lockdown has alerted us to stop and pause for a little while pondering on the things that really matter in life more than money and materialistic needs. For me, this lockdown was a special gift from God as everything that happens in this world happens as God chooses to happen. He sets the time for sorrow and time for joy.

We can't add anything to it or take anything away from it. Whatever happens and is yet to happen is a plan & purpose of God for our lives.

For me, this lockdown was a special gift from God as everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses. He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy. We can't add anything to it or take anything away from it. Whatever happens and is yet to happen is a plan & purpose of God for our lives. It's not right to question or blame God as his plans are beyond our understanding.

My personal experience during this lockdown was a "Gift of Time" from God.

Time to unite and talk with family members.

Time to bond and play with my kids.

Time to enjoy our meals together as a family.

Time to pray together as a family for those suffering from coronavirus and side effects of the lockdown.

Time to read and understand the scriptures in the Bible.

Time to partake in mass online and offer a thanksgiving to God for our daily bread.

Time to do charity and be generous to the poor.

Time to build a close relationship with God and to receive his abundant blessings & grace after a proper examination of conscience and by doing his will.

Another gift I received was a gift of patience and faith that helped me stop worrying about the return of my husband who is a seafarer and was unable to return home since March. I had faith that the Lord will protect him and make a way to bring him home soon.



This lockdown has really changed my life and helped me and my family realise our priorities and the gift of life God has given us. God provided me and my family during this lockdown with much more than we needed so that we could be a blessing to others in need. We shall always be grateful to God for all that he has done for us and for others too. Every coin has two sides and similarly this lockdown too has advantages and disadvantages. Though there are many side-effects of this lockdown like joblessness, poverty, etc. but the advantages weigh more compared to the disadvantages and therefore I have been focusing only on the positive side of this lockdown.

**Pamela Rodrigues
St. Sebastian Church, Loliem, Goa**



***A picture that grabbed many eye-balls.
It does speak volumes though!***

Positive Impact on Family in Covid19

Everyone has been in lockdown for more than two months. Many of us are bored, miss our daily routines, and frustrated staying indoors all the time. We feel in this way as it is in our nature to go out and socialize with other people. But what we don't seem to have realized is that there is a positive side to be in lockdown.

The first and obvious reason is that we are helping to break the chain by safeguarding ourselves from Coronavirus.



So here there are some positive impacts on my family during quarantine.

The first thing is 'We are getting sufficient sleep'. As we don't have to commute long distances to go for our colleges or for work on time, we can get a little more sleep, which make a big difference to our health. In the evening too as we don't have to come late from our work, it is possible to get to bed little earlier and get more rest by which we can stay healthy.

Everyone has been in



Secondly 'Eating healthy home cooked food', as I was going for college and use to eat more outside food. And now I have become cautious about eating outside food because I don't want to catch Covid19. As a result, now I'm eating home cooked food. It usually uses less oil, fresh ingredients etc. And this keeps me healthier.

Third thing is 'I keep my body feet by exercise and playing some outdoor games'. This is also a fun activity because the whole family can join and stay healthy together.

Fourth thing is 'Home care'. As I was going for my college and was unable to do any housework. But now I found myself needing to do my own housework. This is good thing for several reasons. It is one of the most productive way to keep busy and not get bored. By sweeping, mopping, dusting and cleaning cobwebs etc. And I'm helping my mom in cooking. Also I've learned to cook new things from YouTube.

Fifth thing is 'We can spend more time with our family'. Before we use to be busy with our own work and was not getting more time to spend with our family. But now we have got best time to bond as a family. Even though my Father and Brother is in abroad, we communicate with them on WhatsApp by video calling and talk with them for a long time. As before they use to go for their work and was not getting sufficient time to talk. So, here also our bond is getting stronger.



I keep my body feet by exercise and playing some outdoor games'

So, apart from this healthy life I have become more spiritual and spending more of my time with God. As before in our family we use to say the prayer but sometimes not on time, as for now we say our Rosary and Prayers on time. Also we have increased our prayers and get more attached to God.

So, these are some of the positive impacts on our family during Covid19.

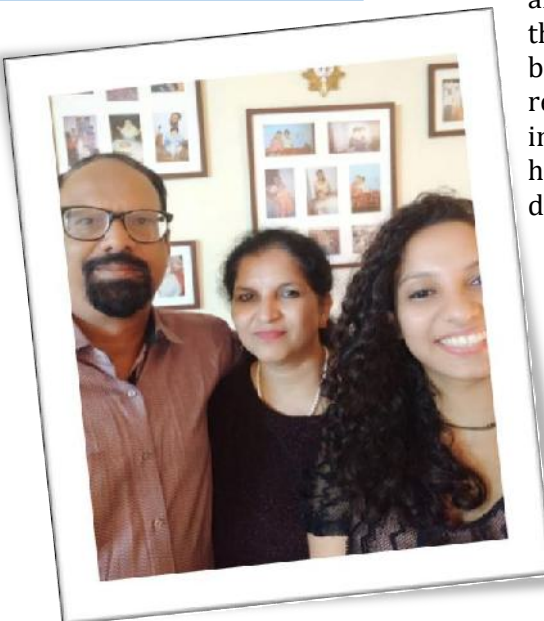
**Enigma Fernandes
St. Sebastian Church, Loliem, Goa**

Lockdown - a Homely Experience

For me, the lockdown period of Covid-19 has been a blessing in many ways. Many of us specially women I am sure, dreamt of working from home though at times it is misinterpreted as "work as per your convenience". For me however, this opportunity has been a huge blessing to catch up with many of my pending tasks and in the

meantime complete my professional commitments. On the day this new directive was announced in the office the first person whom I missed was my son who would have been so excited to have me around throughout the day. That's why I consider it as a dream come true for working women like me. Who cuts out the time spent on commuting, which is not only a time saver but also a money saver as well?

For the first time in my life I am able to totally enjoy family time, do justice to a mother's role, spend time in prayers together with the family, try new recipes with fresh ingredients from my garden, practice yoga and nurture my garden without compromising on quality and productivity



It is also a time for isolation from all the unwanted distractions of the world and spend time in personal and spiritual renewal, to reach out to the less privileged and needy in love and compassion

of tasks I am entrusted to. The best part of this experience is spending quality time with my daughter who is also working from home and I must say I am having a working vacation with the family, all thanks to the latest digital technologies which has forced us to educate ourselves on variety of topics.

It is also a time for isolation from all the unwanted distractions of the world and spend time in personal and spiritual renewal, to reach out to the less privileged and needy in love and compassion. As I thank the Almighty for his abundant blessings on our family, let us also face the reality with courage and make a difference in whatever possible way we can and ask him to protect us from all the dangers in the days to come.

**Edna Rodricks
Christ the King Parish, Pune**

“Everything is not locked down
Sunrise is not locked down
Love is not locked down
Family time is not locked down
Kindness is not locked down
Creativity is not locked down
Learning is not locked down
Reading is not locked down
Relationship is not locked down
Praying is not locked down
Meditation is not locked down
Sleeping is not locked down
Work from home is not locked down
Conversation is not locked down
Imagining is not locked down
Hope is not locked down
Cherish what you have.

Locked down is an opportunity to do what you always wanted to do.”

(Source- Internet)



God be Praised!!

Praise God!!

"Lockdown" is now a familiar word in every person's dictionary. Initially when the lockdown was announced I went through a mixed feelings. There were a lot of unanswered questions in my mind.

It was natural or I shall say human to feel anxious and worried about the prevailing situation. There was uncertainty about the future, fear of losing one's job and dealing with pay cuts.

It was natural or I shall say human to feel anxious and worried about the prevailing situation.

Our plans had come to a halt and it seemed like the whole world too had come to a standstill. We were scared of moving out of our houses and fear was all around. The media only increased this feeling of fear and anxiety of the future.

In the midst of this negativity and fear, I turned to my Lord. This lockdown made me realize how vulnerable we humans are and how my Lord has been so good and kind to me throughout my life. I began to count the innumerable blessings he had showered on me that I had taken for granted. I learnt to be grateful for every moment of my life that God has given me.



My family was a big support in these times. Having a strong emotional bond with my wife and children helped me to stay positive and value the people in my life

I learnt to thank God for every new day of my life, for a good health, a house to live, for a wonderful family and children and my job which God has blessed me with. God has blessed me abundantly and this lockdown gave me the time to introspect and reflect on whether I have been faithful to him. I got ample time to spend in prayer and to reflect and study the word of God through which I was able to keep out the prevailing negativity and keep my mind at peace. After beginning the day with prayer I would spend time with my family and children.

Doing household chores, having meals together, playing together was very enjoyable. I surrendered all my troubles and fears to the Lord and prayed for the strength to accept his will and plan in my life.

I learnt to be more thankful and hopeful knowing that His plans are always the best. In my moments of doubt I would pray to the Holy Spirit to help me trust my God. My family was a big support in these times. Having a strong emotional bond with my wife and children helped me to stay positive and value the people in my life more than the material

wealth. Being in a missionary community helped me to share my thoughts and ideas with likeminded people which was very reassuring. The plight of the wealth. Being in a missionary community helped

me to share my thoughts and ideas with likeminded people which was very reassuring. The plight of the poor people made me realise how fortunate I was and my responsibility towards them. It was a call for me to help the less fortunate people around me. This lockdown has taught me that what ultimately matters is peace and happiness which can never be bought. This lockdown has taught me the small joys of life (spending time with family, just being at home cooking for my children) and has made me a more thankful and grateful.

Lockdown might have brought unpleasant feelings for many around however for me and my family this period will always be a wonderful time to cherish in the future.

Dr. Elvis Rodrigues, Mangalore



Cartoon: www.deccanherald.com Sajith Kuma

Provincial's Message



The Coronavirus pandemic that began early this year has swept across the entire world, leaving nobody unaffected. Individuals, communities and families have all been affected. Migrant workers have given up/lost their jobs, fled the cities, and have gone back to their native villages. Many others have lost their jobs as factories /manufacturing units have had to either close down or reduce their numbers considerably so that the virus can be contained. The lockdown has also caused the economy to go on a downslide.

However, there have also been some positive developments in this dismal scenario. There is a new awareness and appreciation for what others have contributed to our lives. Migrant workers who have been doing a lot of the necessary menial tasks or laboured hard in factories, are now not there anymore. In their absence we now can appreciate all that they had been doing and contributed to our well-being and our economy.

In families too, perhaps husbands, wives, and children had failed to notice and appreciate the many favours that each one does for the other. Each one may be silently doing things for the welfare of the entire family, but all these little efforts may have gone by unacknowledged. With the lockdown and the need for almost everyone to be at home, there are now innumerable occasions for family members to recognize the worth of the other and to be appreciative of the everyday blessings they receive.

With the awareness of what different people contribute to our lives – family members or otherwise – the result can be very positive. Family ties and bonds of friendship can be strengthened and the joy of togetherness can be experienced in a very tangible way. If this happens, then the Coronavirus would not be such a bane after all! May we all row in respecting and appreciating the other's worth!

Rev. Fr. Roque D'Costa, C.S.C
Provincial Superior
Province of South India

Muchas gracias



Fr. Arul Raj C.S.C



Fr. Herve C.S.C

Thank you very much dear Fathers for your many years of dedication and service to families through Holy Cross Family Ministries. We wish you all the very best for your future endeavours.

NEWS LETTER

HOLY CROSS
FAMILY MINISTRIES
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