

Our Sisters Dealing with Covid19, Vietnam



Vietnam, one of the safest countries in the world in the initial period of pandemic, has seen a sharp increase in confirmed cases since July. Daily cases go over 10,000 nationwide, and Ho Chi Minh City, the worst zone of all, has been under a strict lockdown since July. As the lockdown continues, many people struggle to put food on the table after losing their jobs. Particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, its large population came from other central and northern rural areas to search for work; consequently, many of them are becoming impoverished. Since all roads are closed, those who were returning to their hometowns to escape any further deprivation have been stranded on the streets.

Currently, fundraising is underway across the nation to help Ho Chi Minh City. Villages in the countryside are sending free vegetables and fruit for Ho Chi Minh citizens, which means that people from humble country villages are helping those of Ho Chi Minh City, the most affluent city in Vietnam.

We are dealing with these moments together by sharing food sent to us by our concerned family members and benefactors from the rural areas. One day when five tons of vegetables arrived in a parish church, we spent the whole morning moving and packing them with the parishioners. The harder the work gets, the merrier we become, with lots of laughter at meal table because, in spite of physical fatigue, the joy of sharing is so great and because we are so grateful for those who share and for the good people who work with us.

As the new daily cases amount to four or five thousand, all hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City ended up incapable of accommodating Covid patients. Medical staffs are all exhausted. In this context, “the religious voluntary workers’ group (under 40 years old)” was created by the request of the city authority. The teams consisting of Catholic religious, Buddhist monks and nuns, and a handful of protestant church leaders give their assistance for one or two months in ICU, the frontline of battlefield against Covid. As members of these teams, our Sisters Paula Maria and Maria Jolyn are also taking a great care of poor patients who do not have family. On the scene of hardship, where daily they have to witness dozens of people dying, our sisters stay with patients in their last moments by saying a prayer for the dying or even secretly baptizing them, if even a single minute is allowed before the patient passes away. By exchanging the circumstances of voluntary activities through SNS, we all support one another in our joint rosary in the evening and night prayers.

We believe that by the time the Covid19 pandemic passes, we will have grown greatly. May more joyful days come as soon as possible when we can have Mass and celebrate feast days all together again. With deep gratitude toward all SNDs who support us with prayers, concern, interest, and love, we offer our prayers in Vietnam that God’s peace may always be with you.

Sr. Marie Julietta, Tan binh community in Ho Chi Minh City