

# Children Pastoral Ministry: Steadfastly Promoting and Caring for Life

Province of Our Lady Aparecida, Canoas



Despite the necessity of maintaining a social distance and other restrictions imposed by Covid-19, for more than a year the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Canoas Province have continued to steadfastly promote and care for life among the poor both in Brazil and Peru through the program Pastoral da Criança (Children Pastoral Ministry).

The sisters working in the Children Pastoral Ministry have maintained frequent contact with the program leaders and the families of newly born to six-year-olds as well as with pregnant women through “WhatsApp” and other social media applications. Formation of new volunteers and ongoing formation for all leaders engaged in the Children Pastoral Ministry have also been offered online.

In Peru, the sisters have trained a group of priests who had shown an interest in Children Pastoral Ministry and who continue to support this program. In addition to online meetings with Children Pastoral Ministry leaders, a psychiatrist and a pediatrician have given presentations on the need for micronutrients and healthy foods, and the necessity of safeguarding children’s emotional health during the pandemic. Also, on Christmas 2020, Christmas symbols were displayed and explained to the children who were also served eye-catching dishes creatively prepared for the small children.

In Palmas, Tocantins, Brazil in spite of the challenges and hardships endured by the families and aggravated by the pandemic, the number of children and pregnant women served by the Children Pastoral program was not only maintained but even increased from 610 in August 2020 to 838 in March 2021.

In Paraíso do Tocantins, “WhatsApp” messages or telephone calls to elderly people or to someone in their families provided support and assurances of concern. In addition, the Liturgy of the Word with Communion could be celebrated with the Santa Júlia Catholic community in the village where the sisters reside. Participants in the program also prepared food baskets for needy families and continued to hold online meetings.

In Pinhal Grande, Rio Grande do Sul, many people have also been served through not only by means of the various activities sponsored by Health Care Ministry, but also through home visits to the elderly and sick, always respecting the Covid restrictions.

Therefore, regardless of adversity, the sisters ministering for the Children Pastoral and the Health Care Ministries have continued to channel a life-giving energy to children, pregnant women, the sick and the elderly and thus offering them better life.