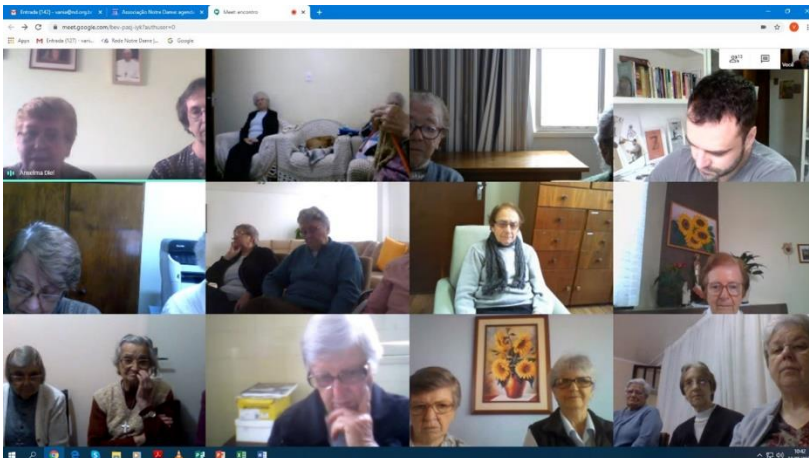


# Creativity in Times of Pandemic

Our Lady Aparecida Province, Canoas, Brazil



Group of sisters over 70 years of age



Group of sisters over 51 years of age



Group of sisters under the age of 50 years

It is a fact that we were following the news of what was happening in the world regarding the coronavirus. However, when the local news started reporting cases in Brazil, we had no idea how serious the situation could become.

In mid-March, we started a journey never before experienced in our Province, something totally unusual and for which we had not made any plans. The whole world was on the alert and taking precautions regarding Covid-19 and so were we, the Sisters in Canoas.

Sister Vania Maria and her team, assisted by Dr. Leandro Minozzo and by the psychologist, Fabiana Della Valentina and other managers working for the institutions sponsored by the Province, immediately started a process of communication and decision-making. This delicate moment demanded collaboration, respect,

and solidarity from all. The school year, that had just started, was interrupted in all the Notre Dame schools; visits to the elderly sisters in Recanto Aparecida were forbidden; holy masses in parishes and in our religious communities were suspended. A different arrangement had to be set up for our employees; pastoral care services had to be reduced or canceled. In fact, since the situation inside and outside was not good due to the effects of the pandemic, we were compelled to face it with creativity in order to meet various demands.

Schools continued with online classes, meetings and other appointments were carried out by means of videoconferences. Community prayer services were provided via Facebook or recorded and made available through our institutions' various social networks. The provincial administration prepared a series of measures and guidelines for all the Sisters. Among these were suggestions on how to overcome fears, insecurities, and anxieties that normally occur in times of pandemics.

An online human-spiritual training program was organized to promote more quality of life, to help with interpersonal relationships and to develop ways to handle the unpredictable caused by the coronavirus. The sisters of the Province were divided into age groups and Dr. Yara Helena Sherem, a psychiatrist, and Sister Maria Luiza Morschel, SND, a psychologist, offered a presentation entitled "Emotional stress in times of pandemic".