

I need to nourish my soul if I cannot live the Eucharist, so very quickly, I embark on the "Crossing" with the team of Father Louis Dalle and Bishop Rey of the diocese of Toulon. When I am at rest, I can follow a teaching, testimonies, I can pray, live the Eucharist and adore in communion with so many others. Wealth of the Church which does not abandon its confined sheep! I reread Pope Francis' message of March 27, then I pray with Damien. I marvel at these multiple initiatives that are born in neighborhoods, buildings, everywhere. I am happy to hear the birds sing, to learn that the earth breathes, calms down. There comes the hope of a wiser world, more attentive to our mother earth. So I try to live as my brother Bernard Couronne invites me to: "Let's stay in service clothes".



NEWSLETTER
SECULAR BRANCH SS.CC. - SECTOR FRANCE

Special pandemic bulletin

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EDITORIAL

2020: A strange year.

We hadn't anticipated this, but was it really inevitable? Some would say that it is Mother Nature who is rebelling against man, others a human manipulation or, even, a divine punishment. Thus, each in his own way lived this period, and more particularly that of confinement, more or less with difficulty. It turns out that this was also a chance not only to reflect on one's own existence but also for us to try to take care of each other. How many families ended up with their children returning to the parental home in order to look after each other and, on the other hand, how many people were left alone without any visit? These situations have developed a certain form of solidarity. Isn't the definition of the word Brotherhood: to take care of the other, as for a brother, a sister, a parent; to be attentive to difficult situations and try to find solutions while respecting the rules of distancing? In this newsletter, you will read some feedback on this period from members of the Fraternity. If others wish to provide a new testimony send it to the secretary:

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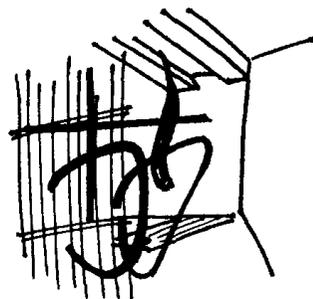
TESTIMONIES:

Christophe PAVARD

I remember January 1st when we wished each other a Happy New Year and good health. I don't think our wishes were sincere enough, because our year has started off very badly and we don't know how it will end. In short, March 17 we were confined for 2 weeks by our governments. Many personally believed that these forced holidays would pass quickly. I was one of those, even if I started my confinement on January 10 with bronchitis which lasted until the end of the month and was followed by an inner ear problem which lasted a month and a half. Good health you said?

Then came the announcement that this confinement would last much longer than expected and that we would have to organize ourselves for work and for ecclesial life. For myself, being on call at my job was one less concern. As for the parish, everything was stopped, except funerals. As part of this service, we had many families to comfort and many celebrations to organize, first in churches and then, when that was no longer possible, in cemeteries. In addition, the majority of the members of the funeral service were people at risk and therefore forced to remain confined. There were only 2 people left, since our 3 priests contracted the virus and had to stop all activity. This period was not too difficult as there was still some social life allowed in the meetings with the families. But the hardest part was when we were forced to stop celebrating funerals for almost a month due lack of celebrants.

It was then that I experienced the hardest days of this confinement. Being single and living alone, I'm used to some loneliness, but not to this extent. The fact of no longer meeting people, of not going out, of being cloistered at home, I experienced what many isolated people go through. There were of course the phone and emails, but nothing that could replace physical contact, real presence. I don't know if you were ready to go through that but I wasn't. Despite prayer, despite the very rich documents that we received and shared, my morale took a big hit.



Marie-France HACHET, nurse

It was when I listened to Lille's emergency department manager, Patrick Goldstein, talk to his daughter that I really realized the gravity of what was happening. That same day, a host of messages, information, and instructions between nursing colleagues came to us.

Then there was the official announcement of the lockdown.

What's in store for us? What are we going to experience at work? And with the family? Here I am soon looking for the few masks bought for the H1N1 a few years ago.

After the initial emotions, life got organized. It was a question of continuing and reassuring. As long as I don't infect my mother (89 years old), the home help service is no longer available, neither are the nursing assistants, my presence prevents them from coming. Fortunately, we are in the West, the danger is there, but nothing to do with what is happening in the East of France.

I am continuing home visits; the majority of our patients are single, isolated people who need their treatment and care. The attempt to limit visits to some believed to be possible has failed. As one patient told me, "I think I have fear syndrome."

For me, in this context, trust is the first road to take and in my soul I am a daughter of the Good Mother and the Good Father. I am thinking above all of the Good Father confined in his attic, nourishing himself with the Word and the Bread of Life; I think of the Good Mother with an open heart and present to the existence of the other and of the Other, imprisoned at 'Les Hospitaliers' while the death sentence lurks.

I also think of Damien confined to the 'island ward' of Molokai, and I pray and join heart and soul with my fellow nurses in the hospitals. Because yes, I have also experienced emergencies, contagion, intensive care, shifts, stress, death, but never, ever with such intensity, such duration! In the midst of my intercessory prayer, of supplication, I manage to rejoice and give thanks for recovering an 'esprit de corps', support, mutual aid, a team spirit to save lives. Agents, doctors, orderlies, supervisors, nurses, externs, interns, all united. Finally, it is life that counts above all; it is the patient who becomes the center of focus again.

Francois AYMER

Post-confinement on May 30, 2020

Thank you to the Sector Council for giving us the opportunity to speak out during this fragile period of confinement. This one, without forgetting its sufferings, has all the same a beneficial side: that of making us think and asking ourselves questions.

Indeed, if I take the initiative to write, I can only do it personally because everyone has lived these days according to their own sensitivity and initiatives. In addition, it is true that from the very first hour, the understandable spiritual disarray was noticeable, and as a couple, we spontaneously turned to the appropriate and available media.

This is how our lives flowed daily with KTO. It was exceptional, with several Masses offered each day, including one from Rome with the Holy Father, followed by beneficial Adoration and then the Rosary live from Lourdes. On Sunday, three ceremonies were possible including that of the Lord's Day, always of great spiritual intensity. Besides these highlights, I felt the need to get down to reading the book of Job and the three prophets: Jeremiah, Baruch and Lamentations. The connection between these readings and the events struck me as interesting. To complete this somewhat ambitious picture, the Holy Spirit led me, quite by chance, to take a momentary interest in Saint Joseph, patron saint of workers. I have a little text left: "Joseph, husband of Mary".

And Picpus in all of this? I do not forget Father Couronne's 12-page document, always clear, precise and quick to teach us. It is true: we must also add the novena in honor of the feast of Saint Damian and ask for his intercession. The daily texts were simple, easy to read, and this facilitated their effectiveness. They have allowed us to broaden our horizons and our prayers internationally. The lengths are often tedious to read on the screen and sometimes alter the desired goal. On the other hand, they do show that the Founders are still very present in the world and that is encouraging.

Can we hope and dream of the national feminine branch for something that makes it present and alive to us, offering a simple but strong spirituality; We miss her.

I found myself helpless in the face of situations that should never have existed. I found myself helpless for people I usually visited at home but could no longer comfort with my presence except over the phone. I found myself in front of my screen to participate virtually in the celebration of Mass, with no one to bring me Communion. I found myself alone with my helplessness. Without forgetting the fact of putting everything off until the next day, of telling ourselves that we have time, time is not infinite. It passes and makes us face reality. Then we run to try to make up for lost time.

After 3 months of confinement it is the so-called return to normal. In fact, we still have more questions about the future. First of all about this virus; is it an integral part of our life now? How many of those we know have been affected? What about professional, financial problems? Has this experience changed us? What is the future for our society and humanity as a whole?

Marie-Agnès ROUSSIALE

When the confinement began, I worried about my husband's health. Asthmatic, he is one of the "people at risk". I had to protect him. Our children were also worried about both of us. I avoided going out, even with a mask, so as not to bring the virus home.

How could I make this time more fruitful than usual? I got into the habit of 'participating' daily in a mass on the Internet, that of my bishop on weekdays, that on television on Sundays, in communion with the priest of my parish who celebrated all alone at the same time, and so many Christians here and in all of France. I didn't sit on the couch as if watching a movie, but after lighting a candle, I would sit in a chair and stand up at the usual times of Mass. I lived these Masses with intensity, with the Communion of desire, feeling the lack of sacramental Communion and the absence of the assembly.

At the time of my weekly Adoration, I took the same time at home, in front of a beautiful image of a monstrance displayed on my computer screen, in addition to the Crucifix and Our Lady of Peace which are still in my office.

I have often read and re-read the booklet that Father Bernard COURONNE, ss.cc., sent to the Secular Fraternity of France at the start of confinement.

I added notes to it as I heard prayers or homilies that spoke to my heart. Again, Father Bernard sent a booklet for the month of May, on the anniversary of the arrival of Our Lady of Peace in Picpus on May 6, 1806.

Christophe PAVARD, our National Coordinator, offered a novena prayer day after day to Saint Damien.

The General Government's site (sscc.picpus.com) also offered a number of elements to support our journey through our "granaries".

At first, this new way of living had a little taste of adventure. Without lacking work given my commitments in the parish and the desire to support the morale of the people entrusted to me, I was not bored. I undertook storage and spring cleaning with ardor.

Then the lack of meetings became heavy. However, we live as a couple and are well housed, enjoying a garden that my Husband maintains with care. What a gift from Providence to be able to contemplate Creation at home! The absence of planes and the reduction of cars brought silence, more birds including some species that we had never seen in the city, and even stars as the pollution had diminished.

Thank God! The group of the Secular Fraternity of Montgeron has decided to maintain our meeting dates, without deconfining ourselves, but to put ourselves in communion of prayer. One of us, taking turns every month, prepared the prayer as we do together at the end of each meeting. And we each followed the progress at home. How good it was to know that we were united like this!

Also, THANKS to the people who continued to work despite the risks, to meet our needs. There were those in the evening when, at 8 p.m., so many people at their windows were applauding, banging on tambourines or pans, with whom I was blowing my foghorn. There were the 'Thank you' signs on my trash cans and mailbox. Doesn't the word 'Eucharist' mean 'Thank you', 'Thanksgiving', in Greek? So what could be more logical than to live it and express it!

A member of the Secular Fraternity

Oddly enough, this confinement took me back years to when I was 7 years old.

Following a family tragedy, I was brutally separated from my family. Overnight, I no longer knew where my parents or my brothers and sisters were. I was only told: "you will not go back to your home, they are all gone" ...abandoned, I no longer had a family.

When the confinement started, I felt the same great void, the same anxieties. It's like I've gone back years. No more celebrations and we couldn't meet anyone. The people I knew, all couples or families, did not come forward and the meetings and sharing after Mass, of course, no longer took place. They lived in confinement between them. It was I who, to their surprise, ended up asking about them.

So I waited a lot and urgently for news from our Fraternities, from our SS.CC. Family.

I was afraid, I admit, of having nothing but silence, when the great, beautiful and encouraging message of Father Bernard Couronne arrived with, moreover, his precious prayer to Our Lady of Peace inspired by the Pope's prayer. François for this time of pandemic.

Other community supporters arrived, they all ended with these words: "Hold on", "Take care of yourself". We were not forgotten by anyone. This True Family did exist. Phew! What happiness!

Without this close bond in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I don't know how I would have lived through this confinement.

What have I experienced with the Lord? Thanks to our dear and precious spirituality, allow me to keep it to myself. There was pain (as for everyone I think) and Blessing.

One day, during a televised mass, at the time of "spiritual communion", I cried out to Jesus: WE are confined, but YOU are not, so come, I beg you.

I believe Jesus heard me, He came. There, I need not say more.

Long live the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary!