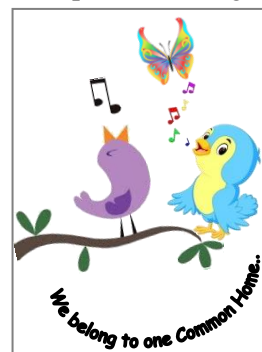


ST. MARTHA'S HOSPITAL : *Spearing ahead through Covid-19*

Corona Virus! Covid-19! Pandemic! Stay at home! Stay safe! Social Distancing!

Yes, we are in the era of these phrases echoing in our ears constantly. I really wonder how such a miniscule creature could put the whole world, especially the crown of creation –Human Beings - on hold? If you really look around, there is yet a beauty. When humanity was locked up, other living beings found their own free movement on this earth. By their free movement in areas which were busy, are they not proclaiming to us, they too belong to the same universe where we belong?

One who has ears can hear all through the day the chirping of different birds praising God for the freedom that they can now enjoy. Their sweet singing and chirping are loud and clear even in the busiest cities. There is no honking and speeding of vehicles that could hinder them from singing in their sweet voices. It is thrilling to see squirrels running up and down in the trees and from tree to tree as though they have won the world. The roads are free, the air is free from pollution, the sky is clear, and the sea is clean and calm.



Is it not a call for us to listen, to respect, to allow these living creatures in our midst??? An invitation to evolve a new way of living!

For the first time in history, the churches are closed, temples are locked and mosques are shut, no entry and no exit. Why? Are they not the places of divine dwelling? Is it shut for us or did we, human beings forget about the Divine power above us, ultimately, being forced to contain ourselves to our own little rooms or spaces.



As I write this, our nation India has already entered into the third phase of lock down. How many more in the series, no one knows. A small virus where did it come from? Where is its origin? Is it man made? How long it will go on? Umpteen questions with no definite answers.

But one thing is clear as the nation or the whole world is in lock down, there are heroes and heroines in our midst fighting against this deadly virus at the cost of their own lives. Lockdown has no place in their professional life. Our words are insufficient to thank and appreciate these warriors.... the entire healthcare personnel, the police, the armed forces, the support and maintenance staff, the government agencies, who are tirelessly working to save lives and containing Covid-19. At times they too stand still and helpless witnessing the unwarranted death one after another, young and old alike.

A look at our Community of Sisters

We are a community of 22 Sisters in lockdown; out of which 12 of us are above 70 years with their co morbidities. Being a community attached to a hospital which has existed for last 134 years, it was announced by CHAI (Catholic Health Association of India) to move out Sisters above 60 years for their safety as they are more vulnerable to the attack of the virus.



Powerhouse of prayer

Because those of us directly involved in the health care regularly come in and out of a common Refectory and Chapel which was not at all advisable. Therefore, they were (in a way) doubly locked-down to their own rooms forgetting all their aches and pains and spending time in prayer. They are the power house of prayer for all of us, the management, doctors, nurses, paramedics and support staff who are there out in the fore front and in the wards actively involved in the healing mission of Jesus the Good Shepherd. I personally thank God for keeping all of them safe and sound in His protective arms.

We made sure their every need is attended to by two angels **Venila** and **Shobha** who are professionally trained in our hospital to care for the old and the sick. We were lucky to attend the Eucharist now and then because of the presence of two priests in the hospital campus. Otherwise we learned to participate in the live Mass on media and to be in spiritual communion. We missed our common prayers together and of course our recreations which brought life to our community. But I am happy our youngsters even with the tensed moments in the hospital found time to play shuttle and rejuvenate themselves at the end of each day.



Turn your eyes and ears to the hospital.... **St. Martha's Hospital** with a history of 134 years.

Today on 8th of May St. Mary Euphrasia addresses us and affirms us in these words: "You have been chosen for the holy work; you will be its support". I fold my hands in gratitude to all our hospital staff especially those in the frontline as warriors against Covid-19. I appreciate their courage, confidence, commitment and above all their zeal and faith to be at the Fever Clinic, Emergency department and Out Patient department areas.



I marvel at that chain of our Partners-in-mission being healthcare personnel who stand at the entrance of OPD to control, guide and screen each and every patient and their attenders and ensure the safety before they enter inside the hospital to meet their respective doctors. Wonderful chemistry of working together for a noble cause! Hats off to you, **Mr. Jason, Antony, Stephen, Anto, Mathew, Ms. Irene and Candida!** May Heaven rain its Blessings on you and your families!

During the first week of lock down, there was fear and anxiety everywhere. The patients visiting the hospital drastically came down all through last week of March to the end of April. I think people forgot about their pains and illnesses as they were concentrated on virus. With hope and determination, our team of doctors, nurses, paramedical and support staff started seeing the patients. One day to our shock, we got a visit from BBMP authorities. They came tracking the contact details of a patient who had visited our hospital earlier but tested positive for Covid-19 later.

Meanwhile another bad news came to us that one of our medicine consultants developed fever and other symptoms and had to be quarantined in a hospital near to her house. Again, a horrible long day and night for our emergency department as they had to treat a symptomatic Covid-19 patient. As we are not first-responder hospital for Covid-19, we could not proceed with treatment and had to wait for a nod from prescribed Covid-19 hospitals to shift the patient.

With these two or three suspected cases, in all, we had to make immediate arrangements in tracking all primary and secondary contacts of all these patients. We had to quarantine 39 of them including doctors, nurses, paramedics and support staff.

Though puzzled, we acted quickly to gather them and arrange accommodation for all these front-line warriors at one of the special wards in our own hospital. And staff nurses were kept round-the-clock to attend to them and to observe any development of symptoms in them.

These events really shook us but I should say our cry and earnest prayer for protection for all our staff and patients reached God. So much so, that we received the good news that all of them testing negative for Covid-19 test after their quarantine period.

This was a great learning experience for us that the hospital management left no stone unturned to make sure that all required protocols were put in place and strictly adhered to by all concerned in examining, and caring for any patient. Prevention is ALWAYS better than cure !

At this juncture, I thank many well-wishers who called us to enquire the situation and to assure of us their prayers and support. I like to mention some of them who reached out with the much required personal protection equipment, masks, gloves, visors etc. To name them are **Theresa Greenhough, Mr. Deepak Sharma, Mr. Jason Furtado, Dr. Rahul Sima, Mrs. Kavita and Mr. Rahul.**



The situation of non-availability of protective equipment urged us to make masks, protective gowns and body bags by our tailoring and P&O center staff. I also thank **Arise Foundation (New York)** who sent financial assistance in procuring PPEs, masks and dry rations for migrant and contract laborers in the campus.

I thought it would be good to get a feel of our senior sisters, hospital management and medical fraternity during this pandemic period. I am sure you will be happy to hear them sharing their feelings, emotions and opinions.

Our senior experienced Sr. Angels Saldanha RGS speaks: 'It is a blessing for the rich and the poor. People have learned to become more human and to relate with their family members. If not all some have learnt to share with the poor their time, food and learnt to pray for their brothers and sisters. The silence all around has awoken in them a greater silent one within.'



Sr. Mercy Abraham RGS, senior most in the Nursing Profession says: "I feel that the Covid 19 and lock down are a God- given opportunity to think of our Creator with gratitude and love. This event should make all of us to see the Hands of God. Nothing happens without His knowledge. It should bring back to us the 'Place of God' in our lives – we are mortals and our life span is short- only God knows when it will come to an end. It is an invitation from God to be prepared.....for He will come when least expected.

I had more time to spend in prayer, reflection and reading, listening to spiritual talks (YOU TUBE) since I was not going to the Hospital side to visit patients.

Our world had been on the go - very fast moving, with many discoveries, technological development, trying even to compete with God, with self-sufficiency, to the extent of cloning human beings etc.

Human beings forgot that it was God who had created us with a particular purpose. God gave us the whole creation with all its resources, to be at our service, to nurture it, use it with love and care. But we not only used it, but misused and abused our Mother Earth. Most of the diseases are due to the

environmental destruction resulting in air pollution. The deforestation, interference with the sea, river etc, destroyed our natural resources.

Materialism and enjoyment at any cost, has become the primary purpose of life. Nations competing with each other, using war and violence to become the number ONE in the world is the high priority for many nations.

The spirituality, rituals and traditional observances which helped humans to be closer to God and with one another became unnecessary or rather redundant practices.

Self-centeredness and selfishness among individuals, the families, and Religious Institutions became a natural phenomenon of the day to day life.

Our food habits and health practices were not given much importance. Any Junk Food was welcome at any time, as long as it gave us good taste and satisfaction. It looked as if humans live to eat and not visa-versa.

Drugs, Alcoholism and free sex also played a vital part in the lives of many, especially among the youth. Erosion in morality and values have caused many problems in the everyday life.

It is worth listening to **Dr. J.M. Johnson**, Director, St. Martha's Hospital.

He says Covid-19, the pandemic of 2020 shook the world with its intensity, comparable with the Spanish Flu of 1917, though there were other dangerous pandemics in the last 2-3 decades. The panic everywhere, including Bangalore spread faster than the virus, mainly due to social media.

St. Martha's Hospital with its long history of service jumped into the frontline to admit and serve the Covid-19 affected patients; however for the first time there was palpable fear and anxiety among the health care staff due to the highly infective and virulent nature of the corona virus. Doctors and nurses faced challenges like limited availability of PPE (personal protective equipment) and attempted to decipher and make sense of the conflicting available medical literature regarding treatment of this dreaded infection.



Lessons from other countries dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic gave us evidence-based preventive measures: 'Stay Home', social distancing, wear face mask and frequent hand-washing. The hospital too felt the ripples of the effect of a strict government-mandated curfew-like lockdown, which lasted for over 7 weeks, this not only affected the ability of many of the hospital staff to travel from their homes to work, but also prevented patients from accessing health care. On one hand the number of emergencies and deliveries went up, with the closure of nearby maternity homes and clinics, and on the other hand in-patients in other departments started to dwindle, leading to financial losses.

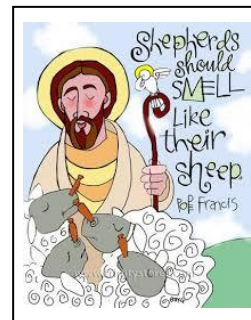
Through these challenges, St. Martha's hospital ran a "Fever Clinic", to screen patients for Influenza-like illness and refer suspect cases to the designated government (Victoria) hospital. We are still riding this tsunami-wave of the epidemic, and the St. Martha's fraternity is preparing itself for the inevitable deluge of Covid-19 cases over the next few months. In the meanwhile, we are committed to serving all patients walking into the hospital.

At the time of this writing, we in Karnataka have fared much better than other states, with effective community surveillance and contact tracing of corona cases. Though the mortality in India has not been comparable to Europe and the USA, only time will tell how we fare eventually.

I am inspired by the words spoken by one of our Mission Partners and HOD of Physiotherapy Department, **Jason Furtado**, whose Zeal went beyond all possibilities. Listen to him:

“You who love this mission so much, help us to keep it going”. – SME

On March 23rd 2020, India went into a complete lockdown. It was an unprecedented time for everyone. It is at this point of time that our primal instinct of ‘flight or fight’ response is triggered. And we could see that as one-by-one, many opted to ‘stay home and stay safe’, these were health care ‘essential’ workers also ! ‘*Our Mission is truly defined by the people we serve*’. And my duty as a Partner-in-mission was not be an ‘Armchair- Officer’ but to be in the thick of it; fighting side-by-side with my Good Shepherd Sisters. To be a Shepherd with the smell of his sheep. Ablaze with Love and passionate for Mission !



The general atmosphere all over was of heightened anxiety bordering on paranoia. I went to work daily without being certain we would be permitted to return home. What if we were quarantined because of one patient that we may have come across? I have a mother who is in the vulnerable age group. I had my staff and my patients to think of; and of course, a human instinct of self-preservation also.

It was also a time where our fundamentals as health care professionals were stirred. Most of us in the healthcare profession came face-to-face with our true core ‘call to service’. We were forced to rethink our basic instincts of freedom, unbiased outreach and uncontrolled compassion. The three core elements of Good Shepherd Partnership helped me i.e. Our values, rooted in our heritage, expressed through our service in mission. The details documented of the actions of Mother Mary of St. Hyacinth, the 1st Sister Superior of St. Martha’s Hospital, during the time of the great plague of 1897. ‘*We are sisters from St. Martha’s Hospital, and we fear no disease.*’ they boldly said. This inspired me to move onward with courage.

One of the greatest challenges was to hear the voice of God in the clutter of world.

‘*Be Still, and know that I am God!*’, was the echo in my core. The automatic overpowering and almost uncontrollable drive to respond, was my response to my Conscious, integrity to my Profession and commitment to Mission. This was my formation through this difficult time. The grace of Zeal. The strength to say, ‘Here I am Lord!’

It didn’t matter anymore that every day I had to walk through 10km of absolutely desolate streets of Bangalore, with barricades and checkpoints that one had to twist and climb under. Each day, not knowing if the way would be clear to reach the hospital. At the hospital too, the risk of exposure was imminent as we were all learning to cope with limited resources. It was a unique experience to be in the frontlines at the preliminary screening desk of all the patients, visitors and personnel that visited the hospital. It was a formative process of learning to ensure that we kept to our Good Shepherd Culture even though we embraced the tough rules and regulations that the government was proposing. It was humbling too to reach out to migrant workers and staff members who were in need of assistance.

Lessons I learnt through this experience:

- Our unity is our strength.
- This is truly God's work, and He will protect it.
- St. Martha's Hospital is as relevant today as it was in 1886!

Here I have **Dr. Davy J Olakkengil**, the Medical Superintend of the hospital who speaks objectively:

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant lock down that the government has imposed in an attempt to control the spread of the disease had had a very deleterious effect on all economic activity and businesses, including the health care industry. Very obviously this has affected St. Martha's too adversely.



Because of the Lockdown, there has been a very precipitous drop in foot falls and consequently admissions, bed occupancy, utilization of facilities, all resulting in poor inflows and consequently adversely affecting the revenue inflow/outflow equations.

Some very heartening observations have been the attitude of many employees/doctors, who have shown great commitment, loyalty and a sense of responsibility to the institution and the patients that are taken care of here.

There was an initial hesitation and fear among the health care workers as was to be naturally expected. This behaviour could in part be explained by the non-availability of 'personal protective equipment' in adequate numbers during the initial phase of the crisis, when we were inadequately prepared.

These lacunae have now been filled to a large extent by the proactive actions of the management. The infection control team have painstakingly also developed specific area/task level of PPE requirements, so that the safety of health care workers is ensured without wastage of precious resources.

As the medical superintendent, what has alarmed me is the unfortunate tendency of some of the staff, to blindly avoid 'exposure' to the detriment of patient care and the interests of the hospital. This has continued in some cases despite the provision of suitable protective equipment to the concerned health care workers.

A reading of the currently available literature, point to the Covid-19 crisis remaining with us for a significant period of time. I feel that this crisis is also a great opportunity to rebuild ourselves. We need to assess our strengths and weaknesses, bring about suitable changes, review our performance and identify and eliminate our weaknesses and reinforce our strengths.

This will enable us to weather this storm and further challenges down the road, and emerge stronger, flexible and more resilient, and equipped to meet future challenges confidently and successfully.

Let us turn our ears to **Sr. Shanty Chacko RGS**, the Nursing Superintend who sees an "invisible enemy" in Covid-19 and its lockdown. Walking through the campus of St. Martha's, one would wonder whether it was the same campus which was bubbling with activities and movement of staff and public! The fewer foot falls, fewer vehicles driving in and out, one could easily sense a deadly silence all over.

Outpatient department with a handful of patients, comparatively free casualty, a closed Dental department, closed intensive care units, huge wards with one or two in-patients, office with very few staff, nursing staff with hardly any patient to look after being forced to remain in the hostel was the reality that we encountered ever since the lock down on account of Covid-19.



Every day we were called to make arrangements in accordance with the government protocols to screen, segregate, isolate, diagnose and treat patients. Social distancing, hand hygiene and mask for the public was enforced with the support of a handful of our dedicated staff. Wards were assigned to treat Covid-19 suspect patients with dedicated teams of Doctors and Nurses and other health care team members.

The challenge of providing adequate PPE to the staff and public was met when our tailors rose to the occasion by stitching gowns, mask, face shield etc. The Prosthetic and Orthotic centre lent their helping hands by stitching leak proof body bags for packing dead bodies of Covid-19 suspects.

A vigilant Covid-19 Task Force with Dr. Raksha at its helm kept watch over every minute aspect of the Covid management strategies.

It was an uphill process to get the medical fraternity to come out in service of the patients but we believed that the time would help them gain confidence and indeed it did happen.

Our staff going in to quarantine was an eye opener for all of us to be prudent, chalk out definite protocols in view of protecting our staff to ensure continuous service delivery.

The experiences of patients' relatives having to wait for 12-24 hours to for the body of their beloved ones as they awaited the Covid-19 test report, unable to mourn was heart touching. The apprehension on the face of pregnant women to get themselves tested for Covid-19 took us ending up as counsellors and mothers with tender love to help them understand the importance of the test and thus gain their confidence.

The purchase department too had its challenges of procuring essential items needed for the day today functioning of the hospital. They went literally to different vendors to get things which otherwise would come to the hospital at a phone call or an e mail. We appreciate the central stores and Pharma team who whole heartedly supported the front-line warriors.

Our aim was to reach out to and serve everyone who entered St. Martha's with utmost sensitivity, love and care at the same time protecting our health care personnel. The fight against our "INVISIBLE ENEMY" is an ongoing challenge which requires cooperation, commitment and dedication. Only then the sleepless nights, the mental agony, financial losses and spiritual deprivations will yield fruits and bring Glory to our shepherd God who guides and leads us.

Our Senior consultant Surgeon, **Dr. Giridhar** speaks, let us listen to him : The Corona pandemic which started in China (Dec2019) is something which no one thought would occur. Whatever the source of the origin of the Virus (animal ?/ lab experiment ?) it is here to stay . It is the immunity of the person that is going to be one's shield against this virus. It was initially thought that the mortality and morbidity would be high in the elderly (70+years) with associated co morbid conditions, but this has been disproven by the spread of the virus among all ages. It was surprising to see developed countries like the USA, UK and European countries that are struggling to control the number of deaths during this pandemic. The effectiveness of the early lockdown announced by India was proved by the low number of positive cases and deaths in the country. It is going to be a long time for things to get back to normal in India and the world.



It has been a very difficult time for everyone especially the healthcare professionals, police and the administration (country / state/ institution) For the people there were no jobs, no money and decreased in food supply. Especially, the migrant workers. People are trying to do their best with the limited money and resources. Social distancing is starting to work, but for healthcare workers, the devastation is far too real. The risk involved in taking care of the cases is high, both to the healthcare worker and their families – ‘Death does not differentiate’. Healthcare workers are witnessing ‘horrible things’ with little time to process the experience.

Only time will tell us whether we will be able to control the spread of this virus or is it going to take a heavy toll in many levels.

One of the senior Ward Sister **Mrs. Molly George** felt during the Covid-19 lock down, Sick people were not able to come to the hospital. Due to unavailability of transportation, family were not able to procure essential for daily needs. It was my privilege to be on duty during that time which I always enjoyed. It's my husband who transported me, to and fro from the hospital. I felt it was a great help for the hospital as many of the wards in charges couldn't attend duty due to the lock down. I thank God for taking care of me and my supporting staff.

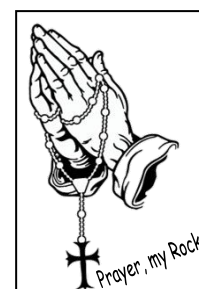
I have **Mrs. Candida Mary** another senior Ward Sister sharing her journey of quarantine....

“Quarantine kept me away from others but closer to God.

Other days I was selfish person praying only for my own dear and near ones.... but this quarantine made me to pray Universal prayer.... Every tear from my eyes turned to prayer and my unbent knees, knelt before God which is an amazing experience in the presence of the Healer....

My every tears of prayer were for my quarantined team to come out with no signs and symptoms of Virus and I am Thankful to Almighty that it happened...

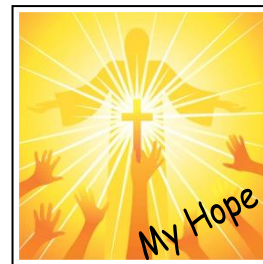
I Thank God for his mighty healing upon each one of us... and we all join together pray and come out of this deadly period of our life.”



Dr. Rahul Sima, Surgeon says Covid-19 has changed life as we know it. In a world where we thought nothing could stop us and as mission partners we often felt when will all this end? A world of power and wealth but all that mattered was where were we heading?

The pandemic has changed all that. The world has come to a temporary halt. Greed has been put on the back burner and need has resurfaced. It has affected us all.

As mission partners in the healthcare/ healing mission too things have changed. What is right and what is meaningful have replaced our outlook.



However more than the crisis and this 'walk through this valley of death' it is the light the end of the tunnel that really inspires me and gives me hope. We are being given a second chance, a new beginning. It is now once this crisis is over that we must as mission partners in the healing ministry forge together to recreate re-educate and regrow a healing environment. UN environment not just to treat illness but to learn that prevention is better than cure, health is better than wealth. We need a holistic society and most importantly to realise that no one can walk this journey alone we must do it together.

Sr. Ancy Anto RGS, the Assistant Nursing Superintend shares her touching experience during Covid 19 and even her quarantine experience.

“At all times, dare to be!”, says Steve Maraboli. As a health care professional, I found it incredibly rewarding to work in the Emergency Department. The experience helped me to develop strong critical-thinking to ensure optimal patient-care especially when the lives are at stake and I always felt proud of my profession as a nurse.

Today we are in the midst of Covid-19 crisis and it is really a challenging situation especially when patient comes to the Emergency department and are battling for life.



“Energized by the spirit we risk together for mission”, yes one of my experience of risk taking was on 13th April 2020. Unknowingly, I happened to take care of a patient in the emergency department who was later tested positive for Covid-19. Knowing the symptoms and the area where she came from, we suspected her of having Covid-19. Thereby after the emergency measures were taken care, we tried to refer her to a first respondent Covid-19 hospital, but it wasn't an easy task. Almost ten hours we spend caring for the patient, consoling and reassuring the relatives, finding ways and means to shift her to a safer zone. In the midst of all these the grace of my Shepherd God, energized me and my team members. This experience re-ignited my passion to care for the needy.

My Quarantine Experience: The above experience with the patient necessitated me to be quarantined for 14 days. Deep down I was not afraid of any consequences of treating the Covid-19 patients, but what let me down was those long fourteen days. Initially, I occupied myself with my work but as the days went on, I experienced frustration. At times negative energy began to creep into my life, but my God was so good; He did not let me down. He strengthened and nurtured me with spiritual energy as I got down on my knees and trusted Him and thus found more time in prayer.

Our Staff Nurse, **Melony Vinaya Kumar** speaks:

During the pandemic of covid19, it was initially a crucial period for me to work as a health care worker. Due to this crisis my family members were also worried. I took care of a patient who was positive, by the grace of God I was tested negative. Since then I don't hesitate to take care of such patients despite the situation. The updated training provided by the hospital and by wearing complete personal protective equipment I have no fear to provide care for patients.

Let us listen to what **Nimmy Simon**, Staff Nurse had said: Initially, I have to admit that despite being a Nurse I was not prepared to face the situation. As the days passed and the situation worsened, I noted that we have to be more cautious and educated in handling the pandemic.

It was a challenge for me to take care of the vulnerable groups and infected patients. By the grace of God and prayers of my parents and institution, I'm able to overcome this life-threatening situation.

I quote **Roshni Mascarenhas**, a Staff Nurse “it was unique experience to work during this time of Covid 19. I was indeed glad that I was chosen to work for quarantined staff of our hospital. In the beginning I was anxious and worried about how to deal with it. As the days passed, it gave me strength to take up this challenging task. It was a wonderful opportunity to risk my life and keep up my oath that I had taken to serve the people at any time. It was a different experience to take care of them in their tension and anxious movements. I am thankful to management for this experience and opportunity.”

How will I leave out the College of Nursing which is attached to our hospital where annually 600 students join for Nurses Training. I have **Sr. Deepa RGS**, the Principal sharing her experience with us.

When ‘Covid19’ stretched its arms to India specially to Karnataka, as a principal College of Nursing I was anxious and my first concern was to protect the young Nursing Students from this deadly virus.

The steps taken for students was to call for a faculty meeting; discuss and assign 2 teachers to prepare a PPT regarding **Covid-19** based on WHO guide lines to give awareness programme for the Students. We called for an SNA meeting and explained to the students the situation in all over the World especially in India\ Karnataka. As a precautionary measure, any outing permission for the students were cancelled and no visitors were allowed to the hostel, students who were ‘day scholars’ were asked to check into the hostel or stop coming to the college. As per university circular classes were suspended for all the batches of students except the final years. The students were encouraged to watch the daily news and read newspapers to update themselves with the daily happenings in India and all over the world. Awareness programs were conducted for the students in small batches. Hand sanitizer was provided for the students, particularly, those who were posted in the clinical and motivated them to use the face mask which they were already using. When the university and the Gov. of Karnataka declared holidays, student expressed their desire to go home, so holidays were declared for all the students from 19th of March 2020 onwards. At present all the students are at home except 11 students in the Student nurses’ hostel. As per the university request online classes are started for the students.



For the teachers, since all of them were coming from home, they were asked not to come to college. Teachers were encouraged conduct online classes for the students and it is going on well. A weekly report was sent to the university regarding the online classes. We encouraged the faculty and the students to attend the online classes conducted by the University and INC on Covid-19. I receive a good feedback regarding this. Hand sanitizers was also provided for all the office staff, teachers, and class IV employees also encouraged them to use the safety mask.

For the Parents of the Students: I **addressed the concerns and the anxieties of the parents whenever they called me.**

My Personal experience was that I was able to relax and accept the situation. I could spend more time in prayer, meditation, reading and reflection. I have begun to look at things and people more positively. I have begun to serve the community better. I developed my hobbies like gardening and cooking.

The main insight and experience

- Take personal responsibility for one's life
- Enjoy God given life in the midst of uncertainty and confusion and trust in His promise
- To conclude "Covid-19" may be able to LOCK DOWN THE ENTIRE WORLD physically, but it cannot lock down the spirit of freedom within each one of us, because this spirit is given to us by **JESUS** our Divine Savior and Lord.

Sr. Pushpa RGS, a B.Sc. Nursing Student, speaks:

Since it happened during the Lenten season and Easter made me to realize that prayers, penance and fasting to intercede the Lord to save people who are affected, health workers and the Leaders. As many others don't have the Eucharist but I am privileged to have it is not by my merit but God's special gift during these days. I learned to think optimistically to preserve, promote and protect life with their limitations. Though I am not able to directly help the people, but can support the undertakings by the community and likeminded people.

Sr. Mereena RGS a Medical student shares "I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains." Anne Frank.

The whole world is undergoing pain and suffering as we all are affected by the tiny little virus. This pandemic has a great impact on all of us. We began to live behind the doors.

This experience helped me to realize our emptiness and nothingness. As St. Paul says there is nothing which can separate me from the love of my God. Initially, these days were for me to slow down from my daily routine and to deepen my prayer life a little more. I feel I am privileged and blessed when the whole lot of people are going through hunger and hardships.

This lockdown has affected me badly as a student. Even though we have switched on to online classes, there are uncertainty and difficulties I undergo. Teachers try their maximum but we students go through stress. There was of joy in being together with all my friends in learning. I hope and pray that this situation will pass away and we may have better days.

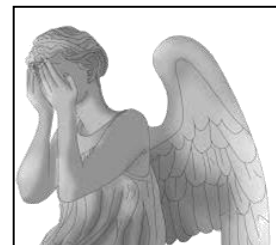
...**You are well aware** what is happening with the migrant workers all over India. Pathetic to listen and see the media reports concerning them. The authority seemed to be inhuman to treat own brothers and sisters. We forget that they are our nation builders and wealth generators as they sweat their blood for the nation. Here too St. Martha's reached out to as much as 203 families to lessen their pain and sorrow by giving them food grains at least for two weeks. May they experience the generosity of our own brothers and sisters.



As you listened to the feelings, emotions and learnings of our Sisters, Mission partners, hospital management and many other staff, I pen down one of my heart wrenching personal experiences during this time where I stood emotionally helpless. This happened on 18th April 2020 at 12.00 pm. I

got a call from Mr. Sunil one of the Security Officers in the campus that his brother Mr. Mathew's (Another Security officer) wife's body will be passing through our hospital gate who passed away two days ago due to massive heart attack. He wanted his guards to pay last respect to the body of their Boss's wife. I informed Mr. Jason, HOD of Physiotherapy dept to see to the necessary arrangements.

At 12.45 Mr. Jason informed me that the body has arrived and the guards keeping social distance are paying their respect. I immediately left with Sr. Shanty to pay our condolences and prayers to Mr. Mathew and pay respect to Mrs. Mathew's lifeless body. As we reached the ambulance waiting outside our casualty, I saw some of the security guards paying their respect to their boss's beloved wife. I really didn't know what to do or what to speak. Deep silence! I had no words to speak. Without my knowledge I put my right hand on to my chest and just bent my head to Mr. Mathew who was standing motionless waiting for us. I could feel he was in fact a bundle of sadness and emotions and yet controlled himself as he saw us. Sr. Shanty climbed the step of the ambulance and had a look at the body. Then I took the chance of seeing her first and last to say goodbye and after me Mr. Jason too. I saw the body was fully packed head to foot only I could see a rose garland. My mind raised lot of questions?



How terrible for a young man of 32 years to stand still not even having the freedom to touch, to kiss and hug her as his beloved one lies motionless in front of his eyes. Remember she did not die of Covid-19 but yet social distancing became the norm which cancelled all human love and relationship. How many families lost their dear ones with Covid19 or without Covid-19 during these days? All of them have to go through these inhuman way of saying goodbye however close one was. It all happened because the whole world going through the satanic grip of the pandemic. I pray May the Good Lord be their support, consoler and comforter in those moments' lone grief.

I believe that the statue of St. Mary Euphrasia (which stands beside the Outpatient department entrance gate), reaches out to embraces all our staff and patients, who enters our gates daily; while the cross of St. Benedict embedded at both the entrance gates of the hospital, protects us from all harm and danger especially these challenging times.

We recognize even in the darkest moments, **love gives hope**. Love compels us to fight against Covid-19 alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far. Love compels us to give and act as one. Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before. As we pray in our individual homes, communities – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and nations from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

Father, we seek Your wisdom daily. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. We pray that they communicate clearly, truthfully, and calmly — with each other and with the public — and that their messages are received and heeded. May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

Sr. Gracy Thomas RGS

Local Leader

St. Martha's Hospital Community, Bangalore

8th May 2020



Stitching Face Masks



Distribution of Rice, Pulse and Oil to contract workers



Our skilled tailors making haste to meet the growing demands for PPEs



Stitching Body Bags



Our support staff: committed to serve



Hand Sanitization of all Patients & Visitors before entering the OPD



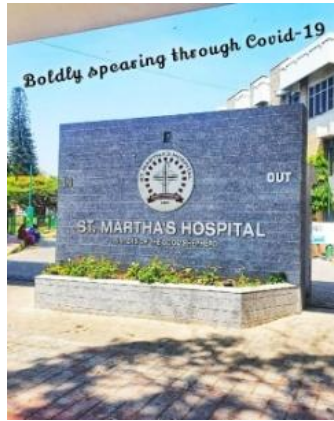
Screening of all Outpatients, Staff & Visitors



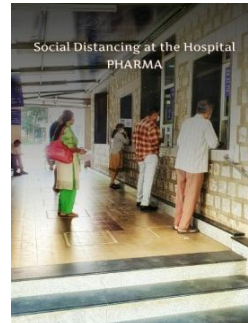
FEVER CLINIC



Emergency Unit



Boldly spearing through Covid-19



Social Distancing at the Hospital PHARMA



Dry Rations for our contract workers



Tailoring Section making reusable PPEs



'Why are we here, if not to help our neighbours?' - St. Mary Euphrasia



Vigilant Guards keep watch even during Lockdown



Checking symptoms & Cross referencing of Address with Government Hotspot Data



Quality & Safety Checks before entry into OPD



Outpatient Entry Social Distancing



Hospital provides Protective Disposable or Reusable Masks to Patients and Visitors with Education on its proper use



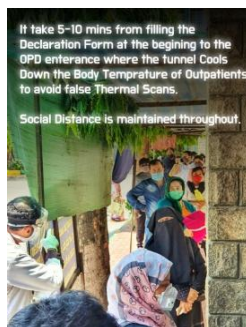
Security Guards validate Declaration Form Information with Patient's ID Proof



Social Distancing at patient waiting areas



Preliminary Triage of all Outpatients



It take 5-10 mins from filling the Declaration Form at the beginning to the OPD entrance where the tunnel Cools Down the Body Temperature of Outpatients to avoid false Thermal Scans. Social Distance is maintained throughout.

