

Brazil - Ingenuity of Charity in a time of pandemic



Our local communities in Brazil suffered greatly from the pandemic in 2020 and the situation is still alarming in 2021. Schedules and plans are being disrupted, activities paralyzed or modified, families, associates and members of our staffs often greatly affected.

On Guard in Times of Turmoil

« Graças a Deus » only one of us, **Sister Fátima Pereira** was *lightly infected* in May 2020 and she did not transmit the virus to the other Sisters of the community of the Regional House, where she resides. After a rigorous quarantine, she was able to return to work. Director of a home for the elderly and long-term care, she is *on the "front line" of an essential service*. She travels by subway and bus each day for two and a half hours to get to work and another two and a half hours to get home. She loves her work with the elderly, where she embodies the charisma of compassion inherited from our dear and venerable founder Elisabeth Bruyère. Even today, as Brazil sinks into an out-of-control health crisis, and the morbid numbers of the pandemic fly from record to record, Sister Fátima continues to work valiantly as she has done throughout the year 2020.

Creativity in Times of Need

At the **Elisabeth Bruyère Association**, in the Santa Maria de Pimentas neighborhood, Sisters Ivani Costa and Tatiana Cristina Alves coordinate the impressive "Project for Adolescents" with the help of some employees. However, since the pandemic, the work with teenagers was interrupted by the government and all schools and other places at risk of contamination were closed.

- However, the Sisters found other alternatives to continue helping the needy in their environment. With some women volunteers, they *produced ten thousand masks* for the people of the communities, and uniforms for the employees and patients of the "André Luiz Hospital ". This hospital is managed by the Spiritan Community of Guarulhos, which receives the most vulnerable patients.
- They also organized the "Panela Solidária" project, which was proposed by a group of people from the community who reflect on the conditions of social inequality. Therefore, we joined together to contribute to



Masks and uniforms are sewn by volunteers



Packaged masks ready for distribution

fight hunger. Lunch boxes were prepared thanks to the food donations of the local people. Despite the obligation of social isolation, we can, by the grace of God, exercise our charisma of compassion by serving the needy!



Meals are offered to families living in the area where the Sisters reside. Lunch boxes are distributed to the homeless.

A Project : From Small to Prodigious

With the spread of the pandemic, in the state of Bahia in the northeast of the country, poverty became deplorable. Some of our Sisters live there, **in the town of Conceição do Coité**. The residents of this area have been living in poverty for a long time but now, the families are even more affected by the devastating socio-economic effects of the coronavirus, which is becoming more devastating every day. Touched by the situation, the SCOs became inventive in trying to provide some relief. The Sisters began to collect donations and in October, they inaugurated a large **"Solidarity Bazaar"**. This was set up in an outlying area of the city where clothes and shoes are sold at low prices.



Sister Aparecida Donizetti Gonçalves, the instigator of this project, shows the sign announcing the opening.



This project also aims to empower individuals and families in vulnerable situations, to promote their autonomy and to rebuild their self-esteem by offering them the opportunity to exercise their right to purchase coveted goods like any other citizen. Many volunteers, donors and local actors have made their valuable contribution and have become project partners. As a result, an impressive and well-articulated **"Solidarity Network"** has been solidly established. The pandemic has not prevented hearts from opening up to sharing. Praise God for all the good this bazaar has done and continues to do in the lives of those in need!



"The tenderness of God's love is difficult to explain, but we have proof of it every day." (Élisabeth Bruyère)

..... *The Mission in Lesotho is also very much alive and bustling! Before - During - and After Covid-19*



"One Shot, Two Targets" !

As the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation was about to be celebrated, Sister Marianna Mohleleng, Principal of Mount Royal High School, thought of celebrating the 41st anniversary of the school *at the same time*. She saw it as an opportunity to honor the great dedication of the foundress, Sister Juliet Lithempa and to applaud her great accomplishment.

This led to a fabulous project. Sister Marianna suggested that a few teachers and students *rewrite the history of the school*. This initiative resulted in a series of various compositions, songs, writings, speeches, etc. The presentation, for example, brought out laughter and tears especially when the students acted out the first moments when Sister Juliette founded the school.

It is important to specify that this school is the only one of its kind in the country. What sets it apart is its occupants. Many of them are deaf and they are in the same classrooms as the other students. All receive the same level of education together. Interpreters are available in the classroom for anyone who needs them. Sister Angelina Mashoai was the one who made the inclusion of the hearing impaired and deaf at this institution possible. We are proud of this program and happy to continue it. We thank the Lord who was the source of the inspiration to start this program.



A few of the students with Sisters and their teachers

Awareness and Action On a Need

Due to lack of resources in Lesotho, cancer patients have to travel to Bloemfontein in the Republic of South Africa to receive chemo, radiotherapy, surgery and other treatments. The Ministry of Health pays for treatment and lodging in the neighboring country. But the patients, often not very wealthy, find themselves alone far

from home with too little money to adequately provide for their other needs such as food, toiletries, etc.

The Sisters strive to raise awareness and to make the Government more responsible towards the members of these groups. They are trying to advocate for additional funds to be given to them so that they can better benefit from their treatment during their

stay. The Sisters have taken the initiative to prepare meals or "lunch boxes" for the traveling patients but since resources are scarce they offer a meal to the patients twice a week while continuing to hope that the Health authorities will decide to provide meals every day of the week.



Preparing lunches



Patients **on departure** for RSA

Fighting for the Rights of Children Born with Disabilities

Sister Theresia Noko went on the air to defend the rights of children born with severe disabilities. They receive no help in the country, but if they could undergo certain surgeries in the Republic of South Africa, some of them could have an almost normal future. Certain cases may seem incurable, but Sister Theresia has an unshakeable confidence in Divine Providence and she is also convinced that Mother Bruyère intercedes for these children. She relies on her own experience, which she often recounts. When she needed an ear operation, it was refused because it was assumed as a sure failure. But thanks to the tenacity of Sister Clara Rakhomo, the Provincial Animator at the time, Sister Theresia finally underwent surgery and subsequently enjoyed good hearing. She had been on the verge of losing her hearing completely and irrevocably.

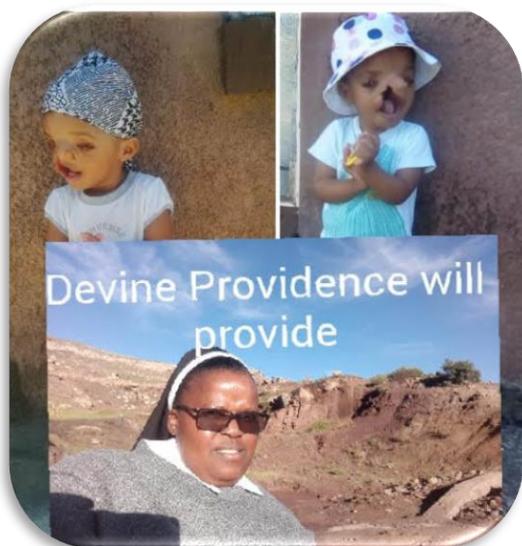


In response to her requests, many volunteers and associates help raise funds to give some children the opportunity for a cure and a better life. Compassion without borders is at work.

For example, Sr. Theresia, with the help of many donors, faithful of Pontmain Parish and associates, managed to raise the sum of 50,000.00 M for the operation of a child named Khauhelo who was born blind, that is to say, with his eyes completely closed. Deceivingly, the surgery scheduled for 2020 has been delayed due to the confinement caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms. Ivy Africa, our RSA associate, is part of the project that helps Khauhelo. With her ACSCO team in Pretoria, she even organized a birthday party for this child. We pray that, through Mother Bruyère's intercession, the operation will soon be successfully done. It is three years now since the operation was planned. Both Khauhelo and his mother support each other in this long wait.

Sister Theresia Noko with those children born with severe disabilities.



*“Leave ... leave your home ... go to ... (...) to find the poor, people in need, families in need.”
(Élisabeth Bruyère)*