

Issue 22, August 2020

Family Trove

Nurturing Christian Families & Community



See Judge Act

Sheltering in Love



*“He is my refuge
and my fortress;
My God,
in whom I trust.”*

PSALM 91:2



In this Issue

- 3 From the President's Desk
- 5 "How Long O Lord..." (Ps.13/1)
- 8 Staying Positive During a Pandemic
- 9 In Search of Silver Linings
- 14 The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective
- 21 A Tribute to Fr. John Menezes
- 22 In Memoriam of Xavier Sequeira
- 23 Regional News
- 28 Announcements: Obituaries, Milestones

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Dear CFMers,

"By deciding to seek and do good, to pay attention to each moment, and to cultivate positive thinking, we transform each day into a joy" - This is the crux of the message from CFMers on coping with the pandemic.

We thank all the CFMers who willingly shared their stories with us for our feature article 'In Search of Silver Linings'.

Special thanks to Rev. Fr. Xavier Sanjivi for his much-needed spiritual guidance for us during this pandemic, and also to Rhonda Divecha, CFM Mumbai, for contributing an article from her personal blog.

A big thank you to all the children and a grandchild of our CFMers, whose art and writing brighten up our issue, while giving us a window into their perspective on the current crisis.

As we shelter at home in the protective love of our family, may we also consciously shelter in the ever present Love of Our Lord.

Evelyn Coutto
Editor



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From the President's Desk



Judith & Richard D'Souza, National President Couple

Dear CFMers,

We hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well. We can honestly say that we have never experienced an event with such a drastic impact on how we live and work, as the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, we need to be divinely directed to do the right things and be prepared to take steps beyond what we are typically required to do. BUT keep in mind **“Even this shall pass”**, and it is important that when it does, we will always recollect the learnings from this time and pass them on to future generations.

In the current situation, it is vital to stay connected to God. With online mass, spiritual Communion, family prayer, novenas and all the spiritually enriching seminars available online, coming right into our homes and without other distractions, many have experienced a deepening of their faith such as never before. It is very important in these times to stay digitally connected – connected to your families, friends and communities; to accompany them in their day to day experiences and see how they can be best supported. Their feedback is essential to chart the right course to ensure they receive everything they need. Change is good and because of the challenging circumstances, even those who claimed were not tech savvy, have learnt to use social media like WhatsApp, Zoom and other Apps to communicate, make online purchases, payments and financial transactions.

Our top priority is the spiritual and physical health and safety of our CFMers. We are aware that groups have been unable to conduct Monthly CFM meetings, but we are happy to see the mind shift with certain Groups who have hosted meetings on WhatsApp and Zoom. We would like to make a special mention of our Senior Group - G3. They have set an example for us by having meetings and great discussions via WhatsApp.

We are happy to inform you that the **New CFM Inquiry papers** for our monthly meetings was completed on time and released in May 2020 as scheduled. Meanwhile we were running the fourth Alpha Program in Sacred Heart's Church, Richmond Town, Bangalore, but it had to be discontinued in view of the COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. We are however looking into the possibility of conducting **“ALPHA ONLINE”** programmes, which we hope to launch shortly.

By now we should have had our CFM AGM. However, in view of the prevailing circumstances, that too has been deferred. As travel may not be possible in the near future, we have begun exploring **the possibility of an Online AGM**. This is the Election year, and we pray that God puts it in the heart of the right couples and that they will respond and come forward to make up the next dynamic team to steer CFM India ahead.

We wish you the Peace & Joy of Christ as you stay safe. As Pope Francis has instructed, we pray that each of our CFM families are vaccinated with the blood of Jesus and believe in faith that the virus cannot touch us.

Much love and Jesus bless us all,

Judith & Richard D'Souza

National President Couple – CFM India

“

Out of necessity our space may be restricted to the walls of our homes, but have hearts that are bigger than that – where another can always find openness and welcome.

Pope Francis



When this is over

by Laura Kelly Fanucci

When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbours
A crowded theater
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.

When this ends
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way — better
for each other
because of the worst.

“How Long O Lord....” (Ps. 13/1)



Fr. Xavier Sanjivi. C.Ss.R, National Chaplain

A person named Ms. Diana Eck, who is a professor of comparative religions of a prestigious university in the U.S. had authored a book entitled, “Encountering God”. In that book she narrates this little incident. She said, once a Zen Buddhist teacher came to a college to give a talk to a group of students. One of the more serious students in class said to him, “Sir, what are the main teachings of Zen Buddhism?” The Zen Master took a piece of paper and wrote the word ‘*attention*’ on it, and gave it back to the student. The student was quite disappointed with the answer and so requested the Zen master to write a little more about his religion. And the teacher took the paper and wrote once again the words: ‘*attention, attention*’. This time the concerned student was very dissatisfied with the answer and pleaded with the master, to write something more that would be relevant and needful for our world situation today. And once again the master took the paper and wrote for the third time, ‘*attention, attention, attention*’. He then he said to the student, “Perhaps this might appear to you as being something very ordinary and simple. Yet, it is perhaps the greatest spiritual challenge that we face; in fact the heart of all our striving”.

Yes, to be attentive is a big challenge for many of us. To be constantly alert, attentive, watchful, is quite a difficult task in our life. Many of us experience this lack of attention, most of all in times of prayer. Normally when we begin to pray we realise that within a few minutes, our



Silence is a great means of acquiring the spirit of Prayer, and of disposing the soul to converse continually with God.

St. Alphonsus

minds would begin to wander far and near. We either keep thinking of the past or imagine some happenings in the future, and fail to rest in the present. We soon realise how difficult it is to keep the mind in focus and to bring it under control.

In the Christian tradition, our saints used to often mention the need for silence, so that we could attentively listen to the voice of God in our lives. St. Alphonsus once said, “Silence is a great means of acquiring the spirit of Prayer, and of disposing the soul to converse continually with God”.

Today, many among us have slowly come to realise that we are caught in a forced lockdown for quite some time. When the lockdown was imposed on us, many of us felt that it might just last for a month or two and after that things will return to normal. However, that dream that things might soon return to normal again has become a matter of wishful thinking.

Today it is almost five months since the lockdown has begun, and there does not appear to be any let down in this matter. We do not know for sure when a vaccine would be ready to protect us from the COVID-19 virus, or when we can once again move about freely in society.



The Virgin in Prayer by Giovanni Battista Salvi da Sassoferrato , 1640

And being in this forced locked down situation many of us have turned to prayer or to the study of the scriptures, as a way to break the monotony of simply staying at home. Perhaps at this time, an image that can come to our minds is the image of Mary the Mother of Jesus, who as our scriptures point out, must have spent much of her time in prayer and meditation at her home in Nazareth. There were many incidents that had occurred in her life that she must have found difficult to understand or comprehend. Some instances of happenings that she must have found difficult to understand would be God's choice of her to be the mother of his son; or the virgin conception; or the words that the prophet Simeon had spoken to her in the temple, or the words of Jesus himself who as a young boy was

lost and then found in the temple. These must have been words that she may have found difficult to understand. And the gospel tells us that **"Mary treasured all these things in her heart"**. In another translation it reads **"Mary meditated on all these things"**, or **"Mary pondered these things in her heart"** (Lk.2/51). And by reflecting and meditating on these words or happenings in her life, that Mary possibly begins to see and understand the plan of God for her in her life.

Perhaps during this time of the lockdown, we must use the time or opportunity available for us, to listen and to listen deeply, to the voice of God in our life. This voice of God won't be heard when we keep or observe just a little silence in our life. But if we maintain a prolonged and active silence, where we are attentive to listen to God's word, then surely we will hear him speak to us. And God may speak to us in different ways. He may speak to us through his word in scripture; or through the words of a friend in our life; or through a misunderstanding or a conflict in the home where one or the other person has been wounded, and we ask ourselves why did this happen? Or when we experience a kind of radical loneliness that perhaps we may never have experienced before.

If we are people who have developed a spirit of silence in our lives, then it is precisely in all these situations mentioned above, that we will be in a position to listen to what the Lord wants to tell us. One important way in which we can listen to the Lord is to listen to his Word in Scripture. The church in her teaching says that the Word of God is the main channel of Divine interaction with us as human beings. St. Ambrose once said, that when a person begins to read the

scriptures ‘God comes to walk with him in the earthly paradise’. And the more we read God’s word with faith, the more will we be in a position to listen to his special message for us in our lives.

Perhaps we should take Mary as our great model in this time of the pandemic. The Blessed Virgin Mary was a person who not only heard the Word, but listened to the word of God as given to her by the angel; and it was she who treasured or pondered on these words all through her life.

Many years ago, there lived a famous Swedish diplomat, Dag Hammarskjöld. He was the Secretary General of the United Nations for some time. In the year 1964, he died suddenly in a plane crash. And he carried with him a little book entitled “Markings”, and in that he had written a line that reads: **“For all that has been thanks. For all that shall be – Yes”**. During this pandemic, in spite of the fear and uncertainty that seems to fill the air for many of us, we pray that the Lord may grant us serenity and calm. And though surrounded by ambiguity about the future, let us also say, “For all that has been thanks; For all that shall be – Yes”.



Pandemic: a poem

by Lynn Ungar (Minister, Church for the Larger Fellowship)

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and
beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another’s hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

<http://www.lynnungar.com/poems/pandemic/>

Staying Positive During a Lockdown



Rhonda Divecha, Asst Professor Human Development, Nirmala Niketan College

The COVID-19 situation has brought in a new set of experiences. One major life change for most of us is staying home. Some still managed initially, but then further extensions of the lockdown, have played havoc in some families.

Each home and family is different and there is no single formula that will work to keep us happy. But one thing that is commonly usable is the power to think positively.

All of us have this power to think positively. But you'll say, "Why are some people still so negative then, if we all have the power?" The difference is that some choose to exercise this power and some don't. It's as simple as that!

Whatever happens, **ask yourself a simple question "What's something that I can learn through this?"** or "How can this be good for me and my family?" And most importantly, after asking the question, **search for the answer.**

No one can give you this answer. It has to be found by you, only then will you believe it, and only then, will it make you feel good. Similarly, you can't find the positives for your family members too, you can only guide them toward thinking positively, as I am guiding you now. **For positive thinking to have a good effect on you, you have to own it.** It has to be your own thoughts to make you feel good.

We may have no control over some things that happen to us, but we have control of our thoughts. We can choose to put a little effort and turn bad thoughts into good thoughts.

Instead of saying "I'm stuck at home", try saying "I'm safe as I have a home". Instead of saying "I'm so bored at home, got nothing to do", try saying "I've got this time to do things I've never had the time to do before". Instead of saying "Working from home is so time consuming, I'm working the whole day now", try saying "I'm safe indoors as I don't have to commute to work daily" and also "I'm grateful that I'm employed".

The main effect of this whole new way of thinking is that you'll be a happier person, and this also tends to have a domino effect on people around you. Even after this lockdown, when you go back to your regular schedules, this habit of thinking positively will bring in joys a hundredfold.



**For more articles,
do explore Rhonda's blog:**
<https://rhondachologist.wordpress.com>

In Search of Silver Linings

Evelyn Coutto & Lynessa Coutto



As we adapt and cope to our world during the Covid-19 pandemic, we thought we could all use a dose of positivity. Here are a few perspectives from CFMers who share their silver linings among these troubled times. Times are tough, but CFMers are even tougher!

Bonding with Family



Preethi & Samira Mathias,
CFM Mumbai

For Preethi and Samira, the lockdown has provided them quality time together, which has been precious as Samira will soon be leaving for Oxford. Mother and daughter have also been productive by taking an online French course together. Preethi is also taking an online Bible study class and often shares learnings during family conversations.

As a parent, one big challenge for Preethi has been accepting the fact that their elder daughter, Dr. Sitarah, needs to continue working in a hospital and be exposed to Covid positive patients. Prayer and trusting in the Lord gives her strength.



Norma Lobo
and her
grandchild,
CFM Bangalore

Like most seniors who live alone, Norma moved in with her son and his family when Bangalore was under lockdown. They have a 5 year old daughter, who Norma adores. Though she misses being in her own home, she has enjoyed family time. From helping with cooking to assisting her granddaughter during online school classes and school work, Norma shared that she has been more active and felt more needed during this time.

It was Norma's alertness that discovered their neighbour was pregnant, and so she initiated a family discussion about how they could show their caring. A cake, home made and delicious, was exactly what the woman was craving, and it conveyed the message that they were there for her.



Norma's Message

Be involved with everyone around and see how and what you can do to help in whatever capacity.

In Harmony Together



Rhonda Divecha
and family,
CFM Mumbai

Rhonda, living with her husband and two daughters (aged 22 and 18 years), found that though at first it was difficult to “just be at home”, the family soon adjusted to this new normal. They are working from home, with Rhonda able to carry on with her music classes online. There is no travelling to work in Mumbai’s traffic and crowded transport, which is a big silver lining.

The family is enjoying the extra quality family time. They belong to different choirs but have now discovered that their voices blend well together. They recorded a couple of songs and sent it to family and friends. People appreciated it so much that they started uploading songs on YouTube, and now have more than 20 songs online. Some of these are hymns that have been selected to uplift friends who were in distress. As these YouTube videos were shared and forwarded on, they were heard by Fr. Melroy, who is in-charge of the Archdiocese of Bombay online service. He contacted them and the family is now one of the choirs that sing for the Archdiocese of Bombay online Masses.

Rhonda and her family are grateful that God has given them opportunities to use their talent and to bond together in love and music.



Gerald Manoharan
and family,
CFM Bangalore

Gerald and his wife Sharon have two young children, aged 10 and 7 years. His Mother-in-law lives with them and his Father lives two houses away on the same street, and he is concerned as they are senior citizens. He is a lawyer and a partner in a law firm, with a responsibility to his clients and firm employees as well. So, as he shared, there is anxiety both on the personal and professional front.

Working from home is blurring the distinction between office hours and private time, and Gerald finds that there isn’t time to de-stress. Instead of ‘working from home’ he feels he is now ‘living at work’. Yet, there have been positives of this lockdown - Life has slowed down, and he feels he is no longer in a rat race, and he has found he doesn’t need it to survive or to feel fulfilled. He is enjoying waking up later, spending more time with his wife and children, and not working for long hours away from home.

Being at home, Gerald gets to see just how hard Sharon works. She teaches at Mount Carmel College, is Head of Department, and is presently doing her PhD. He calls her a “Superwoman”, because from online classes to staff meetings on Zoom, to helping the children with their school work, she does it all with such grace. Quality family time has definitely been the ‘silver lining’ for Gerald.

Building a Strong Prayer Routine



Deslina Pereira
and family,
CFM Goa



Amelia Rosario
and family,
CFM Goa

When the lockdown was announced, Deslina was alone with her three children - a 10 year old son and 2 daughters, one aged 12 and the other only 6 months old. Her husband had already left to sail as a Master. While he was able to call, offer support and even mobilise help, it was a lonely and challenging time for her.

However, when she looks back, she feels blessed with the support received from friends (CFMers, close friends and even colleagues) who delivered groceries to her home as she could not step out. Even her older children supported her in caring for the infant. Despite being stuck at home during their vacation, Deslina was surprised to hear her daughter remark, "Mama, this is the best vacation I have ever had, spending time with our baby sister."

The biggest blessing has been their growth in faith through prayer. While they used to say the rosary together, Deslina created a stronger prayer routine to ease their fear and anxiety – this included reciting the Rosary in the morning and evening, the Angelus at noon, the Divine Mercy prayer, and sometimes Holy Faith or Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, as well as viewing Mass live at 7 am over television.

For Amelia, this pandemic has been a teacher of patience, given 6 adults (herself, her husband Gordon, their 3 sons, and her sister) and a puppy sharing a home 24/7. The lockdown has also helped focus on what is essential. With a restriction on shopping, they suddenly realized that they had enough of clothes, shoes, bags, etc., and decided to donate what they were not using to homes and institutes that were in need.

As a family, they used their television to participate in the Daily Eucharist, learn the scriptures through different speakers and pastors, as well as watch Christian movies. Amelia says, "All this brought a great peace that God is with us during these times and covering us with his precious blood."

The pandemic has also reinforced the surety and suddenness of death. Hence, the need to focus on forgiveness, repentance, charity and love, especially one's love for God.



Deslina's Message

We are so busy with worldly things; we do not know who we are or why we are here. This is an opportunity to reflect on our own lives.

Joys of Cooking Together



**Sybil
Fernandes**
and family,
CFM Goa

As a teacher of Political Science to 11th and 12th std. students, Sybil has had to quickly adapt to conducting classes online. While she struggles with internet connectivity and keeping teenagers engaged online, Sybil feels that her tech savviness has improved and is grateful for the help that she has received from her own college-going children.

While the family have enjoyed spending more time together in general, they have also enjoyed cooking together. Sybil and her daughter have been experimenting with baking cakes and biscuits, and trying new dishes from recipes explored online or shared by friends. Sybil's son has occasionally joined in to help as well. Another highlight has been Sybil's husband cooking for the family for the first time, while she was busy working.

As Sybil's mother-in-law is 92 years old, they have been cautious about social distancing. While they haven't met up with friends since the lockdown began, meeting up with close family has helped keep their spirits up.



Sybil's Message

One must not panic, as this leads to anxiety and more problems.
Help those who have lost their jobs and need to support their family.

Routine & Resilience



**May
D'Souza**
and family,
CFM Mumbai

May's husband is a heart patient and on the advice of his sister who is a doctor, he has been confined to the house since March. They keep to a "strict regime" of having meals on time, with regular time for Prayer and hearing Mass. In any way she can, May has seen that she keeps their life as normal as she can, carrying on with things as usual.

May tutors students at home in French and English, and she is happy that the students who live in the vicinity are able to attend their tuition classes. She has also been able to continue with her Bible study class every Saturday, a class she had begun before the pandemic. May has for many years helped conduct classes for those preparing to receive their Confirmation in her Parish. She is happy that they are being conducted online, and is busy preparing and conducting them.

May is most thankful that her daughter, married 3 years ago, also lives in Malad, just a short walk away and comes to visit almost every evening.



May's Message

The best way to deal with the pandemic is to pray, and then carry on living your life as normal.

Safe & Connected, even in a Distant Country



Mabelle Palat,
CFM Bangalore

Mabelle says she feels like a very happy victim of fate. She was visiting Paris in the third week of February 2020, to celebrate her grandson's birthday. However, she suffered from flu from 2nd to 4th March, a time when the fear of the Coronavirus was building up in France and much of Western Europe. Her other daughter came just then, from work in London, and promptly brought Mabelle over to recover in her home in Antwerp, where she stayed on account of the lockdown.

Despite being confined to her daughter's home in Antwerp for the last few months, internet and social media has helped keep Mabelle connected. She says news from home has been relayed more quickly than if she were at the neighbour's house. She also feels blessed to watch religious services from thousands of miles away, and have religious discourses, from different sources, available at the mere slide of a finger.



Mabelle's Message

We often brush off circumstances as coincidences. The circumstance IS that I am beloved by God, as are all His children. He is our Protector and Carer.

STAYING AT HOME ... some interesting observations from the Bible!

1. When the flood arrived ... Where were Noah and his family?

Answer: At home

2. Where was Abraham, when the three angels visited him?

Answer: At Home

3. When the two angels went to Sodom and Gomorrah, where was Lot?

Answer: At Home!

4. When the Angel killed the firstborn in Egypt, where were the Israelites?

Answer: At Home!

5. Where were the apostles of Jesus when they received the Holy Spirit?

Answer: At Home!

6. Where was Paul when he was visited by Ananias?

Answer: At Home!

7. Where was Rahab when the walls of Jericho fell?

Answer: At Home!

8. Now, where are we?

Answer: At Home! – **A great place to be, to experience Spiritual Growth & Breakthrough!**

Contributed by Nirmal Raj, CFM Bangalore

The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective

Our Contest for School Children required them to send in a poem, painting or essay around the Theme: **How I feel about this Pandemic.** Through art and writing, we hoped to create an outlet for children to process their experiences, as well as express their own unique thoughts and feelings.

The Family Trove is proud to present the children's entries as part of this issue, and congratulates each child who participated, as well as their parents who encouraged them.



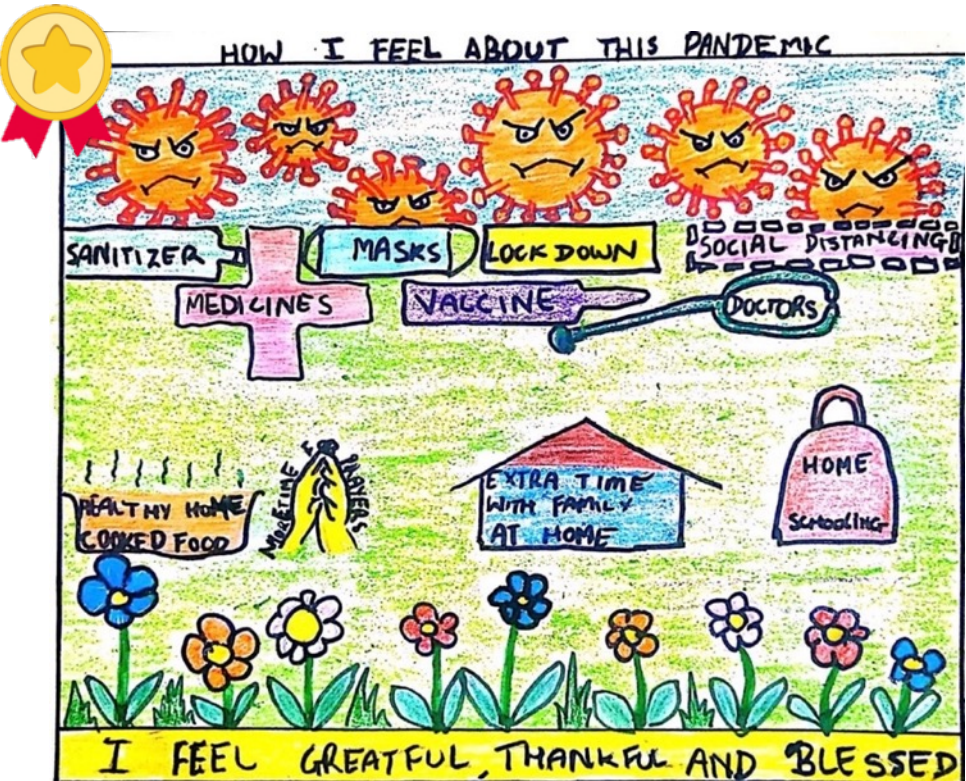
**Rebecca Do Carmo
Colaco**

7 years

*Daughter of Winston
B. Do Carmo Colaco
& Marlin Monteiro
Colaco,
CFM Goa*



The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Genessa E. C. Fernandes
8 years
Daughter of
Nixon Fernandes
& Goretti Falcao,
CFM Goa



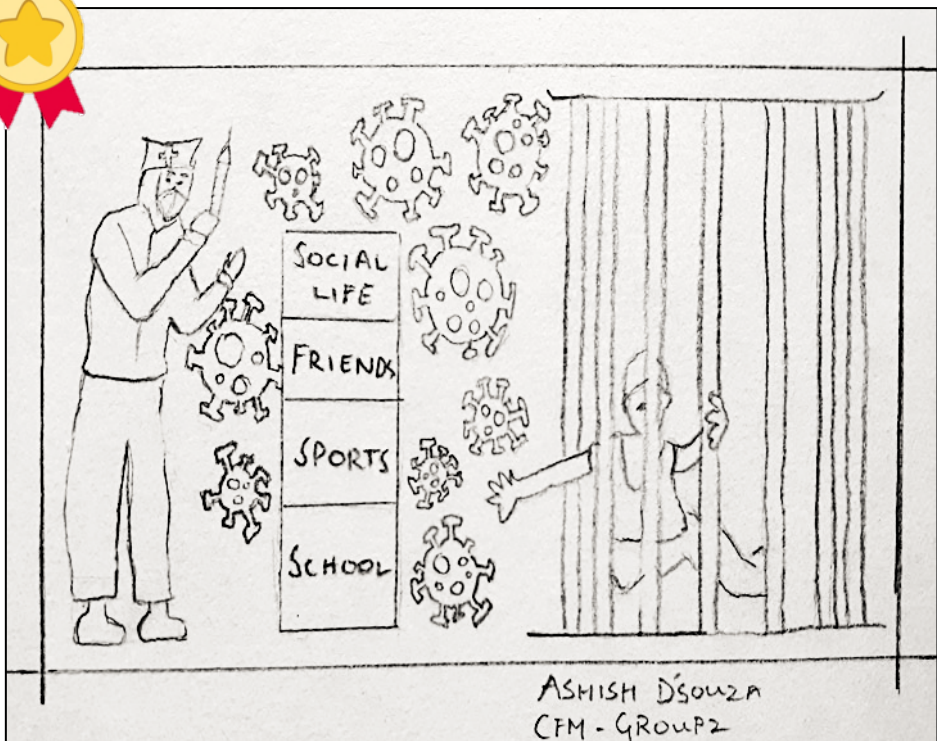
Chirag Saldanha
11 years
Son of Anup &
Rakhee Saldanha,
CFM Bangalore



The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Noela
Immaculate
Fernandes
12 years
Daughter of
Agustin E.A.
Fernandes &
Deslina Pereira,
CFM Goa



Ashish D'Souza
13 years
Son of Deepak &
Meenakshi D'Souza,
CFM Bangalore,
Group 2

The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Keane Sean

Fernandes

14 years

Son of Dominic

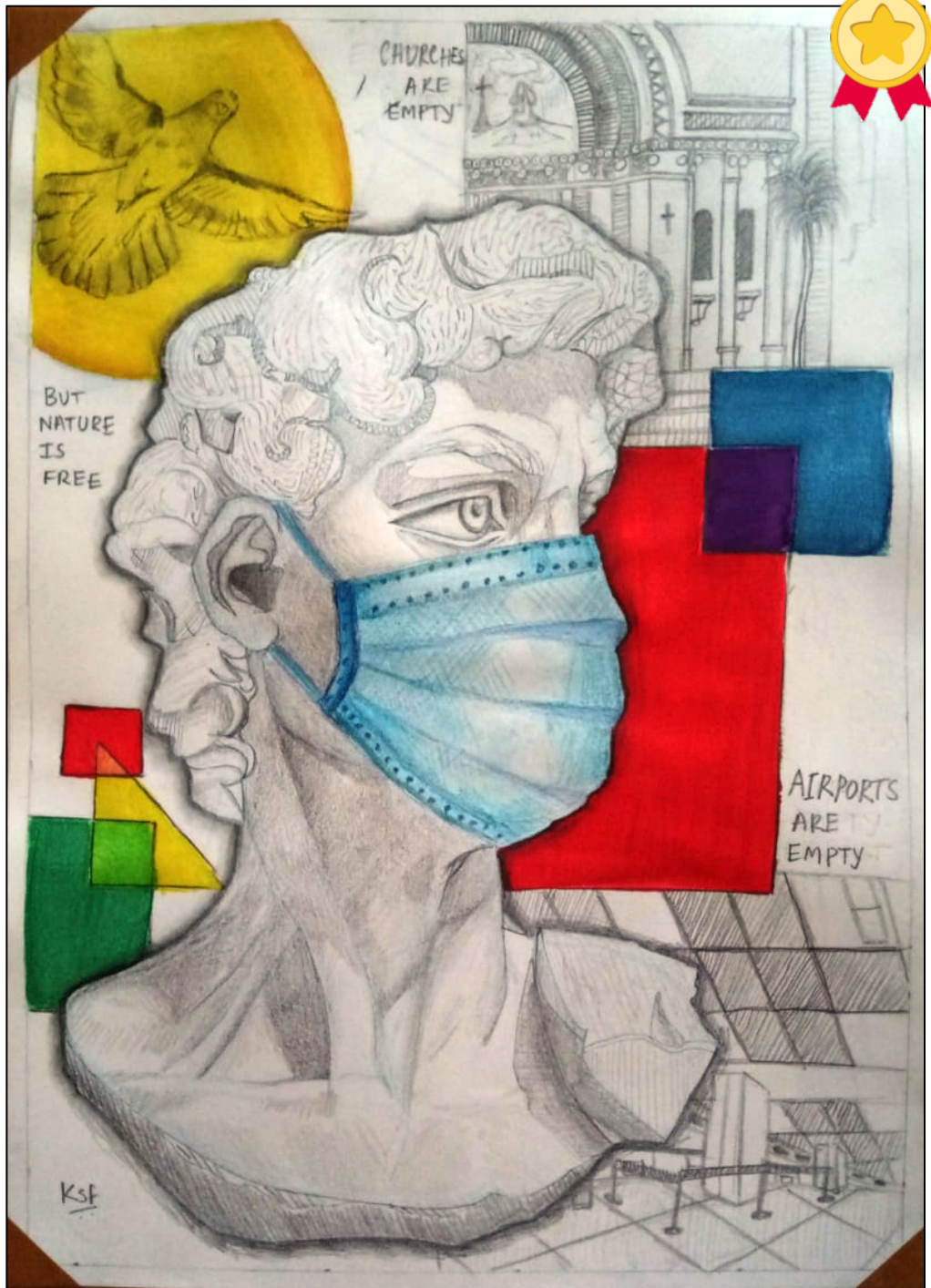
Fernandes &

Francisca

Pereira,

CFM Goa,

Group Merces



The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Nihar Saldanha

14 years

*Son of Anup & Rakhee
Saldanha,
CFM Bangalore*

Locked up in the Locked down



In this lockdown, we've been through a lot,
The daily grinds have come to a halt.
For us, each day blurred indistinctly to the next,
We have been bored, scared and vexed.
We put friends and neighbours in suspicion,
Staring at infection rates and
forecasted fatalities bring us down,
But what really keeps us moving is
the thought that we are in this together
and that this too shall pass.
Started in China, now the world is tricked,
Let us unite and find a cure, quick.



Noela Immaculate

Fernandes

12 years

*Daughter of Agustin E.A.
Fernandes & Deslina
Pereira,
CFM Goa*

The Coronavirus Pandemic



These days many people are becoming ill,
The corona positive people only God can heal.

We are not allowed to meet people face to face,
This really contagious disease is a dangerous case.

Time is passing really fast,
And this disease is spreading in numbers so vast!

I keep remembering those beautiful days,
But now we should do everything in different ways.

It's really hard to cope up with this,
Those times when things were normal I'll always miss.

"Maintain social distance and always wear a mask",
We are told to do this very easy task.

Try your very best to stay indoors,
I learned to do some drawings and mop up the floors.

These times have been really tough,
And days for many people have been really rough.

Please stay at home I am telling you,
Otherwise this virus will take down you and many others too.

The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Navya M. Souza

16 years

*Grand daughter of
Mr. & Mrs. Timon
Cardozo,
CFM Mumbai*

O CORONA



We humans are such fools
We love the earth so much
Yet we treat her cruel
We are negligent and we make her cry
But if she turns her face away, we will surely die.

We have to slow down, be careful we understand
We cannot be greedy, we cannot demand
This awakening we need, I guess we now understand well
We have been heartless and we couldn't even tell.

We youngsters now feel frustrated and are fed up of staying indoors
We feel caged from the outside world and completely closed
At first it was horrible, we did not know what to do
Everything shut out, options so few.

We were caught up with our lives, the freedom felt wow
Hanging out, doing our thing, we had fun and how
Now that's the past, we weep for it so
We did not realise how fast it would go.

Now we are sorry, it feels so bad
We feel constrained, it makes us sad.
The only few good things I see when you came along
We now have time to hear the birds' song.
We can sit with our family and say 'The Lord's Prayer'
Patiently we recount our sorrows and burdens He will bear.

We must make time to do more good
More than we can, a lot more than we should.
Please corona, go away now
We have learnt our lesson we know how.

It's been disheartening, it's been unkind
Especially for us, who are in our prime
Leave us now, leave us we pray
Let our humanity heal, we will mend our ways.

The Pandemic: Our Children's Perspective



Nasya Rose

Diniz

13 years

Daughter of

Albano A. &

Leocadia S. Diniz,

CFM Goa

Essay: My Experience during the Lockdown



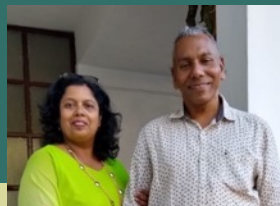
The first lockdown started on 22nd March 2020. During the virus it was scary but gradually it turned out fun for the family. We even got more time to have fun together and to pray together. My lockdown was not sleeping the whole day but getting up at 7.30 doing workouts with my family members. After the workouts we all used to feel very active and full of energy. Then we all did our house chores and eating together all our meals. My Mother would make delicious breakfast for us. Even during the lockdown, my Mother learned a lot of new recipes with the help of YouTube, which made eating at home very exciting. I also taught my Mother new things to do on her phone, like making collages, seeing YouTube videos, etc. Then after breakfast, we all would participate in Mass and thank God for keeping us safe. Later on we would all do our own day to day activities. I would do craft work or even read books. It was so fun, we could do anything during lockdown.

Even some days, my family and me would watch movies together (Hindi, English) and I improved my Hindi by watching these films. My brothers and I took turns to make snacks for the movie interval. I learnt how to make potato chips. It was so much fun, cooking and trying out new things. I even made a video, step by step on making potato chips, for my school assignment. I got a new hobby, gardening with my father, and helped to grow beautiful plants and vegetables. In the afternoons we used to first pray the 3 o'clock prayer and even prayed for the pandemic every day. After that we would play cards (mendicourt). I did not know first how to play mendicourt, but no worries, I had my family there to teach me. In the evening, I made my favourite snack sev puri (very delicious). Then my whole family played cricket out in our backyard. My brothers learnt to make awesome chapatis and different chicken dishes to eat.

My learning from the pandemic is that we as a family spent more time together, which is very much required to strengthen our family bonds, for our spiritual growth, to pray for others and to thank God for everything.

Editor's Note: This has been printed unedited, so as not to rob it of the innocence and joy of family that shines through.

A Tribute to Fr. John Menezes



Goretti & Nixon Fernandes, Goa Assistant Regional President Couple

Fr. John Menezes was born on 9th August 1945 at Chinchinim, Goa and was ordained Priest on 26th April 1970.

Fr. John Menezes was the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima Church, Dicarpale, Salcete, Goa when he started the CFM group in Dicarpale. While at Dicarpale, he wanted to help families, that was when our Regional Chaplain and Director of the Family Service Center, Fr. Kenneth Telles convinced him to start CFM group in our regional language – Konkani. Soon thereafter, the CFM group was formed on 19th October 2016, with Fr. John as its first Chaplain.

Fr. John took up the task of translating the inquiry papers to Konkani and mentoring the group. During his term at Dicarpale, he gave his full hearted support to CFM, in spite of his health conditions. Even after his transfer to St. Joaquin Chapel, Borda, in 2019, he would still help by translating the inquiry papers.

CFM Goa is indeed grateful to Fr. John for his immense contribution. We have lost a great mentor, guide and friend in Fr. John, who passed away on 25th June 2020 at the Clergy Home, Margao.

We pay our humble respects to Fr. John and pray that his soul rests in peace.



Father John, CFM Goa

Adeus Padre.

In Memoriam of Xavier Sequeira

Anette D'Cruz, CFM Mumbai



Early morning, May 19 2020, the call came to tell me that Xav had passed away. It was a moment of great sadness, made more so because his illness and death occurred during the lockdown. I had not been able to visit him at the hospital, nor would I be able to pay him my last respects before he was laid to rest.

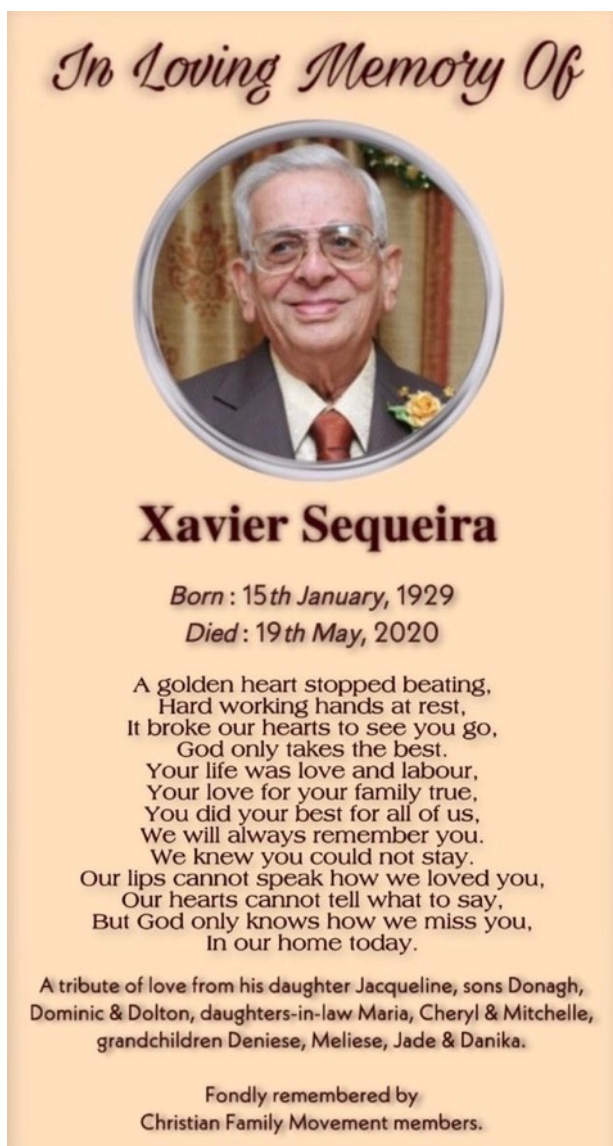
Xav's passing brought back many memories. But, I cannot think of Xav without remembering Irene. Xav and Irene were active and zealous CFMers. They were among the founder couples of the CFM in Orlem and although they were a working couple, they were always at CFM meetings and action, giving generously of their time and talents and their lovely home 'Xavirene'.

For many years, 'Xavirene' was the venue of Family Days, Reflections, celebrations and other CFM events. The Sequeira family willingly put up with CFM invasions on their home and hospitality.

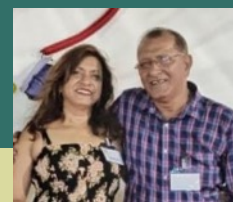
Xav and Irene served a term as Regional President Couple for Mumbai in the 1990s, during which time they organized CFM action and other events. They also implemented the suggestion made by the Delhi CFM to hold a mini-convention after every National Board Meeting to promote the CFM and expand membership.

The Orlem CFMers will remember Xav for his service to the Movement, his friendship and generosity. To his family, our heartfelt condolences.

May the Lord grant Xav his well earned rest and, together with Irene, may he enjoy eternal bliss.



Regional News: Mumbai



Sharon & Francis D'Souza, Mumbai President Couple



Fun Activity

As the coronavirus pandemic spreads, self-isolation or quarantine is one of the key strategies in 'flattening the curve' of infection rates. This has created extra burden for parents/caregivers of person with disability.

Keeping this in mind, we decided to have a fun activity for our group. Each of us had to take a pic of ourselves with a mask and send it to the group. Below are some very creative ones that were shared.



Regional News: Bangalore



Sandhya & Roshan Menezes, Bangalore President Couple



While the world is making sense of the ongoing threat from Covid- 19, we pray that all who are associated with the Christian Family Movement worldwide are keeping good health and coping with the day-to-day challenges of the pandemic.

CFM Bangalore had planned a host of events to enrich the spiritual growth and family bonds as part of its various programs for the year. However due to the prevalent conditions then, the events had to be kept on hold.

1 Lenten Activity

The annual Lenten Retreat in March had to be put off in the wake of Covid-19 and the lockdown. Like other states, migrants in Karnataka too faced several problems. The Archbishop of Bangalore, Rev. Fr. Peter Machado, had made a fervent appeal to all Christians to come forward with a generous heart to support the cause of the Archdiocese in helping families in distress. CFM Bangalore united for this cause and an appeal to our members brought in a total contribution of Rs.1 Lakh. The amount was handed over to the Archbishop and the generosity of CFM Bangalore was widely acknowledged.



Roshan Menezes, President CFM handing over the cheque to Archbishop of Bangalore



2 Online Executive Committee Meeting

The office bearers organized a zoom meeting of the Executive Committee on 3rd July 2020 to discuss CFM activities that could be continued online.

3 Inquiry Book Meetings

Most of the groups have conducted their monthly CFM Inquiry Book meetings online.



4 Eucharistic Celebration

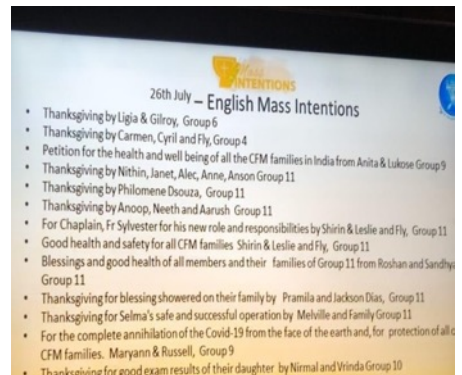
A Holy Mass was arranged with the Redemptorist Media Centre on 26th July 2020 for the wellbeing of all CFM'ers with Rev. Fr. Xavier Sanjivi, CSsR, was the main celebrant and prayed for the various intentions that the members had requested for during the mass.



Special Mass for CFM'ers, viewed at home



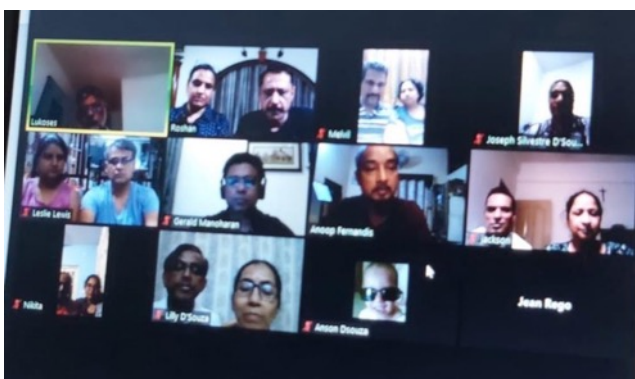
Main celebrant, Rev. Fr. Xavier Sanjivi, CSsR



Personal Intentions offered by the CFMers during mass

5 The Intercessory Prayer Group (IPG) sessions

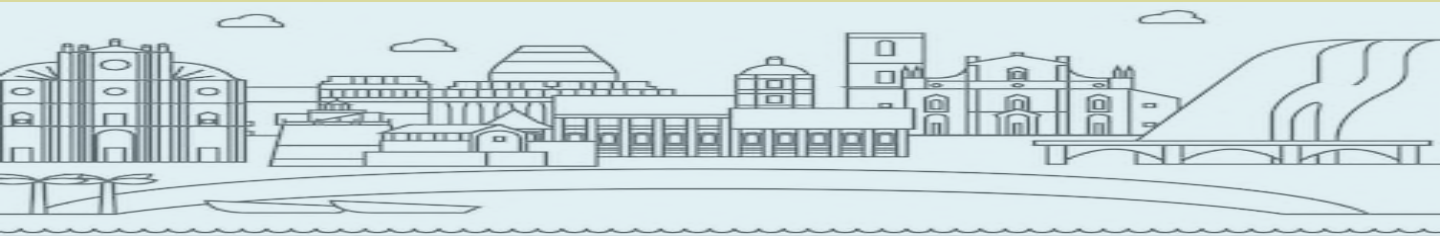
IPG sessions were organized online by Group-10 on 10th July 2020 and by Group-11 on August 14th 2020.



Regional News: Goa



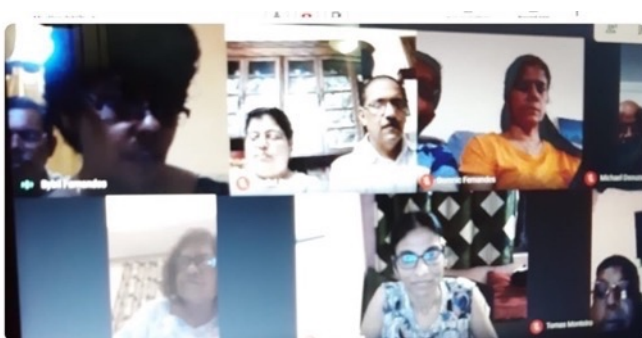
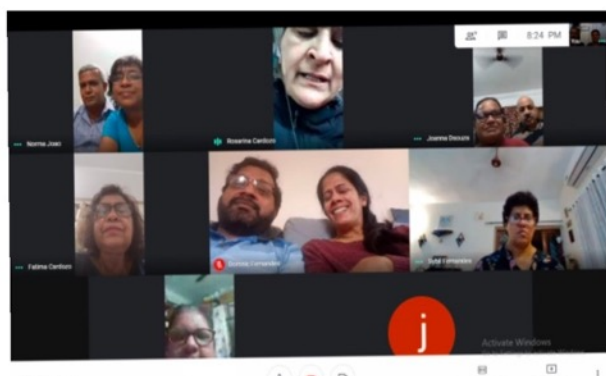
Annelese & Mollet de Sa , Goa President Couple



1 Monthly Meetings Online

This pandemic may have put on hold many of our activities but it has also given us an opportunity to embrace technology. On 8th July, our Mercedes unit had our monthly meeting thru "Google meet ". It was an awesome experience. Our cyber experts, Sybil and Norma helped us with tech issues. Ten of our members could login including Domnic & Francisca and Rosie all the way from UK. It was very interactive with all the members sharing. We discussed the topic "The power of positive thinking " - an appropriate one during this pandemic. We will henceforth make a conscious effort to move ahead with a positive attitude.

The following month the meeting was held on 5th August. Miguel and Sybil conducted the session with the topic "Getting rid of prejudices". Our next meeting is scheduled for the 2nd of September. Domnic & Francisca will be conducting the meeting all the way from UK.



2 Daily Prayers during Lockdown

The Margao unit of CFM were in constant touch with each other. During the lockdown they decided to recite the 3 o clock prayer followed by the Divine Mercy chaplet in each of their homes daily, dedicated to the victims of the COVID-19, those suffering, and also to the doctors, nurses and health workers.

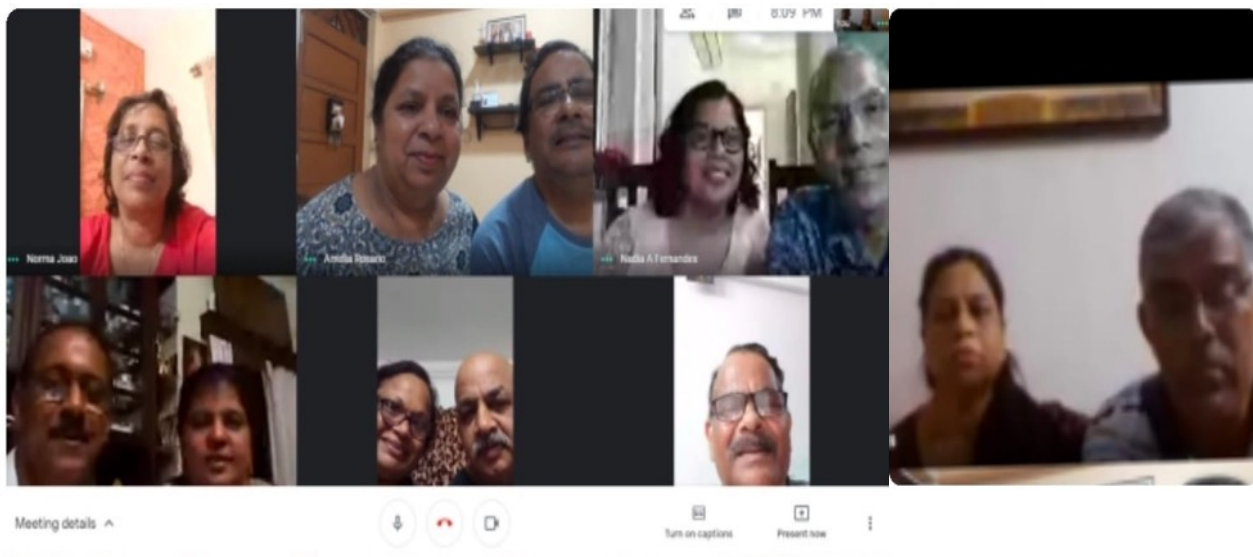
3 Meeting with Deacons

On 23rd July, we, Annelise and Mollet, were invited by Fr Kenneth Telles, our Regional Chaplain and Director of Family Service Centre, to enlighten the Deacons of our Diocese about CFM. After an interactive presentation, we appealed to the Deacons to help us form new groups once they go to their new parishes post their ordination.



4 Group Leaders Meeting

The CFM group leaders also had our meeting through “Google meet” on the 6th August.



5 Reaching out to the Elderly

Our members have reached out to the elderly CFMers and also to the needy during the Lockdown.

Obituary

CFM India mourns the loss of the members who passed away in 2020.
They will be missed.



Xavier Sequeira

15th Jan 1929 – 19th May 2020
CFM Mumbai



Fr. John Menezes

9th Aug 1945 – 25th June 2020
CFM Goa



Rane Noronha

Passed away on 4th May 2020
CFM Bangalore Group 1

May their souls rest in peace



Milestones



Priscilla D'Gama (CFM Bangalore) celebrated her **80th birthday** on 12th July 2020



Raju Louzado (CFM Bangalore) celebrated his **60th birthday** on 29th April 2020



Norma Lobo (CFM Bangalore) celebrated her **80th birthday** on 20th March 2020



Shanti Paul (CFM Bangalore) celebrated her **75th birthday** on 7th August 2020



Rev. Fr. Silvestre D'Souza, OCD has been **appointed as Superior of the Carmelite Community at Margao, Goa**. He was the Chaplain of CFM-G11 from 2011-2020.



With Best Wishes from Judith & Richard D'Souza

**He will cover you
with his feathers.
He will shelter you
with his wings.**

His faithful
promises are
your armor
and protection.

-Psalm 91:4





See Judge Act

Loving God,

Help us

to focus on what we have
not on what is removed or changed.

Strengthen us

when we feel discouraged
or overwhelmed.

Embrace us

so that we know your loving presence
within us and among us.

Walk with us

as we bring your love,
and carry your light,
into our world.

Amen.

- Sandra Lucas, MDiv., BCC



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