

“Not simply to endure events but, in God, to build with them.”

As we come nearer Easter, anxiety is growing across the world in the face of the spread of the coronavirus. At Taizé, it seems that for the first time we will probably be spending Holy Week and the Easter celebration without visitors. We have had to ask the people who had registered for the meetings to put off their stay, and the Church of Reconciliation is closed. We continue with our life of prayer and work “separated from all but united to all.” We are very conscious that intercession keeps us united with so many other people throughout the world.

By phone or internet, we receive a lot of news from people facing similar challenges in different parts of the world. Some of our brothers are living or travelling in Korea, Italy and elsewhere. Our Chinese brothers, in contact with their families there, have been following with attention and deep concern the developments of the epidemic since its beginnings.

Quite apart from the question of the precautions and changes to our way of life that are necessary, this quite unexpected and exceptional health crisis touches us in a deeper way. First of all, we are led to feel for the suffering and anguish of the victims, the sick, their families and all those who are severely affected by its economic consequences. We bear them in prayer.

We would also like to give thanks and express our admiration for those who are committed with all their strength to helping the victims and, more generally, in reorganizing public services. There are so many testimonies of creative generosity, of solidarity, and of people resisting passivity and discouragement.

In this difficult period, how can we not ask ourselves: What does Christ expect of us? What does the Risen One, who came to be with his discouraged disciples in spite of the closed doors, offer us? And to what is he calling us today? In the difficulties of the present, in Brother Roger's words, "Not simply to endure events but, in God, to build with them."

Following Christ leads us to an experience of conversion, of turning away from darkness and towards the light of the Risen One. Day by day, let us not be diverted by fears, anger, regrets, confusion, and the darkness that often claims to cover the whole world and to monopolise our attention... But let us remain united, deep within our hearts, to the source of peace that remains always beyond everything.

As containment measures and health precautions are increased to prevent contagion, let us take great care of the treasure of human relations. Let us keep in touch – through telephone calls and messages of friendship – with those who are isolated, and first and foremost the oldest, the most fragile and those already affected by another illness or hardship.

Over the coming days, we would like to take and transmit some concrete initiatives to express our solidarity spiritually. Every evening, a prayer with a small group of brothers will be broadcast from our house on social networks (at 8.30 pm, Western European time). And those who wish to do so can also send us prayer intentions.

As Saint Paul said to the Romans: "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, or anguish, or persecution, or hunger, or deprivation, or danger, or death? (...) I am certain that nothing will be able to separate us from the love that God has shown us in Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 8:35, 38-39)

Brother Alois