

Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk



RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA



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Ursuline Generalate
Rue Musin 1, 1210 Brussels
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From the Generalate

The Congregational Leadership Team has compiled this special edition of updates on the Covid-19 pandemic in India.

Through the personal accounts of our Sisters presented in this booklet, we get a glimpse into how they have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in our health centers, hospitals and in the villages. Some have shared their personal experience of how they were confronted during the coronavirus.

In March 2020, the sudden lockdown in the country affected the people, especially the migrant workers and poor. Sisters served thousands of migrant workers in several centers by giving shelter, food and medicine. The religious men and women played a special role in serving the poor who as a result, were safe from being infected by the coronavirus.

The second wave hit the country very badly in the months of April, May and June 2021. Many people lost their lives including religious. More than 400 religious men and women died, among whom were 4 Bishops. We lost 12 Sisters from India between the months of April and June. Five died directly from the coronavirus.

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During the coronavirus pandemic, we, the Congregational Leadership Team accompanied the Sisters and strengthened them in their suffering, struggle, fear and anxiety as we listened to their stories and shared them with others. We continue to journey with them as they respond to the challenges of the post-Covid-19 period in light of the message of Pope Francis which illuminates the significance of the parable of the Good Samaritan, “...to accompanying, caring for and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our societies”. (Fratelli Tutti, Chapter 2, #64).

We express our gratitude to all who accompanied us through prayerful support and generous donations to fight against the Covid-19 Pandemic. Your support makes a difference in the life and mission of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk.

We are grateful to all the Indian Provinces for their accurate accounts of their lived experience during the Pandemic.

- Sister Bimla Minj, OSU

*“I have come so that they may have
Life and have it to the full.”*

John 10:10

St. Ursula Hospital in Noatoli - serving the Covid patients

(The Lord sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness. Psalm 41:3)

Let me begin with two things – **positive** (strength) and **negative** (disaster) regarding the present state of the pandemic which has gripped the whole world. If we speak of positive aspects, it has increased our faith in God and new resources were introduced to us. From a negative point of view, we have lost many dear ones and our social life has been badly affected.

When the pandemic started in the year 2019, even we, the medical personnel did not know how to tackle it. Situations were confusing. But slowly when guidelines were provided by the Government, the situation seemed to be under control.

When we were informed by the Government medical officer that Gumla district authority had planned to make St. Ursula Hospital Konbir Noatoli a quarantine Centre, we faced lots of opposition from inside and outside. However, under the leadership of Dr. Sr. Jacinta Baxla, we managed to make the local people understand and fully grasp realistically the situation and accept the government's plan as God's will. Under the guidance of Sr. Jacinta we felt a divine

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voice in our hearts - a call to be a greater source of hope, healing and new life for the people of God. From March 2020 till August 2020, St. Ursula Hospital was a quarantine centre. Later, it was declared a COVID centre for the Basia Block. We have served 50 patients in quarantine, 80 Corona positive patients and many suspected cases of COVID -19. In the midst of all the terrifying news around the world especially in Gumla District, when many people were getting infected and dying, the local people as well as the hospital staff were terribly frightened. Although the COVID ward has a separate entrance, people were afraid to pass by the compound wall of the hospital for fear of being infected.



The suspected coronavirus patients were sent to the Referral Hospital run by the Government for the Covid test and registration. After this procedure, they

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were admitted in our hospital for treatment. The Staff had to be motivated to be on the front-line. The sisters in the Staff started to serve them with all the Covid protocols.

“I have come that they may have Life, Life in its fullness” Jn.10:10 is what we are living in this crucial moment of pandemic. St. Ursula Hospital has 50 beds. It is situated in the rural area with very few facilities. We realized that the care for the corona patients could not be provided under the same roof. We remembered God’s promises. *Our present sufferings are not comparable to the glory that will be*



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revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). It was God's blessings that in collaboration with the Government, we could accommodate 20 Covid patients at a time. We prepared Nursing Staff and Students to fight the battle courageously. We brought awareness to the people by explaining **do's** and **don'ts** through role-play, posters, and banners in and outside the campus.

We made the people understand the importance of vaccination as the rumors against corona vaccines were spreading around.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28). The pandemic also increased the pressures on our health care system by increasing demands for certain treatment and facilities. When all other clinics/hospitals were closed and people needed medical aid, we kept our hospital open to receive the OPD and emergency cases. When no vehicles were ready to transport Covid patients to the Government hospital, we facilitated an effective referral system for them, accompanied by our efficient staff. This helped to fulfill the needs of the critical cases.

The people infected by coronavirus needed our compassion and spiritual support along with the medicine. Though we had to maintain social distancing while serving food and medicine, we spent some time counseling them. I am happy to declare

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that all the Covid patients went home healed; none of the patients were swallowed by coronavirus.

“HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO SERVE?”



During the pandemic we were called to walk an extra mile in order to provide curative services. Many of us were reported corona positive: one sister staff, ten nursing staff, four students including me.

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I heard my inner voice, “**How could I be positive**”? I had taken all the possible precautions and followed the protocols.

With my experience I can say that it is not always the virus which kills the patients but a feeling of being **isolated** and **rejected**.

We were supported by the government medical Staff Referral Hospital Basia. We received Covid tests, Covid reports, medicines, and food. We worked in collaboration with them. The fight against Covid-19 is not yet over. There are many post-Covid symptoms with physical, mental and psychological suffering.

We are pleased to report that now we are providing better facilities for the hospital with the oxygen supplies and are able to serve the Covid patients and the people with other diseases. Our gratitude goes to all the donors for their generous support to face the Covid-19 crisis.

- Sister Reema Mamta Ekka, OSU



Prayer and tree planting in Gumla Province

Many countries have seen a two+- wave pattern in reported cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid –19) during the 2020 and 2021 pandemic. The first wave during spring in 2020 was followed by the second wave in late summer and autumn.

Differences in the range of age and severity of the disease have been reported, although the comparative characteristics of the two waves still remain largely unknown. Several differences in mortality risk factors were also observed; these results might help to understand the characteristics of the second wave and the behavior and danger. The second wave of Corona has taken a U-turn in the life of people in our country. The critical situation made people lose hope as many of our beloved ones went to heaven due to the Pandemic.

The painful situation has killed the heart of people as they saw the suffering of their loved ones. Many of our family members, dear and near ones and religious brothers and sisters were swept away by the pandemic. During the time of Easter the pandemic spread rapidly and thousands of people fell under the blow of the pandemic.

At this time of losing our hope and our dear ones, God calls us to reunite with him through our constant

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prayers. Indeed it is the time to come back to the Lord. The Gumla diocese invited the faithful to pray on 14 June for the souls of our dear ones who died due to the Coronavirus and for the consolation of their family members. Sisters of Gumla joined with them to offer special prayers at 11:00am. Following the prayer, the tree planting campaign was done by every community in the Province. In the name of all deceased members the special trees were planted which generate oxygen. This campaign connects us with the many deceased members who died due to a lack of oxygen.



Tree plantation in loving memory of our deceased members

Thousands of years ago our ancestors kept the loving memories of their deceased members by planting trees and building a small tomb and writing names on a plate of stone. On 14 June, 2021 the sisters of Gumla Province planted different trees which generate oxygen, in loving memory of our dear departed souls gone due to the

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Corona Pandemic. The campaign was for every family and institution in the diocese.

Special prayers and the planting of trees were successfully carried out in the Province. Sisters took the initiative to plant trees, knowing the value of trees in our lives.



Trees are our best friends because they clean the air we breathe. Likewise, they also clean the water and soil and ultimately make the earth a better place. It is also a fact that people who live near trees are healthier, more fit, and happier than people who do not.

Moreover, it is our responsibility to look after our friends who serve us in many ways. Most importantly,

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by saving plants, we are not doing any favor to plants but to ourselves because trees and plant life do not depend on us but our lives depend on them.

Trees are important to us in a lot of ways and we cannot ignore their importance. They give us fresh air to breathe, food to eat and shelter/shade from sunlight and rainfall. Besides this, there are many medicines in



the market that are made up of tree extracts. Apart from this, there are plants and trees that have medicinal value and generate oxygen. They bring peacefulness; create a pleasing and relaxing environment. Also, they help in reflecting the harmful rays of the sun and maintaining a balanced temperature. Besides, they also help in water conservation and prevent soil erosion.

They help by absorbing greenhouse gases which are the main cause of climate change. Moreover, they replenish groundwater and filter the air from harmful pollutants and odors.

- Sister Kirti Kiran Xess, OSU



Witness of a faith filled family

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

1 Peter 1:3

I thank God for the dearest gift to me, my brother and to the whole family in the persons of my dear parents. May the living God, in whom they believed and lived their lives, accept them in the company of saints and grant them eternal bliss.

This year the second wave of the pandemic Covid-19 has really claimed thousands and thousands of lives in India. My family was not exempted from this great storm. On 25th of March 2021, my father, mother, elder brother and aunty were admitted in Constant Lievens hospital Mandar with some symptoms.

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They were found Covid positive. The CT value (for Covid-19) of my father was only 14. Since he had other complications, the immune system of the body could not fight off the Virus. His saturation was continuously fluctuating. And on Palm Sunday, 28th of March 2021 my father passed away. Seeing the condition of my mother, the doctor referred her to Samford hospital. After two days she was admitted in RIMS (The Regional Institute of Medical Sciences) in Ranchi.



On Easter Sunday after the Holy Eucharist I went to see my mother along with my Provincial Sr. Suchita Xalxo and Sr. Clara Tirkey. I put on Kit and went to ICU where my mother was kept. I had the rosary in my hand and gave it to my mother. She held the

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rosary, raised her hand and placed it on my forehead. She blessed me saying, “Remain a Nun your whole life”. I replied, “Yes Mother, I will.”

Then she blessed my brother saying, “Be good always. Never leave going to the church. Take care of your spiritual life and grow in it. When you are strong in spiritual life your next generation will also grow in spirituality. Never indulge yourself in any immoral act. And take care of your sister also.”

All these words which my mother could utter during her last days remain a blessing and a legacy for both of us. We too thanked our mother for giving us life, loving us so much, teaching us Christian values, and for all the sacrifices she made for our better future and living an exemplary life together with father and supporting each other in all circumstances.

My mother also suffered from cancer for a long time and due to Covid attack, 70% of her lungs were severely affected, and the report was not at all good. On Easter Sunday, the doctor informed us that our mother would survive only for 24 hours.

The news about mother was heartbreaking. But the promise and the grace of God gave us courage and patience particularly to my brother to accept the reality and to give his best to mother till her last breath. And miraculously, mother lived for another

week. I thank God for those gracious moments during the last days of my mother when I could give my little service to her together with my brother. She told us that she had surrendered everything to Jesus. She further said, “I am ready to accept the will of Jesus whether He gives me life or takes me away. It is His will. I am ready.” Listening to my mother, I was strengthened. It was like sharing one another's pain just as Jesus and Mother Mary shared their suffering on the way to Calvary.

Every time the oxygen saturation level went down she became very tired. I prayed the ejaculation close to her ears “*Jesus, Mary and Joseph have mercy on me and save my soul.*” While I prayed she herself made the Sign of the Cross twice with her closed eyes. The next day, the Feast of the Divine Mercy, we prayed the Psalms from the Bible. She shook her head a little bit and slowly she stopped responding. She did not even ask for water. At night with my brother we sat near to her praying. Slowly her BP and oxygen saturation went down. We applied the holy oil on her chest and gave her holy water to drink. By next morning the saturation was 90. Immediately I went to call the doctor and at that moment my mother breathed her last taking the name of Jesus in the presence of my brother.

Death is not the end of life but the beginning of eternal life. My parents passing away from this world to another world during Holy Week and Easter time has lead me to experience Christ's suffering, death and resurrection in a deeper and more profound way because Christ has conquered death.

I am grateful to God for the constant support of my family, the whole Ursuline Congregation and friends. Your ceaseless prayers have really strengthened my parents to prepare themselves to meet the Lord.

Dear sisters, your prayer has been a great support for me and for my whole family to accept this difficult situation and to be strong in the Lord. I am grateful to my authorities who really understood the situation and allowed me to serve my mother and to attend the burial of my parents in the critical situation.

As St. Mother Angela says, "I am more alive than when I was on earth." So, I too believe that my parents are close to me with their prayers and blessings united with God in heaven. May the souls of my dear parents rest in peace.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Job 1:21

- Sister Joseline Rose Ekka, OSU



St. Angela Health Center in Rengarih (Gumla Province) -healing experience

Ursuline Convent Rengarih is one of the early foundations in India (1909). It is situated in the remote area in the State of Jharkhand with minimum facility of transportation and electricity.



During the 1st phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, though not infected by the virus, people were aware of its seriousness. During the 2nd phase, almost all the villages of Rengarih parish were affected by the coronavirus. It lasted for 2 months, April – May

2021. The villagers of all age groups were affected by cold, cough and fever. They came to St. Angela Health Center, Rengarh from early morning to late night anxious and fearful.

Sister Magdalen Bando, who is in charge of the health center with a nurse, Nilima Tete attended and treated each patient with patience and courage. They were not fully protected from the virus while serving the patients. They treated the patients with simple medicines for cold, cough and fever and weakness and served the people with great love and enthusiasm. She expressed it in these words, “People were very frightened of the coronavirus so they came with hope and faith to the health center for medicines. I was afraid of being infected by the virus but I placed myself in the hand of God, and in God’s name I gave them the simple medicines. It was to my wonder that people were healed. I had the opportunity to serve the family members of Sr. Bimla Minj, the General Superior who were affected by the pandemic. They got cured. Praise the Lord!”

During the 2nd phase of the Covid-19 about 450 -500 patients were helped in the health center. Sisters in the community spent one hour of prayer and adoration every day.

- Ursuline Convent Rengarh



CORONAVIRUS – 2nd Wave
A Reflection: A Renewal

2nd wave of Corona (April & May '21)

Crept in our Ranchi Province

Created havoc

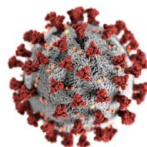
Took the most loving souls

In its grip

Squeezed life out of them

Shook the entire Province

With heart breaking death news one after other.



Death after death

Government people

Bring the dead body in special van

The burial according to

Government Protocol

The entry of JCB

For digging and filling the grave

A handful of sisters

Standing far away

Like onlookers

Being helpless

Folding hand

Praying, praising, thanking God

From a safe distance

Blessing at the grave

Simple prayerful ceremony

That's it, That's all.



A time of trouble
Yet – hope & trust in God
A prayer in heart

*“In times of trouble
He will shelter me
He will keep me safe
and keep me secure on a high rock”*



Ps. 27:5

In this time of trouble, tribulations
A vehement God's presence
Is deeply realized by everyone
Without any distinction of cast and creed
No difference of young people
Of any sect, rich or poor
The whole system of Medical Hospital
Failed to accommodate
People crying/fighting for the beds
Crying, howling grabbing
For Oxygen, Gas Cylinders
ICU beds, Ventilation
Couldn't count the dead
Who could have lived
But died due to insufficient facilities.

Many were in Quarantine
who were touched
by the virus but were not serious
They won the race!

The victims and the untouched
all have experienced
the great value of life as Jeremiah says –
*“Before I formed you in the womb
I knew you and before you were born
I consecrated you
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”*

Jer. 1:5

Life is the most precious gift of God
It's high time to reflect and re-reflect
on our past life
It's time to accept the invitation
to accept, reflect & move ahead
in the direction of RENEWAL

Lockdown period is a time
to review our lives
as individuals, as community
as Province, as Congregation
Lockdown due to Corona
is a time of Grace, renewal
transformation, modification, variation
adjustment, re-doing and re-making
Praying to God to render us strength
to make a **SHIFTS**

God, give us strength at every step

as He has promised in the
words of Ezekiel –

*“More over, I will give you
A New Heart
and put a New Spirit within you
I will remove the Heart of stone
from your flesh and give a heart of flesh.”*



Eze. 36:26

Unwavering assurance of God
invites us and promises us
blessing with courage & strength
Therefore let us accept the INVITATION
to RENEW ourselves and receive the blessings in the
words of St. Paul:

*“And put on the NEW SELF
which is likeness of God
has been created in the righteousness and
holiness of the truth.”*

Eph. 4:24

Then only the words of Blessings of our Founders
will be true –

*“My last words.....last drop of my blood
is that you remain in harmony
united together all of one heart and one will
Be bound one to the other
by the bond of charity*

*helping each other and bearing with each other
in Jesus Christ.”*

Last Council – St. Angela

*“This is what I ask of you
live in deep unity
and have a love that is alive.”*

Letter to Haute-Croix Fr. John Lambertz

May mother Angela and Fr. John Lambertz
remain alive amidst us
with their blessings and interceding for us
to bring NEW MEANING in our lives
“They are NEW EVERY MORNING”

Lamentations 3:23

Sister Mary Grace, OSU 17.05.2021
excerpts from **CORONAVIRUS – 2nd Wave -
A Reflection: A Renewal**



**Compassion shown in many ways in Ambikapur
Province**

The Covid-19 shook us all in many different ways. In the beginning we were not prepared- neither mentally nor spiritually to face the Pandemic. The passing away of many priests, sisters, friends, staff members, neighbors and acquaintances was very shocking.

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The lockdown became severe and coming out of the compound was impossible since the police were seen everywhere controlling the shopkeepers, questioning all the pedestrians. The need to help the victims of Covid became very urgent. All the Religious Institutions of men and women cooperated with the hospital to provide some food items and medicines for the patient.



We were all happy when the Sisters of the Holy Cross started a Covid Center in our place. The Sisters took care of the patients very well and the expenses were manageable for the patients. We also helped the poor patients financially to

buy medicines and nutritious food. Some Covid patients found it difficult to pay their medical bills so we helped them.

All the hospitals were full and it was difficult to get beds. We encouraged some of the patients to remain in home quarantine and helped them by phoning morning and evening and if needed more times a day

to keep them happy and to make them feel that we were with them. Our nurse sisters helped them by offering ways to take care of themselves during this pandemic. We also kept in contact with the families who lost their dear ones. All this we could do only through phone and video calls. Our cell phones were fully utilized during these pandemic days. We called the people at our gate who had nothing to eat before the police came for their duties. We gave them rice and vegetables from our garden. Some of the people who had private jobs lost their jobs, and were unable to take care of their families. They also were helped by us. We still see many needy people who need to buy medicines and nourishing food for their families. Our contacts with the families helped us to give some online classes and games to the children.

- Sister Philomena George, OSU



Ursuline Convent Muri – Serving the migrant workers

During the 1st wave of the coronavirus in 2020, the Ursuline School in Muri played a big role in accommodating the migrant workers. The District Government officers were pleased with the dedicated service of the Ursuline Sisters in Muri.

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During the 2nd wave of the coronavirus, the Government officers requested the Sisters once again to give space for the migrants to be in quarantine for 7 days. They were provided with all the basic needs and medicines by the Government.



Doctors and medical staff visited the migrants for the Covid-test. After the completion of 7 days in quarantine, the migrants were brought to their respective places by the school bus. Those who were tested positive were taken to the hospital by the Government ambulance.

Three Sisters from the Muri community were involved in serving the migrants. They are grateful for the opportunity to serve the people who were in need during the period of the Covid-19.

- Sister Sarita Bodra, OSU



Confronting COVID-19 in family members



I experienced COVID-19 up-front in my sister Ivy's and brother-in-law Pradeep's death. They died infected by it leaving 2 children behind. Dr. Sr. Eileen Kujur and I being the physicians from the family could not help them. We helplessly watched them gasp for breath. Things went out of control soon after the infection was detected. Combating the pandemic is several times more challenging when one knows that the sickness is in its advanced stage and when you see restlessness, helplessness, thirst for water, shortness of breath and many more things occurring in your loved ones, now caged in the ventilator's contraption. Amid all this you experience a surge of panic that they may leave the world any moment now.

Never was your inability to help them more searing than in such a situation. COVID–19 has vehemently shaken my entire strength.

The impact on my family members was the next situation. Clinical untouchability coupled with superstition added their share of blows. Having isolated my family, the neighbours watched us from what they may have judged as a safe distance — none enquiring if our children had anything to eat and drink, or if we might need something. Even some of our close relatives chose to distance themselves — a challenged humanity very carefully eschewing its own kind! Struck by pandemic, humanity was centered only on “I” and “Me”.

- Sister Dr. Pushpa Kujur, OSU
St. Ursula Hospital, Lohardaga.

With people dying all around and the social media predicting a worsening scenario day by day, one sees fear spread all over. On the ground, however, one is challenged to inspire confidence among the people. As a medical professional, I strive to instill confidence in the patients by guiding them to abide by the already known precautionary measures. Personally, I have been treating the patients in their earlier stage of the COVID-19.

My service in the OPD (outpatient department) continues to be an exercise in confidence building.

- Sister Dr. Eileen Kujur, OSU
St. Ursula Hospital, Lohardaga



The Catholic Mission Health Centre – giving vital care to villagers in Barsuan, Orissa

The Catholic Mission Health Centre Barsuan is run by the Ursuline Sisters. In the centre 123 patients were treated in the month of April (19th to 30th), and 195 patients were treated in May.

It is God's providence that we are safe and that we had enough medicine in the store to treat the people in need. We did not always know if the people were ill with the coronavirus but in the name of God we served them trusting in his compassion. People had great hope and faith in the health centre.

After a year of lockdown, we celebrated Easter very solemnly on 4th of April, 2021. We were about to say goodbye to Covid -19. Then the second wave of Covid- 19 came causing a lot of fear and anxiety. People were not ready to face it.

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All of a sudden everything was shut down, especially transportation, market, daily work and shops. It was very difficult for the poor people to manage their daily needs.

In Barsuan even the medicine shops were closed. The doctor from the government health centre did not touch the patients. It seemed human life was not important; people became the victims of the pandemic. Thousands of people got infected. In the interior villages there were no deaths but every family was infected with viral fever.

The Catholic Mission Health Centre was kept open for everyone so people flocked there for treatment. Since the Covid -19 testing facility was not available in the area, any type of complaint was considered as coronavirus. People were very frightened to go to the hospital. Doctors were not available in the hospitals.

A man was suffering from typhoid and he was considered a corona patient. The doctor neither touched him nor tested him. He came to the mission health centre. He recovered his health and is very happy. He said if this mission health centre were not open he would have died.

One evening a child was taken to the doctor with a cold and cough but the doctor refused to treat the child and told the parents that she was infected by

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coronavirus. They went back home without the medicine. Next day they came to the Mission Health Centre and told the story. Parents were assured that child would be all right. The child received 4 injections at once. We continued the medicine until the child was fully recovered.



All who came to the health centre with a high fever, bad headache, loss of appetite, and fatigue were cured with simple medicines and saline. All were given a health awareness lesson during the Covid- 19. We encouraged them to wear masks, to wash hands, use sanitizer, follow good hygiene, take herbal medicines and inhalation, and follow the government protocol for the Covid-19.

- Sister Eriani Kerketta, OSU
Mission Health Centre, Barsuan
Gumla Province



St. Ursula Hospital Lohardaga – Providing medical equipment



St. Ursula Hospital Lohardaga, Jharkhand has responded well to the call of God to serve humanity since the beginning of Covid-19 in collaboration with the government hospital. During the second wave of Covid-19, due to the lack of skilled personnel, medical equipment and modern devices we could do only the initial treatment in our hospital by checking the patients' vital signs of Covid-19.

Accordingly they were prescribed medication and provided oxygen concentrator. Many OPD (outpatient department) patients were tended to during the critical time of the 2nd wave. We had many post- Covid patients who were admitted in our hospital. Some patients were critical and needed strong oxygen

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support and ICU facility. These patients were referred to the Covid Care Centre in other hospitals.

Now India is raising concern of the new variant - Delta Plus after a devastating second wave of the coronavirus infection. Health centers and hospitals are being advised to be prepared to serve the patients by providing medical equipment and other facilities in the hospitals.

We are ready now to face the third wave of Covid-19. We have installed a 45 liter MED OXY GENERATOR machine and oxygen pipeline in 24 beds including 8 beds in the male ward, 10 beds in the female ward and 8 beds in the pediatric ward.



The local government in Lohardaga is providing special training to the doctors and nurses to treat the patients of the new variant Delta Plus.

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In collaboration with the local government our auxiliary nurses and midwives second year students are working as Covishield Vaccinators in two centres in groups of three students.



We are grateful to all our benefactors, collaborators and well-wishers for their support to serve the sick with Covid related diseases and other illnesses.

- Sister Dayawati Minj, OSU



Khunti - Valuable steps taken to save lives

During the coronavirus crisis in May 2020, there was an invitation from an NGO for volunteers to work in a project for coronavirus awareness program in rural areas. I saw this opportunity as a challenge in the mission of Jesus Christ.



I joined this NGO CHABIJ (Catholic Health Association in Bihar and Jharkhand) in June 2020. The project was already running in Murhu block, Khunti District, 25 km away

from my convent based on mother and child health, adolescent girls' health education, health awareness

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on communicable and non-communicable diseases and anaemia and malnutrition reduction. My joining added a Covid-19 Awareness Program and my contribution added a valuable awareness and helped change the life of people in the project.

I go to the village on alternative days with two staff members. We include women, youth, panchayat (village government) president and ward members. We discuss and share ideas about the coronavirus disease, its signs and symptoms, mode of spread, methods of prevention, use of herbs and home remedies. Following the government guidelines we demonstrate the 7 steps - hand wash with soap and water, wearing mask and how to make mask at home, soap and surf making (washing powder), Horlicks (energy boosting drinks) making, phenyl making and mushroom cultivation so that people remain at home and engage themselves in household works.

The 2nd wave of COVID-19 brought not only the new strain of infection but fear and depression among the people. When I sensed this I thought of going an extra mile to help them out to save their lives. I started helping the people who came to our dispensary with mild symptoms of coronavirus and treating them for their mild symptoms for 48 hours. I encouraged them and sent them for a Covid-19 test. Many were found with a positive report of coronavirus.

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Gradually, the cases increased. Many priests and sisters from remote areas were infected. It was difficult for them to consult doctors and beds were not available in the hospitals. In this situation, seeing the needs and emergency, Khunti diocese started a Covid Centre in the SDC (Social Diocesan Center).

I was invited to join the team. Dr. Sunil Xalxo prescribed the IV fluids, injections and medicines to serve the Covid patients.



I helped to administer the vaccination to people during our village visits. We could bring some hope and encouragement in the life of many priests and sisters during the difficult times. All got healed and returned to their homes, parishes and convents.

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Hope can be a powerful force, in time of difficulties. We stand strong against the virus and live by a deep faith in God that “we shall overcome this”.

- Sister Louisa Joseph, OSU
Ursuline Khunti Health Center



Providing warehouse space in Ranchi



The Ursuline Embroidery Center in Ranchi is providing a warehouse facility to Phia Foundation (NGO) to store the materials and medicines for the Coronavirus vaccines.

These medicines are for Covid centers in *Panchayat Bhawans* (Reginal Government Houses) in the State of Jharkhand. The Sisters of the Ranchi Province are collaborating with the State Government through the Phia Foundation.

- Ursuline Convent Ranchi



**Tezpur – Sisters reaching out to many
in loving service**

“Be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.” - 1 Sam 12:24

I, Sr. Niranjana Bilung, OSU, in charge of St. Joseph health care Centre C/o Ursuline Convent Borbam, want to share the deep experience of serving the sick people of my local area during this pandemic. In every home in the local villages people were suffering with COVID-19. In the government hospital people were not getting proper treatment due to the steady increase of COVID-19 patients. Many patients were crying for help at the door of our Ursuline health care centre.

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I was discouraged and advised not to serve them but I heard the call of God in the depth of my heart saying “please help him.” I was moved with compassion and took a risk to serve them placing my full trust and confidence in the Lord.

While attending to the sick I too got infected with COVID-19. Having learnt that I was Corona positive, the government officers came and closed down our health care centre. There was no other way, we had to close the health care Centre. It was a heart breaking experience for me. Every day, patients were coming to our gate shouting to get medicine. But I was helpless to serve them. Remaining inside, I was not peaceful. I tried to find ways and means to help them out. Some people reached me through phone calls to get help, I offered my valuable advice, suggestions and prescribed medicine. I continued my constant prayers for them and all those who were sick. Many got cured by the mercy of God.

The driver of our Convent became badly infected with COVID-19 along with his family members. He was completely broken and depressed with this sickness for there was no one to support them in this time of struggle. After learning his condition, I called him and gave medicines and vitamins from our back door. Along with my sisters in the community, I supported

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the family with prayers and suggestions. Now the whole family is hale and hearty.

I too, received great support and loving concern from my family members, sisters and the patients' families. I was healed from Covid-19 very soon. I thank the Almighty God for giving me new life to serve the sick and suffering. I am grateful to Him who enabled me to attend to the sick and suffering despite my sickness and poor health. I feel privileged and great to be His instrument in giving new life to many.



At present, I am in our Ursuline Provincialate in Tezpur and giving my service to the Provincial, who was also infected with Covid-19 as well as the elderly sisters who are under medication.

I feel happy to render my service to my sisters and others. Witnessing God's miracles and His healing touch through me my faith in Him is deepened.

- Sister Niranjana Bilung, OSU



India launches the new Inter-Province Post Covid-19 Team

The dreadful experience of the second wave of the devastating coronavirus strongly motivated the sisters of the Indian Provinces to take an immediate and concrete step to fight against the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic.

This noble thought was supported and encouraged by the Congregational Leadership Team during the zoom conversation with four Province leaders on “Our Response to Covid-19” on June 11, 2021. In response to this urge, we have dared to create a POST COVID - 19 TEAM of 12 members. The team comprises our zealous sister doctor, nurses, professional counselors, educators, social workers, a priest lawyer and a lay leader.

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The aim of this team is to care for the post COVID-19 warriors. And we do it by our prophetic presence and by rendering spiritual, social and psychological accompaniment through varied and suitable means available.

The team is in its infancy. But we hope and believe that by the grace of God and by the sisterly love and support of our entire Ursuline family and people of good will, our joint effort will make this front line ministry, fruitful and life giving.

- Sister Matilda Dungdung, OSU

Thank you



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