



Through Him, With Him, In Him

KARUNA

Stories of humble humanitarian works by the Catholic Church of Gujarat during COVID-19

Blessed by the Bishops of Gujarat and Issued by Fr. Vinayak Jadav, Spokesperson, Catholic Church-Gujarat State.

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Pope Francis invites



"Since prayer is a universal value, I have accepted the proposal of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity that on this coming 14 May, believers of all religions should unite spiritually for a day of prayer, fasting, and works of charity, to implore God to help humanity overcome the corona virus pandemic. Remember: 14 May, all believers together, believers of different traditions, to pray, fast, and perform works of charity"



POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE TO MARK INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY 2020

Today we celebrate International Nurses Day, in the context of the International Year of Nurses and Midwives officially declared by the World Health Organization. At this same time, we observe the bicentennial of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing.

At this critical moment, marked by the global health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have rediscovered the fundamental importance of the role being played by nurses and midwives. Every day we witness the testimony of courage and sacrifice of healthcare workers, and nurses in particular, who, with professionalism, self-sacrifice, and a sense of responsibility and love for neighbour, assist people affected by the virus, even to the point of putting their own health at risk. Sadly, this can be seen in the high



number of healthcare workers who have died as a result of their faithful service. I pray for them – the Lord knows each of them by name – and for all the victims of this epidemic. May the Risen Lord grant to each of them the light of heaven and to their families the consolation of faith.



12 May 2020
200th Birth
Anniversary of
Florence Nightingale
"Lady with a Lamp"

Walking endlessly on highways

While travelling to Aravali on national highway no. 48, Fr. Xavier James of SSSS saw hundreds of migrants returning home walking in scorching summer heat of May. Young and old, male and females and children. All walking to reach their homes. Seeing their plight, like a true citizen who knows his responsibility, Fr. Xavier James wrote to the collector to arrange transport for this under privileged and neglected section of our society. He also provided biscuit packets to them.



DRISTI rescues 33 stranded reach home amidst Covid-19 lockdown

The number of COVID-19 affirmative cases are increasing in Gujarat state. Amidst this difficult situation of rising cases and the lockdown, people who have been working in the unorganized rural sector as farmhands are going through an anguishing time. DRISTI, Don Bosco Kapadvanj has been able to actively intervene in ensuring the safe passage home of 33 individuals, including 07 minors and a few senior citizens.

Travelling to their home village Ratalia in the Devgadhi Bariya Taluka of Dahod



District, 33 people were held back in Antroli village of the Kapadvanj in Kheda District, unable to reach home. On reception of this information, DRISTI staff contacted DRISTI Director who asked another of his staff, to verify the information received. The people pleaded with DRISTI staff, saying, "We do not need ration kits. Please help us to reach back to our own home in Ratalia village. That will be the biggest help you can give us."

Following this, our staff met with the SDM Kapadvanj and obtained 02 transit passes and helped the stranded labourers and their children to board pickup tempo. However, this vehicle was halted by the police at Ladvel Chowkdi, who refused permission for the vehicle to proceed any further. Immediately, the leader of the group making the

way home, contacted who after discussion with the police on duty, turned the vehicle back to the Mamlatdar's office. Meanwhile, Salesian Fathers reached the Mamlatdar's office with snacks for the 33 people. A discussion with the SDM followed, after which a permit letter was given to the home-bound group, allowing them to travel in 02 vehicles.

The staff accompanied the group till Ladvel Chowkdi, a video recording was made at Ladvel police checkpoint and since the group had to cross Panchmahal and Dhaod Districts to reach Ratalia village, a volunteer's contact was given, in the event of further obstacles. DRISTI staff was constantly in touch with the vehicle-drivers and the group till the entire group of 33 finally made it to their village and homes by 2230 hrs.

This was a one-off first time incident in the entire Gujarat state, where people with legitimate permit passes were denied home passage. The DRISTI team is very happy to have been of some assistance to these stranded labourers in reaching home.

- Fr. Mayank Parmar sdb (Director – DRISTI)

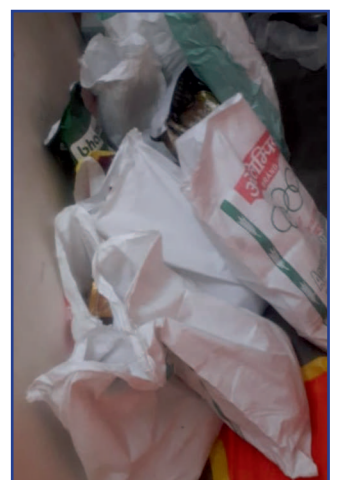
MumbaiSalesians at Narukot

The MumbaiSalesians managing the Narukot Education Society at Narukot village, about 65 kilometres east of Vadodara near Jambughoda of Panchmahala district in Central Gujarat have initiated a COVID-19 Relief Outreach in the neighbouring villages.

The villagers, predominantly of the Rathwa tribe are deprived of food-ration due to the lockdown. The MumbaiSalesians at Narukot are ensuring that food-provision - pulses, condiments, grain, oil, salt, biscuits - are provided together with toiletries



and masks, to the most deprived needy in these villages. In all 53 families in 09 villages were given the relief kits after the initial actual survey assessment and identification of the most poor-deprived.



- by Fr. Ajit Munis sdb

DRISTI empowers people to access government schemes

In the difficult situation of the COVID-19 lockdown, and with its extension further still, DRISTI [Don Bosco Rural Integrated Social Training Institute] Kapadvanj is finding the most effective means to provide relief outreach to the villages. Since its staff could not travel to the various places, DRISTI made a study of the available Government Schemes to ensure that the basic needs of the people are being met, through direct implementation in the villages. This has been possible with constant



monitoring and mentoring of the affected, vulnerable and deprived families in various villages through the Sarpanchs, Village leaders, SHG members, Panchayat, SMC members, VHSNC [Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee] members and Youth leader-volunteers. Some of the Scheme availability and implementation in the Kapadvanj Block of Kheda District have been surveyed by DRISTI and the process is currently underway to help empower the deprived to access these:

1. Free Ration by PDS: BPL families and later on NFSA ration card holders and the poorest of the poor were able to access the APL 1 ration card and procure food grains provided by the government. DRISTI has empowered 11,186 families to receive ration from PDS. The other 247 families who have not received any ration is being addressed by the DRISTI staff at various levels during the lockdown.
2. Mid-Day Meal Allowance: it was decided that during the lockdown, the mid day meal ration and its expenses would be disbursed to the children. Accordingly as per the government notice, the ration was distributed in 02 stages in the month of March and April. Schools distributed coupons to each child to



collect the ration from the Government Ration Shop at local level. Thus, a total of 7139 children received ration and the cooking cost through the efforts of DRISTI staff.

3. Beneficiaries of Ujjwala Gas: The Government has announced a free gas cylinder to the women beneficiaries.

Accordingly 1225 families have received the benefits of this scheme during the lockdown.

4. PMKSN (Pradhan Mantri Kishan Sanman Nidhi): As per the government announcement, farmers belonging to PMKSN would receive advance payment. Accordingly DRISTI has enabled 3026 families to benefit from this scheme.
5. Widow Scheme: The government had announced that widows will receive Rs. 500 each, as an added incentive during March, April and May. Accordingly DRISTI has enabled 643 women to receive the said amount in their account.
6. Special help for Women Jandhan Account Holders: As per the announcement, Jandhan Account Holder women are to receive Rs. 500 as an incentive support during the lockdown. DRISTI has ensured that 52 women have received this help during the lockdown.

Taking into account the present COVID-19 crisis scenario, DRISTI is in discussion with like-minded stakeholders to cater to the villages not yet affected but who have to put up with outside arrivals. DRISTI has surveyed that a total of 65 people have arrived from outside in its field-work area and identified 14 people as virus-suspicious cases. Of these, 26 people were quarantined and a total of 29 tests were done out of which 01 positive case has been shifted to Ahmedabad. DRISTI staff has been contacting people daily in the villages and the various stakeholders of the villages, instructing them and providing them correct information in order to help them avail of and access all Government Schemes beneficially. As and when issues are arising, DRISTI is trying its utmost to address the problems through networking and discussions at various levels. DRISTI has also managed to get some villages medicine-sprayed by the Health Department, while some other villages were provided with Ayurvedic Ukado.

As the lockdown extension continues, DRISTI is studying the following possibilities:

1. Ensuring financial transactions take place in each and every village, as there is lack of transportation service and people are unable to reach the bank.

- Fr. Mayank Parmar sdb (Director – DRISTI)

SSSS-Gandhinagar

Sabarmati Samruddhi Seva Sangh (SSSS)-the Social service wing of Gandhinagar Archdiocese helps needy people on a daily basis.

On Gujarat Foundation Day they have helped 20 migrant families with food grains and ration kits on a construction site in Gandhinagar.

On 2nd May SSSS helped 15 needy families with food grains on the ring road and also near Pethapur village.

On 4th May they donated rations kits to 5 migrants and needy families in Ankol slums near Pethapur, Gandhinagar.

On 5th May, SSSS reached out to 11 families

with food grains. They also provided 425 masks and medicine for dispensary some 280 kilometres away in border district of Aravali.



- Fr. Xavier James

Ray of Light



Ray Of Light Charitable Trust, Ahmedabad reached out to 20 needy families with food grains and other essential items in Vatva area on 30th April. Again on 3rd May, Ray Of Light distributed ration kits to 30 families in Gayatrinagar area of Sarkhej, Ahmedabad.

- Michael Paul

Charity from Pallottine Fathers

The Pallottine Priests of St. Joseph Church, Nadiad came forward to help and support needy families of this lockdown period. They distributed 30 daily essential ration kits to the affected families.

-Viral Parmar



A generous soul

During this Covid-19 pandemic many individuals have come forward to help the needy; thus following Holy Father Pope Francis' advice to be generous to the needy. One such person from Kheda district and now studying & working in UK wanted to help in his home state of Gujarat. He contacted his friend here and sent financial aid. With the money received, the friend bought 10 ration kits and gave it to the needy people. A True example of Each one, Help one!!

-by Viral Parmar

Rahelba old age home

55 senior citizens are well taken care of by Rahelba Vruddhashram at Magodi village, near Mota Chiloda in Gandhinagar district. The old age home is managed by Nirmal Seva Trust. In this Vruddhashram, there are inmates who have no one to take care during their old age and sickness. Some of them are bedridden. Here the aged are given a chance to live dignified life in their old age. The trust operates solely on donations from the contributions from generous people. During Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown they find it very difficult to manage yet they are continuing doing their best.



Karuna is released only after we get fresh stories that are newsworthy and unique from the ones published before. May God bless you and may you continue the good work you have begun

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Indian Migrant Exodus

Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fish, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, a gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst ! The disciples were in fear and doubt, but you poured out love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace, to welcome migrants with joy and generosity, while responding their needs.

Help us to share of our abundance and to give witness to your love for all people.

Amen.

